



Aalto University
School of Electrical
Engineering

PED-131.9000 Teaching assistant as a learning instructor

Day 1

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Timetable

9:00-9:30	Welcome
9:30-12:00	What makes a good assistant/teacher? Interaction in learning and teaching Giving feedback

What do you think about working as an assistant?

Pick a **postcard** which somehow describes your thoughts about working as an assistant

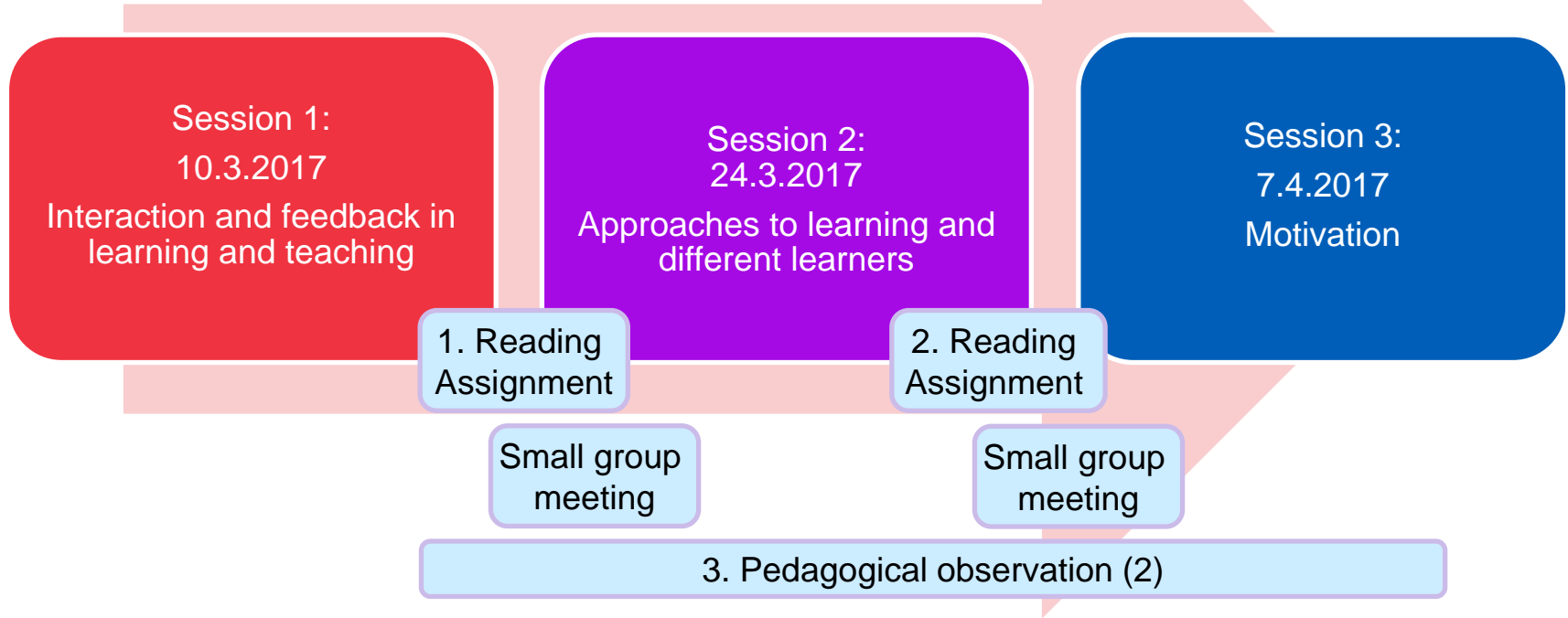


Learning outcomes for this course

After the course you will be able to

- observe the classroom environment from the learning perspective
- identify aspects to support students' learning process
- recognise ways to support students' study motivation
- identify your role as a learning instructor

Course structure



How to complete the course

- Participating in the teaching sessions
- Doing the coursework
 - reading assignments (two)
 - teaching observation + giving written feedback
 - do a reflective write-up (half to one page)

Participant's workload

A. Teaching sessions	9 h
B. Learning assignments (all together)	14 h
<i>a) Reading assignment x 2</i>	<i>4 h</i>
<i>b) Teaching observation</i>	<i>6 h</i>
<i>c) Reflective write-up</i>	<i>4 h</i>
C. Working in peer groups (2 meetings)	11 h
D. Reflection & working independently	20 h
<hr/>	
Total	54 h
(~ 2 credits)	

(one credit is equivalent to a workload of 27 h)

Your expectations

- I would like to **increase the participation and motivation** of the students in the exercise sessions, not only based in the impact (or low impact) that the sessions have in their grades, but **in the actual knowledge they can acquire** from them.
- I have some practical experience, but I haven't any pedagogical training, and I'm open to **theory in the field**.
- I am highly interested in pedagogy, and I would like to learn **how to improve my teaching skills and be able to help students as much as possible**.
- **Tips on aiding students.**
- Learning how to be a better teaching assistant.
- I would like to improve my teaching skills since probably during my Ph.D studies I will act as a research assistant for some courses
- General pedagogical foundations i.e., **how to teach and communicate** with students; **responsibilities and duties** of the assistant from the **point of view of administration**, and university rules and regulations.
- I would like to learn about **responsibilities of a teaching assistant** and how to perform them efficiently.
- **Tips on teaching and advice from experienced teachers**
- I wish to learn how to teach in a better way, which **makes students learn rather than just be there**. So, I want to know about **teaching methodology that can involve them in learning**. Moreover, I love teaching and this makes me to do PhD and thus I want to improve my teaching skills.
- **How to effectively use the MYCOURSES Learning environment?**
- **How to explain technical concepts to students or peers in a way that it is simple to understand. Also important factors to consider that may affect the learning process.**
- **Supporting students' motivation, different teaching approaches**

What makes a good course assistant?

What are the elements and capabilities that make "a good course assistant"?

Step 1 (5 min):

- Write down each element or capability on a separate sticky note.

Drawing a "prototype" of a good teaching assistant

Step 2 (steps 2 and 3, ~30 min):

- Share your thoughts with your group.

Step 3:

- Draw and describe the course assistant that has the attributes and capabilities you have discovered.
- You can personalise your prototype:
Give her/him a name, age, discipline etc.
- Prepare to present your group work (max 5 min/group).



Conceptions of teaching and learning: why is it important to be aware of them?

The teacher's own conception of learning has an impact on their choices of teaching methods

If you want to develop your teaching, it is vital to know what to develop

- Different conceptions may lead to different teaching methods—and different methods may lead to different learning results

International students may be used to different teaching and learning methods, so they expect different kinds of teaching

Interaction: Why and how?



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Interaction in teaching: why?

- The fundamental rationale is to improve students' learning
- Here interaction refers to the types of exchanges (communication) that are believed to extend thinking and enhance learning
- According to this view, learners develop understanding
 - *in interactive and social situations*
 - *with the help of and in collaboration with others*

Vygotsky 1972; Bruner 1986; Britton 1970; Wells 1986; Norman 1992; Barnes & Todd 1995; Mercer 1995 (in discourse: Gumperz 1982; Chafe 1982; Tannen 1989; Levinson 2006)

Interaction

When dealing with social information

we observe the situation

we interpret

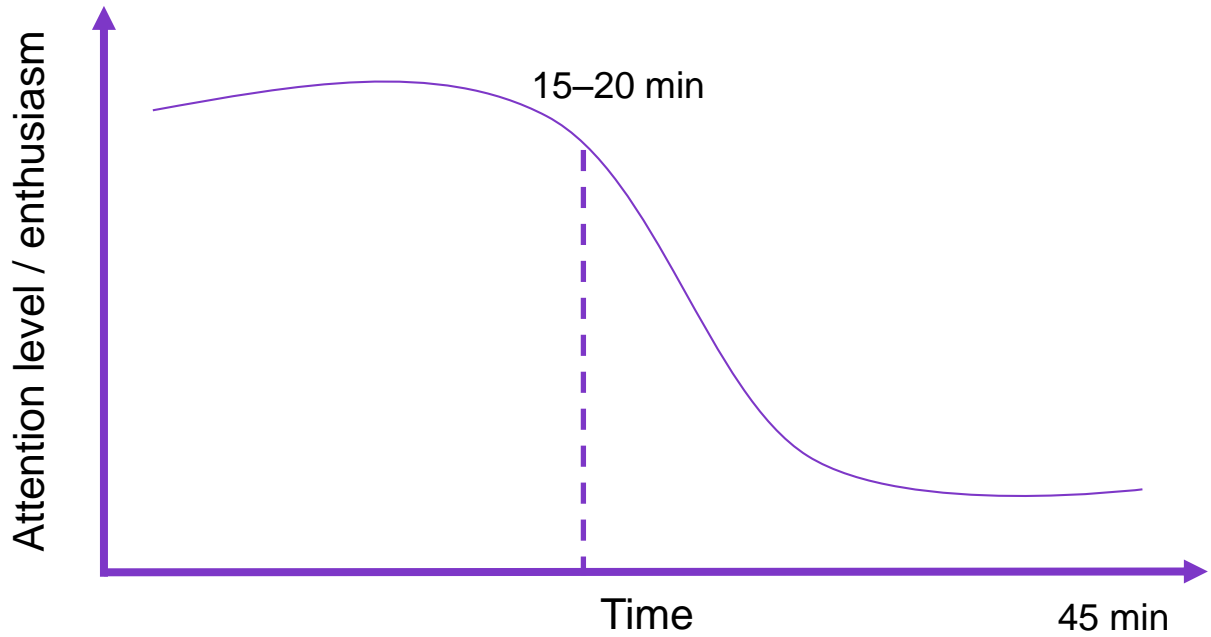
we set a goal



we consider optional
courses of action

we consider the
wisest course of
action

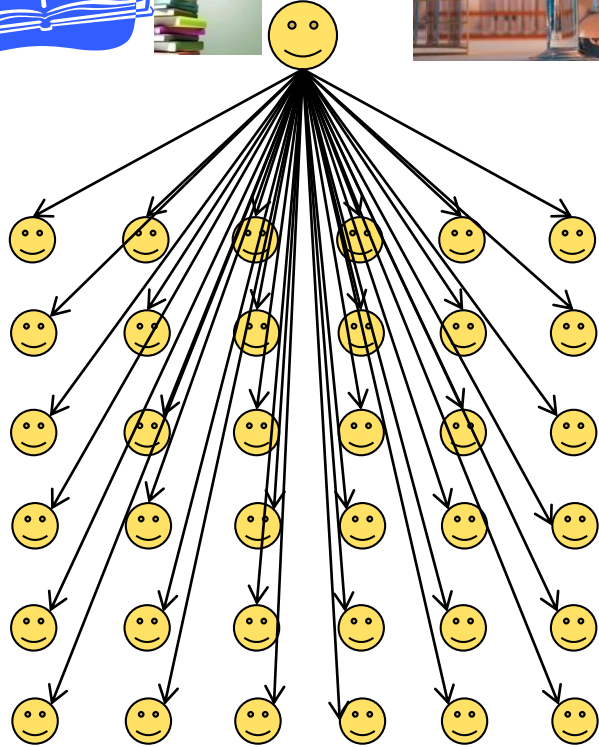
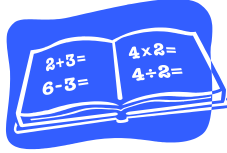
Attention vs. Rhythm of teaching



E.g., Johnson, A. & Proctor, R. W. 2004. Attention, theory and practise

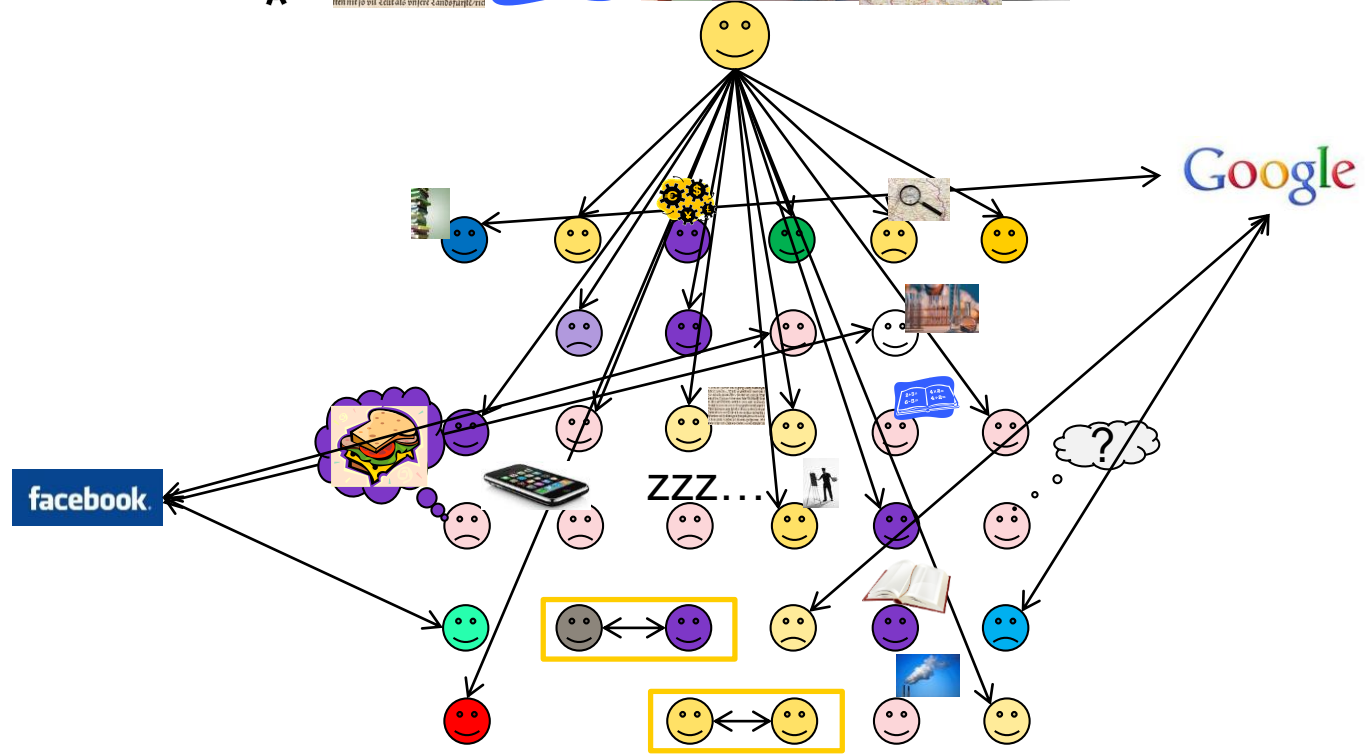


...wenn dieser rausging auch einverge
tet (als im 2. Buch verzeichnet) ward im d
mit als einem Abt / sonder als einem Bist
affen. Notpert aber war kein Bischoff, son
Abt ein Wönch, welcher zum erlt mal weid
ist in seinem alter, frieg gefürt vmb sepflic
er selbigen zeit solchen frieg in die hand geb
melben von Caparin in maffen widerfar
nden nit hab insagen hingeleget werden, bis
ung des lands zuletzt verzeht haben. Es
n nit so vil Leüt als vnfrer Landesfürst, rid



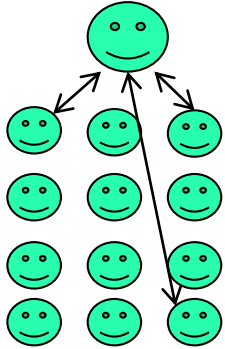


ungewiss, genau, ungenügend und unvollständig
 ist die Calo im „-Stich“ vorzuziehen! Insofern ist
 sie nicht als eigene Ziel- / Feinde als einem Ziel
 möglich. „Zweck aber was man sich (hofft) setzt
 in die mit Unwissenheit verbundenen ersten und zweiten
 Logik in fernen aller Freie, erfüllt und gepfeilt
 Vier können auch folgenden Freie in die beide auf
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 ihnen mit sich geht also von der „Lande“ möglich zu sein

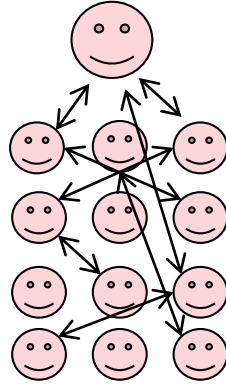


Examples of how to arrange interaction

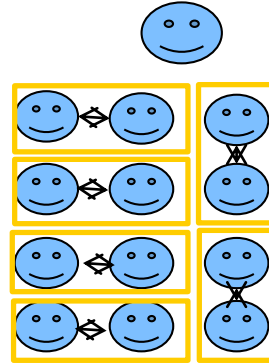
Between teacher and student



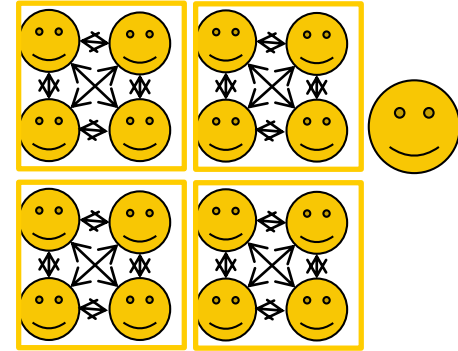
Teacher led group discussion



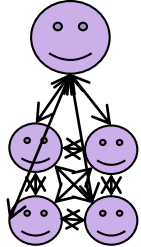
Discussion in pairs



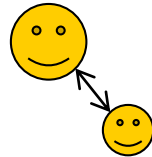
Group discussion; teacher coordinates



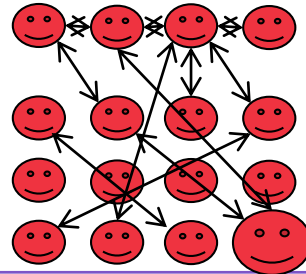
Group instruction



Personal instruction



Group discussion, led by the students



Interaction: to promote learning



Constructive discussion of
conflicting points of view

Deep processing of
the objected subjects

Fair/equal participation

Positive and safe atmosphere

Open questions to stimulate thinking (Aarnio & Enqvist 2002)

How do you consider...?

What is it based on...?

What does it mean...?

What are the consequences of...?

How do you understand...?

What is it all about...?

What is the meaning of...?

What if...?

What is this... connected to?

How do you feel about...?

What do you think you are going to do...?

How do you explain...?

How is it in your point of view...?

What kind of actions...?

Feedback

What type of feedback you have received?

Recall a feedback session and analyse it:

- How was the situation?
- Who gave/received the feedback?
- How did you feel about it?
- What was good/not so good in the situation?
- Did you learn something from it?

Write down your thoughts on paper (5 min)

Share them in groups of two or three (10 min)



Offering feedback

Your message should be in the tone: *I appreciate you and what you have done and whatever else I say should be taken in this context.*

- Be realistic
- Be sensitive to the goals of the recipient: LISTEN
- Be timely!!
- Be descriptive
- Don't be judgemental
- Be positive

Feedback

Constructive	Unconstructive/destructive
<p>Is about an issue/action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. Up to here everything is fine, but there's an error here.</i>	<p>Is about the person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. Can't you understand when I tell you...?</i>
<p>Justifies the views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. Consider this from the point of view of...</i>	<p>Contains judgements (good/bad)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. You don't know what you're talking about.</i>
<p>Is useful for development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. You did this part correctly, and practice this part some more...</i>	<p>Does not necessarily benefit anyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. How stupid can you be...</i>
<p>Takes into account the recipient's state of development, situation, ability to receive feedback, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirm the situation: <i>Can you explain what you have done...? What do you think about this...?</i>	<p>Does not take the recipient into account, is given only from the evaluator's perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assume you know the situation: <i>This is how it is, nothing you say will change my mind...</i>

Examples

Constructive	Unconstructive/destructive
<p>States observations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. This is what I observed... This looks like... I think this is...</i>	<p>Makes subjective conclusions / interpretations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. This is what you did. This went like this because...</i>
<p>Two-way process, the recipient has an opportunity to respond</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. Do you feel that you understood what I meant... I hope I understood your question correctly...? Could you elaborate...?</i>	<p>One-way process, no chance to answer or reflect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. This is how it was, and that's it.</i>

Learning assignments

1. Reading assignment
2. Teaching observation
3. Group meeting

1. Reading assignment: DL 24.3.2017

Go to MyCourses→Day 1, and find the link for the book:

Biggs, J., Tang, C. 2011: Teaching for Quality Learning at the University.

Chapter 2, "Teaching according to how students learn", p. 16–33.

Read the text so that you can discuss it with your peers in class.

Learning assignments

2. Teaching observation. DL 24.3.2017

- Visit an exercise class where you act as an observer. If possible, visit a class of one of your group members.
- Focus on interaction in the classroom and note down at least the following: How was it created? What approaches were used? Which aspects you found supported students' learning process? You can add reflections and insights of your own.
- Be specific, positive and give constructive feedback. **Use the feedback form from MyCourses for this.**
- Give your feedback to your peer/the teacher, and submit it in MyCourses (Day 1) with the name of the observed peer/teacher removed.

Learning assignments

3. Group work: reflect on the teaching session and the reading assignment

- Arrange a meeting with your small group (do it now).
- In the meeting, plan your teaching observation and discuss the article.
- Submit your notes and reflections in MyCourses (Day 1): What did you discuss? What did you observe? What did you think about the article?

**Feedback time:
What was good?
What would you change?**

