



Aalto University
School of Electrical
Engineering

PED-131.9000 Teaching assistant as a learning instructor

Day 1

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Timetable

- 9:00–9:35** **Welcome**
- 9:35–12:00** **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

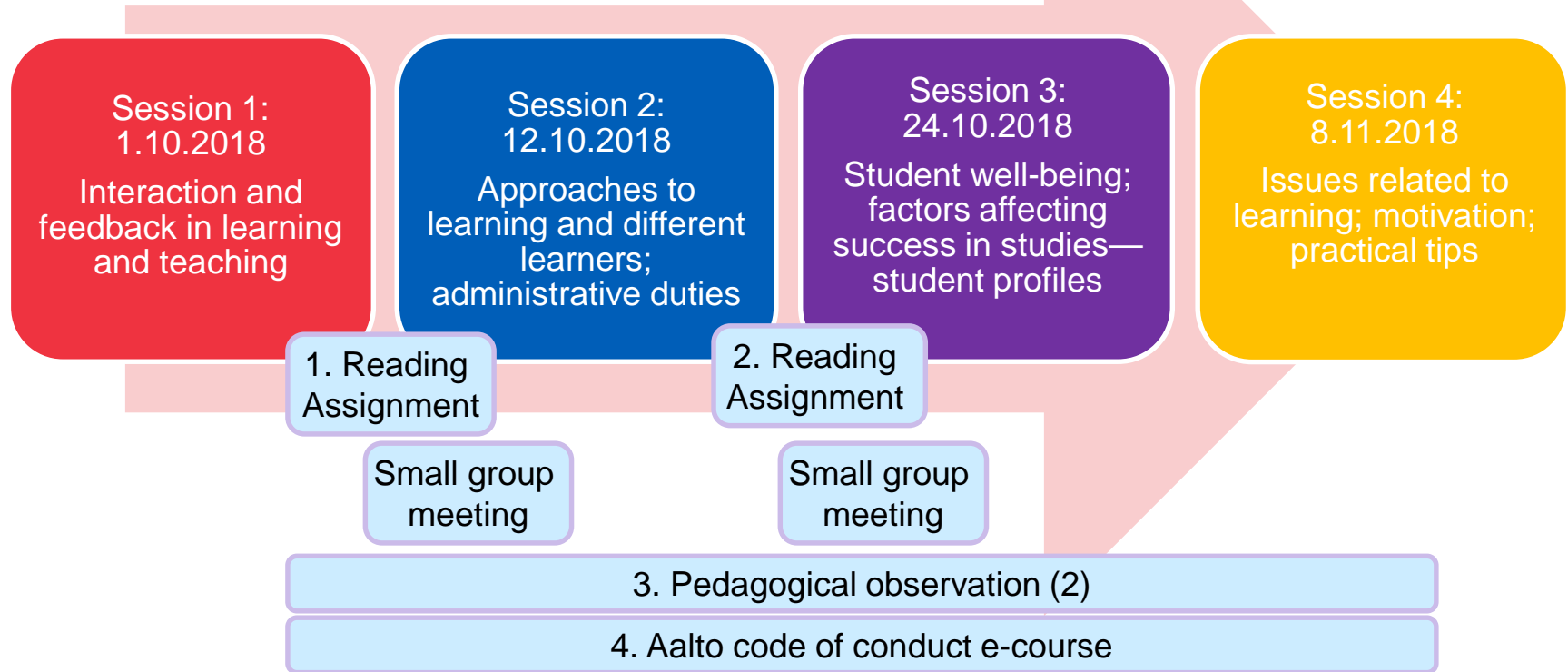


Learning outcomes for this course

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 and giving written feedback
 - do a reflective write-up (half to one page)
 - Complete the e-course on the code of conduct at <https://mycourses.aalto.fi/course/view.php?id=19437>

Participant's workload

A. Teaching sessions 12 h

B. Learning assignments (all together) 15 h

a) Reading assignment x 2 4 h

b) Teaching observation 6 h

c) Reflective write-up 4 h

d) e-course, code of conduct 1 h

C. Working in peer groups (2 meetings) 10 h

D. Reflection & working independently 17 h

Total 54 h
(2 credits)

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

Your expectations (1/4)

Context of teaching and learning

- **A better understanding** of what Finnish students expect from a class and what is the level expected from the students: my lectures and homework tend to be either too difficult or too easy.
- **to view the study process from the point of a teacher (assistant)**
- **I wish to better understand how to help / assist others in their deliverables due for the course.**

Developing as a teaching assistant

- **Motivation to be an instructor**
- **Experience and feedback from 'official' instructors**
- **I have no formal education in being an assistant or a teacher, and this should be a good place to start. I do not know, what I do not know.**

Your expectations (2/4)

Focus on teaching

- I want to be prepared for the future teaching and assistant work like **how to control time**, how to make the student more interactive, every skill I can use to make the more interesting.
- Knowledge how to teach or how to help people to learn in a right way
- To learn basics of work as a course assistant, teacher or instructor.
- to learn teaching techniques
- I want to enhance my teaching skills, learn new techniques, and be able to face the several possible scenarios that can occur when being an assistant/teacher.
- Formal pedagogical training in teaching methodology, **assignment design**, and **evaluation methodology**
- Learn about the tools to support teaching and become a better teacher



Your expectations (3/4)

- **I want to learn the art of teaching.** I want to **effectively communicate** with the students so that I can make them understand the subject.
- **Opettamaan!** Hyviä **opetusmetodeja**, miten löytää **uusia opetusnäkökulmia** jos asia on opetettaville hankalaa, **yleistä koulutuspedagogiikkaa**.
- **I plan to become a great teacher.**
- **My experience so far has not yet included being an assistant in a formal course, or anything about dealing with larger groups (>5) of people.**
- **Being a doctoral student I need to teach 5% of total work hours. Hence I am looking forward to gaining relevant skills.**
- **Minulla ei ole kokemusta opettamisesta eikä se ole omia vahvuusalueitani. Toivoisin oppivani opettamista ja saavani hyviä vinkkejä tuntiassistentin työtehtävään.**

Your expectations (4/4)

Focus on students and learning

- I would like to know the best way to **engage students in learning** a new topic.
- Get the **experience how to be good at assisting other students.**
- Itseäni eniten kiinnoistaisi oppia **miten motivoida opiskelijoita** luennon aikana. Tai **miten opettaa, että se olisi mielenkiintoista ja informatiivista** opiskelijoille. Sekä **interaktiivisempaa.**

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, ~25 min):

- Share your thoughts with your group (~10 min)

Step 3 (~15 min):

- 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 4 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

Short break!



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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

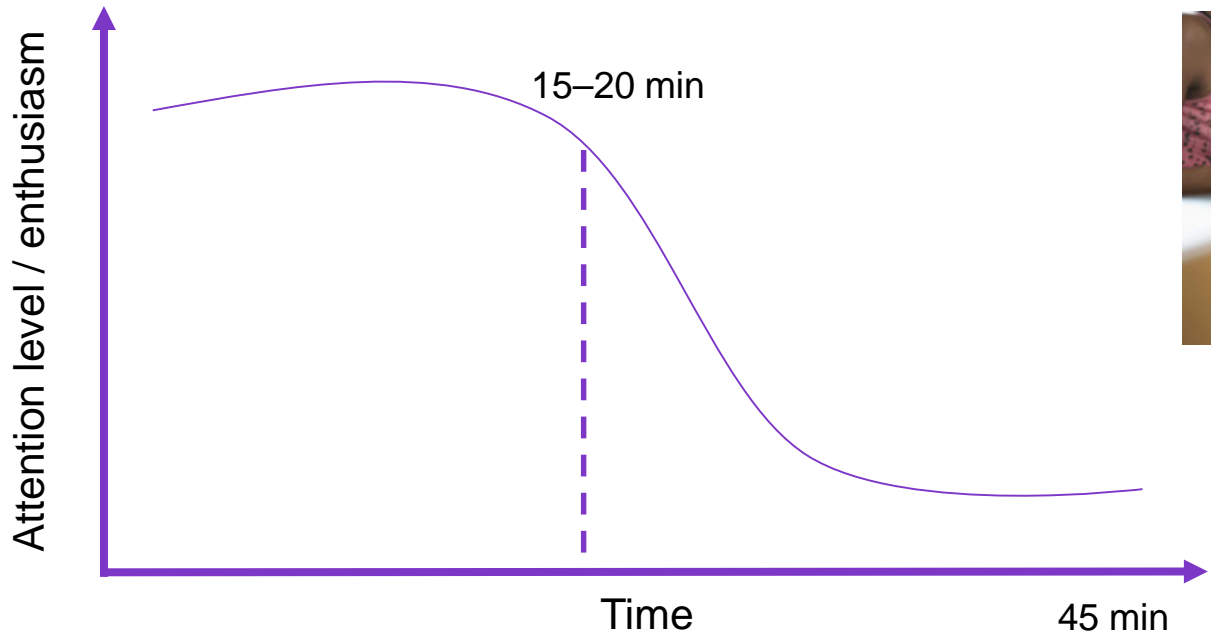
we set a goal



we consider optional
courses of action

we consider the
wisest course of
action

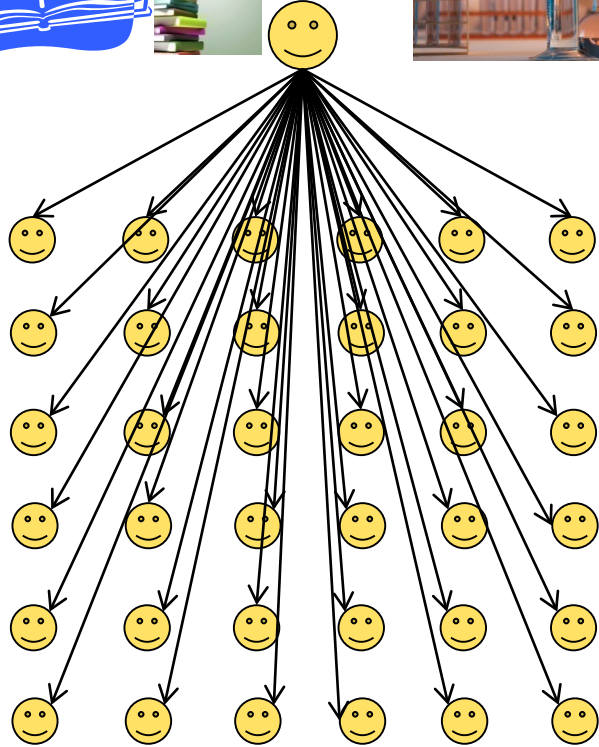
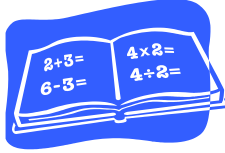
Attention vs. Rhythm of teaching



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

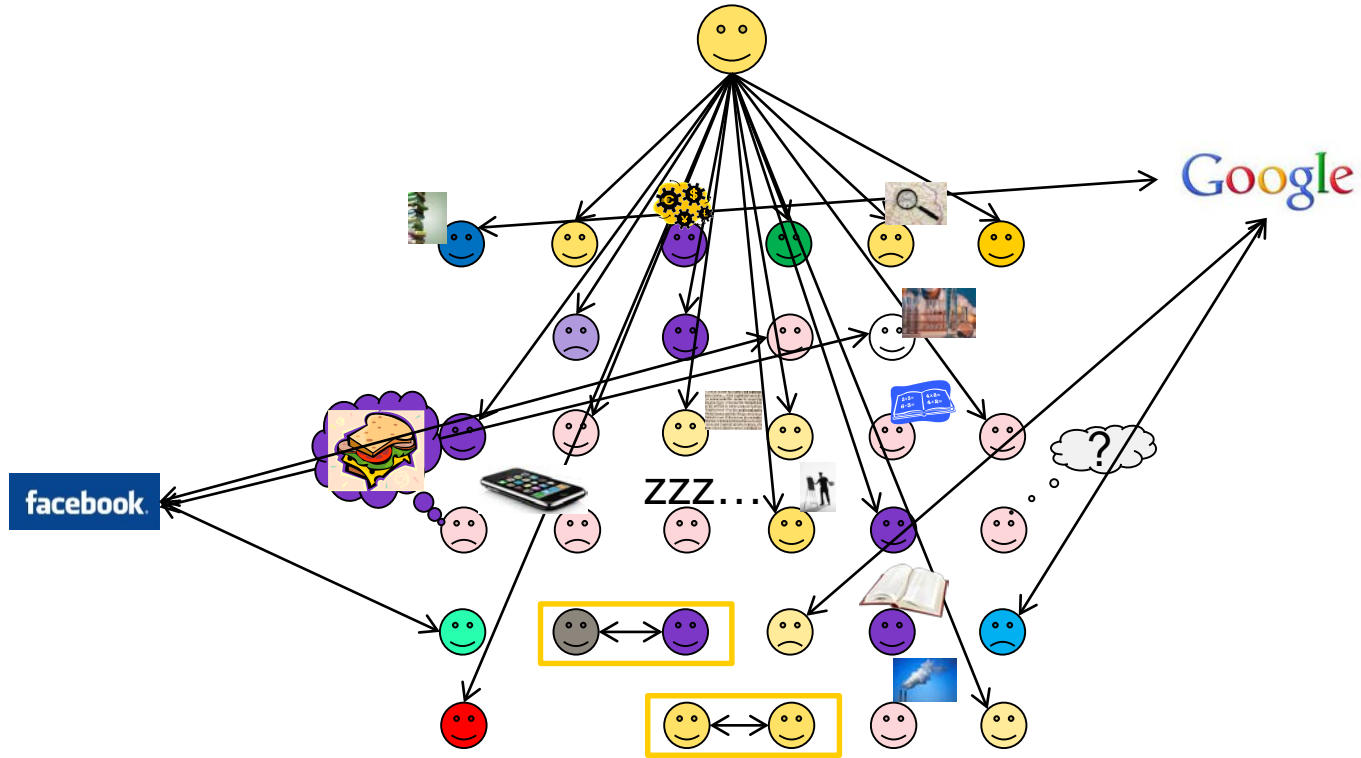
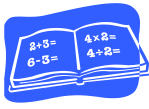


...wenn gewer rauchig auch duntvergie
tet (als im 2. Buch verzeichnet) ward im 2
mit als einem Abt / sonder als einem Wist
äffen. Nostert aber war kein Wisthoff, sond
Abt ein Wisthoff, welcher zum erlt mal wude
ist in seinem alter: frieg gefürt vmb zepflic
er selbigen zeit solches frieg in die hend get
mosden von Cofans in massen widerstue
nden nit hab insagen hingelagt werden, bifi
ung des Landes zuletzt verzeht haben. Es
n nit so vil Leüt als vnfrer Landesfürst, ric



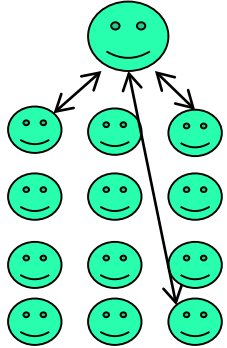


...wenn dieser Kaugummi eine bestimmte Höhe hat... (Text is partially illegible)

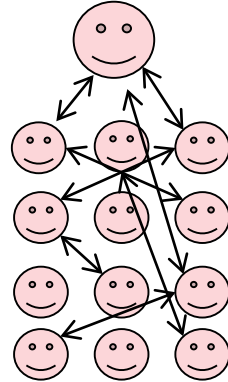


Examples of how to arrange interaction

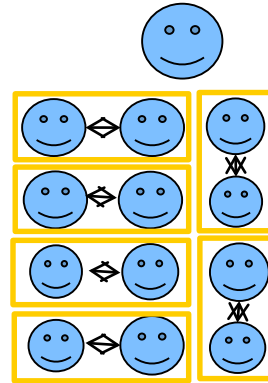
Between teacher and student



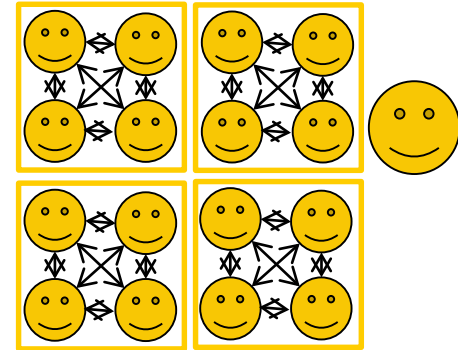
Teacher led group discussion



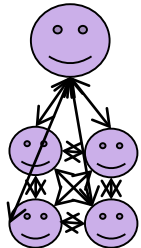
Discussion in pairs



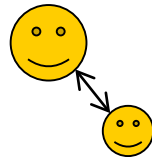
Group discussion; teacher coordinates



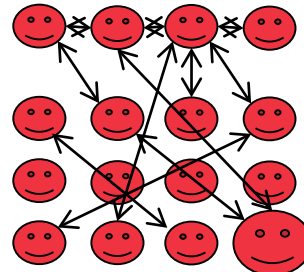
Group instruction



Personal instruction



Group discussion, led by the students



Interaction: to promote learning



Constructive discussion of
conflicting points of view

Deep processing of
the learned subjects

Fair/equal participation

Positive and safe atmosphere

Remember
the code of
conduct

Open questions to stimulate thinking (Aarnio & Enqvist 2002)

Can you explain what you have done so far?

What are you aiming for? (intermediate results in the problem)

How do you consider...?

What is it based on...?

What does it mean...? / What is the meaning of...?

How do you understand...?

What is it all about...?

How do you explain...?

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

What are the consequences of...?

What if...?

What is this... connected to?

How do you feel about...?

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

What kind of actions...?

Short break!



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Feedback



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What type of feedback have you 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?

Discuss and share them in groups of two or three (10 min)



Feedback

What is feedback about?

- **Task**
- **Process**

Hattie and Timperley (2007)

What does feedback mean?

- **Motivational:** influences beliefs and willingness to participate
- **Reinforcement:** rewards specific behaviour
- **Informational:** aims to change performance to a particular direction

Nelson and Schunn (2009)

Constructive feedback[†]

- **Relevant, tailored**
 - addresses the performance/process that it is meant to address
 - designed to meet the individual actor's specific needs and circumstances
- **Factual**
 - based on actual achievement/performance
- **Confidential**
- **Encouraging**
 - motivates to continue and increase efforts
- **Immediate** (some studies[‡] show that delayed feedback has its benefits too)
 - provided as soon as information is available
- **Helpful**
 - provides suggestions for improvement of teaching and learning
- **Respectful**
 - respects actors' integrity and needs

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

Examples (1/2)

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... now let me see... ah, 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 (2/2)

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 think 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>

Additional material: Principles of effective feedback (1/3)

1. Feedback is ongoing and integral part of assessment/course

- relevant, timely, fit for purpose, informs the process of learning
- constructively aligned with intended learning outcomes

2. Feedback guidance is explicit

- clarifies assessment criteria, is explicit about the criteria of quality

3. Feed-forward is emphasized more than feedback activities

- feedback is on work in progress

4. Students are engaged in the process

- feedback enables development of self-assessment skills: not too detailed and specific.

5. Content and level of feedback

- focuses on what, how, and why
- suggestions on how to improve
- takes students' level of understanding into account

6. Training in feedback/forward is an integral part of a course

- feedback facilitates relationship building between lectures and students
- peer feedback
- training in how to peer- and self-assess

Additional material: Concrete actions to ensure students receive useful feedback (2/3)

1. Ensure an appropriate range and choice of assessment opportunities throughout a program of study;
2. Ensure that guidance about assessment is integrated into all teaching sessions
3. Ensure all resources are available to students via virtual learning environments and other sources from the start of a program to enable students to take responsibility for organizing their own learning
4. Clarify with students how all elements of assessment fit together and why they are relevant and valuable
5. Provide explicit guidance to students on the requirements of assessment
6. Clarify with students the different forms and sources of feedback available including e-learning opportunities

Additional material: Concrete actions to ensure students receive useful feedback (3/3)

7. Ensure early opportunities for students to undertake assessment and obtain feedback
8. Clarify the role of the student in the feedback process as an active participant and not as purely receiver of feedback and with sufficient knowledge to engage in feedback
9. Provide opportunities for students to work with assessment criteria and to work with examples of good work
10. Give clear and focused feedback on how students can improve their work including signposting the most important areas to address
11. Ensure support is in place to help students develop self-assessment skills including training in peer feedback possibilities including peer support groups;
12. Ensure training opportunities for staff to enhance shared understanding of assessment requirements

Goals of the learning assignments

1. Reading assignments (two)

- Read the text so that you can discuss it with your peers in your small group

2. Teaching observations (two)

- Observe a class, focusing on a given theme
- Make notes and reflect on the observation
- Give feedback to the teacher observed

3. Group meetings (two)

- Reflect on the previous course session
- Discuss and reflect on the reading assignment
- Plan your teaching observation

4. Code of conduct e-course

- General guidelines of acceptable behaviour

Learning assignments for the next session (1/3)

1. Reading assignment: DL 12.10.2018

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

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

Read **chapter 2, "Teaching according to how students learn"**, p. 16–33.

Read the text so that you can discuss it with your peers in your small group

Learning assignments for the next session (2/3)

2. Teaching observation: DL 12.10.2018

- Visit an exercise class, if possible 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 for the next session (3/3)

3. Group work for the course

- *Start your group work now:* Arrange two meetings with your small group, one before the next class and the other after (do it now).
- 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?

Hand in

- Your notes, reflection and feedback given on the observation
- Notes on the group work; one for the entire group (put the names of the group members on the document submitted)



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

