

PED-9001
**Teaching assistant as a
learning instructor**

Teaching session 5

15.12.2022

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Aalto-yliopisto
Aalto-universitetet
Aalto University



Teaching assistant as a learning instructor (2cr)

Course timeline 13.10.2022-15.12.2022

Pre-assignment
DL 10.10.2022

Session 1:
Thu 13.10.2022
12.15-14.00
(campus)
Introduction

Session 2:
Thu 27.10.2022
12.15-15.00
(campus)
*Interaction and
feedback*

Session 3:
Thu 10.11.2022
12.15-15.00 (online)
*Approaches to
learning, levels of
thinking about
teaching*

Session 4:
Thu 24.11.2022
12.15-15.00
(online)
*Different kinds of
students*

Session 5:
Thu 15.12.2022
12.15-15.00
(campus)
*We as teaching
assistants*

Reading
assignment
& group
reflection

Reading
assignment
& group
reflection

Final
feedback

Individual assignments in MyCourses (e.g., questions for visitors)

Video observation (DL
9.11.) VIDEO

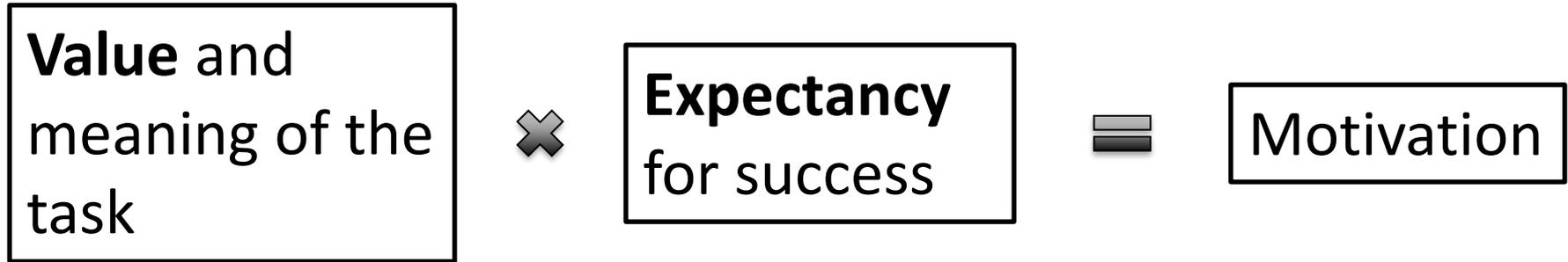
Teaching observation (DL 13.12.)
AUTHENTIC

Individual reflecting & processing during the course

Today's schedule

12:15 - 12:20	Kick off
12:20 - 12:35	Expectancy – value theory of motivation
12:35 - 13:55	Learning café From theory to practice Things an assistant should remember Teaching observations
13:55 - 14:10	Break
14:10 - 14:30	The assistant's bag of tricks
14:30 - 14:45	Aalto Learning Services
14:45 - 15:00	Course feedback in Aalto

Expectancy–value theory of motivation



(Eccles & Wigfield, 2002)

Expectancy–value theory of motivation

Two factors make students want to learn something

1. It (doing the task) has to be important: it must have some *value* to the learner
 - Is the knowledge or skill useful, worth doing?
 - How do I use my time?
 - Am I interested in this topic?
 - Willingness to learn new things
2. The learner needs to *expect success* when engaging the learning task
 - The feeling that I have a chance to succeed if I try?
 - Is it possible to co-operate?
 - Is sufficient instruction and support offered? The feeling that I can ask for help if I need to?
 - Are the tasks at a reasonable level? Is the amount of work suitable?

Both, the high value and the expectancy of success need to be present to engage in an activity

(Eccles & Wigfield, 2002, Biggs & Tang, 2011)

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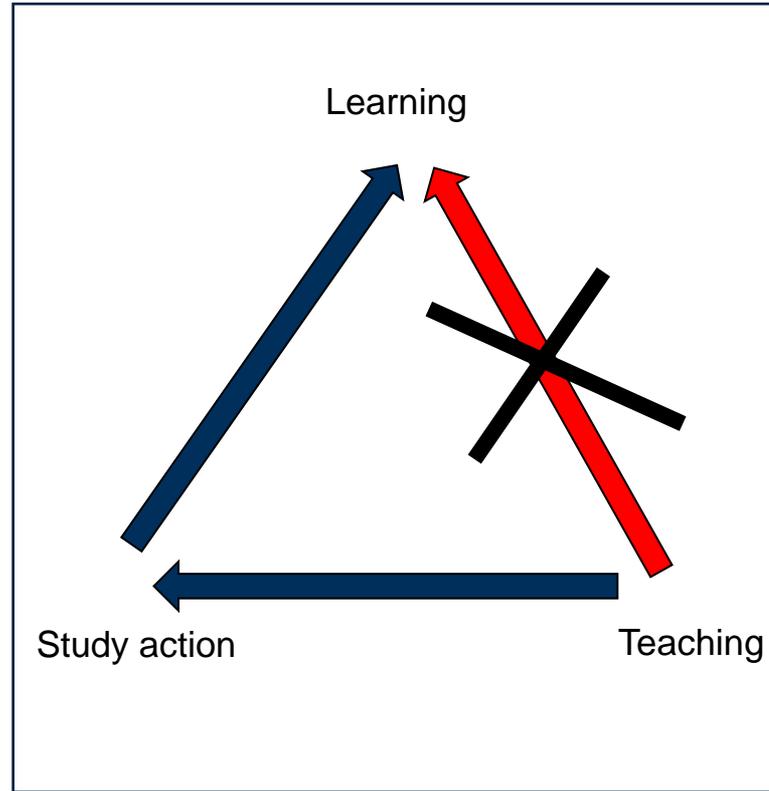
Think about your work as an assistant

■ What motivates you?

- What makes your work **more/less** meaningful?
- What makes it **more/less possible for you to succeed** in your work?
- What can you do to **support your own motivation**?
- What can **other people/the environment do** to support you?

Learning café: Insights from the course

How learning happens

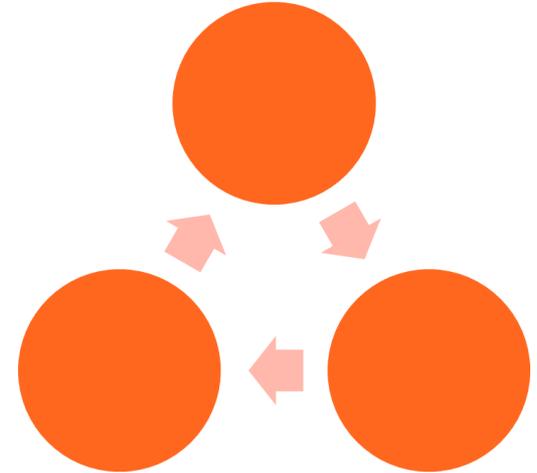


“Learning café”

Learning café is a method for group work [1]

Instructions for the learning café:

- You all are divided into 3 groups / cafés
- Each group / café has a specific topic to discuss and reflect on (15 min/each topic)
- Group moves into a new topic after 15 minutes.
- At each table, every group adds their own notes and takes into consideration the opinions and suggestions made by the previous groups.
- At the last table, pick 1-2 things you'd like to share with others and add it in **TAKE AWAY** section.



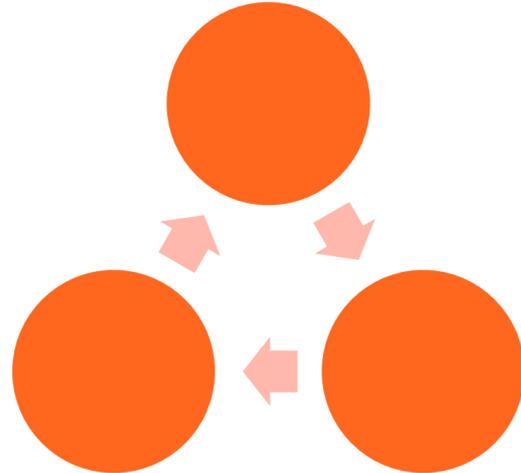
[1] Learning café, Section 4.13 in Hyppönen, Lindén: Handbook for teachers (2009), Chapter 4.13. Available as PDF in English and Finnish, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-248-063-7>

Learning café themes

Three themes (more info on each table)

1. From theory to practice
2. Things an assistant should remember
3. Teaching observations

When you receive the time signal,
move to the next theme in numerical
order: 1 → 2, 2 → 3, 3 → 1



Learning café theme 1: From theory to practice

In this course we have discussed different topics, you have read a pedagogical text book, and you have observed teaching.

- What kind of learning/teaching methods were used on this course?
 - How can you utilize the learnt knowledge/methods in your work as a teaching assistant?
 - Do you see difficulties in applying what you have learnt?
 - What would you like to learn more?
 - Other thoughts, feelings, etc.
 - TAKE AWAY message of the theme **“From theory to practice”** (the last group adds to this):
-

Learning café theme 2: Things an assistant should remember

The teaching assistant has an important role in student's learning process. From your point of view, what should a teaching assistant remember when:

- working with a teacher?
- guiding a student?
- planning an exercise/lab/lecture?
- in the role of teaching assistant representing Aalto University?

-TAKE AWAY message of the theme “Things an assistant should remember” (the last group adds to this):

Learning café theme 3: Teaching observations

You have observed teaching:

Video observation (two videos, *focus on interaction*)

Authentic teaching observation (online/onsite, *focus on student activity and motivation*).

Discussion:

- How did you feel about observing teaching?
- What did you learn from the observations? Any practical tips to share for others?
- Which aspects you found supported students' learning process?
- If you received/gave feedback on teaching, how did you feel about it?
- Something else?

-TAKE AWAY message of the theme “**Teaching observations**” (the last group adds to this):

Learning café wrap-up

Break 14.00-14.15.

The assistant's bag of tricks

Believe that students can

Try always to believe that students can if they want to and try hard. If *you* don't believe they can, it's more likely that they don't either.

Self-fulfilling prophecy:

The students of a teacher who is told their students are very good at something perform better than the students of a teacher who is told their students are very bad at it, even though there is no difference in the students' actual knowledge level.

Some ways to proceed with those who are stuck

Give feedback

- Say something positive about what the student has already done

Ask

- Can you explain how you got here?
- What was your main idea?
- Are there things you are unsure about?

Use peers

- Is there someone in the same situation? Can they share ideas or help each other?
- Try to stay close and listen if they get on track. Give support if they do, keep asking questions if they don't

Something extra

- Is there some extra material they could use?
- Some extra exercises at a more appropriate level?

Next step

- Make sure the students know how to proceed. If they still don't know, help with what to start with.

Tips from a seasoned assistant

At the course level

- **Talk to the course teacher throughout the course**
 - Exercises must be in sync with lectures, problems must serve a purpose (this is the teacher's responsibility, but you should know the purpose too)
 - Remind the teacher if necessary that the students don't know as much as their teacher
 - What does the teacher expect of you as an assistant?
 - Ask for help when you need it (from the teacher, colleagues, previous/other assistants)

Tips from a seasoned assistant

Prepare yourself well before your class

- **Solve the problems yourself even though you have the solutions**
- **Learn the exercise topics as well as you can in the time you have**
 - you don't have to know everything
 - *if you don't know something in class, you could say: "Hmm, that's a tough one. I don't know the answer, but I'll find out and get back to you next time." Prepare an answer for your next class.*
- **Think about what you will say and do in class**
 - how you welcome the students and start the class (ice-breaking is important)
 - any extra information, jokes (remember to tread carefully, jokes about yourself are the safest option)
 - be prepared for the unexpected and to improvise
 - how you interact with different students (the shy ones need you too)

Tips from a seasoned assistant

Content-related things you can do in the class

- **Tell students what you are going to do, or ask the students to choose what you should do in class** (some possibilities are below)
- **Briefly go through the theory relevant for the exercise**
- **Solve an example problem on the board (keep it there) covering all or most of the issues in the exercise problems**
 - don't be afraid to make mistakes
 - consider making an error on purpose (this should serve a purpose)
- **If the solutions have a clear algorithm/procedure, present it**
- **Think of a small related puzzle for the students to think about when possible; return to it at a suitable point during the class**

9 Golden rules for instruction

1. Leave the joy of discovery to the student. Do not give answers but lead subtly towards the solution.
2. There is usually more than one right way of thinking. Do not impose your own solutions.
3. Be supportive, especially when the student has had difficulties.
4. (New) students are shy. Approach them, do not necessarily wait for them to ask for advice.
5. Teaching assistants are not Wikipedias. The students must learn to read the course literature.
6. Teaching assistants do not need to know everything, and they can let the students see this.
7. When evaluating answers, be concise. Underline the parts of the solution that are incorrect and, if necessary, write a short comment. If there is much to be corrected, do not spend time evaluating the assignment, but recommend asking an instructor for help.
8. Having the right idea is not enough. The answer has to be written correctly. The aim is to practice expressing oneself in a precise and reader-friendly way.
9. If in doubt about rejecting a solution, assess if the student will benefit from improving the answer.

Learning services (LES) for teaching assistants



Aalto-yliopisto
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Aalto University



LES for teaching assistants

- **Individual study arrangements**
- **Misconduct and disruptions of student learning**
- **Course practicalities and administration**
- **Pedagogical support**

LES for teaching assistants

Individual study arrangements

- Every Aalto student has the right for individual study arrangements.
- The right to individual study arrangements is granted by the Learning Services of the student's school.

Misconduct and disruptions of student learning

- If you notice or suspect misconduct (like cheating), inform the teacher in charge.
- Teacher in charge will contact the Learning services of your school for further advice (head of academic affairs).

[Individual study arrangements - Student life - Into \(aalto.fi\)](#)

[\(Code of Conduct - Values into practice | Aalto University\)](#)

LES for teaching assistants

Course practicalities and implementation

- Learning services provides support for general course practicalities and course implementation.
- Remember to communicate with the responsible teacher in the course.

Pedagogical support

- Each school has a pedagogical specialist and a specialist of digital learning.
- You can also ask help with any pedagogical issues.

<https://www.aalto.fi/en/services/course-implementation-from-teachers-view>

<https://www.aalto.fi/en/services/course-practicalities>

Course feedback in Aalto





<https://link.webpolsurveys.com/S/8B49885616AD9AF0>

10 minutes

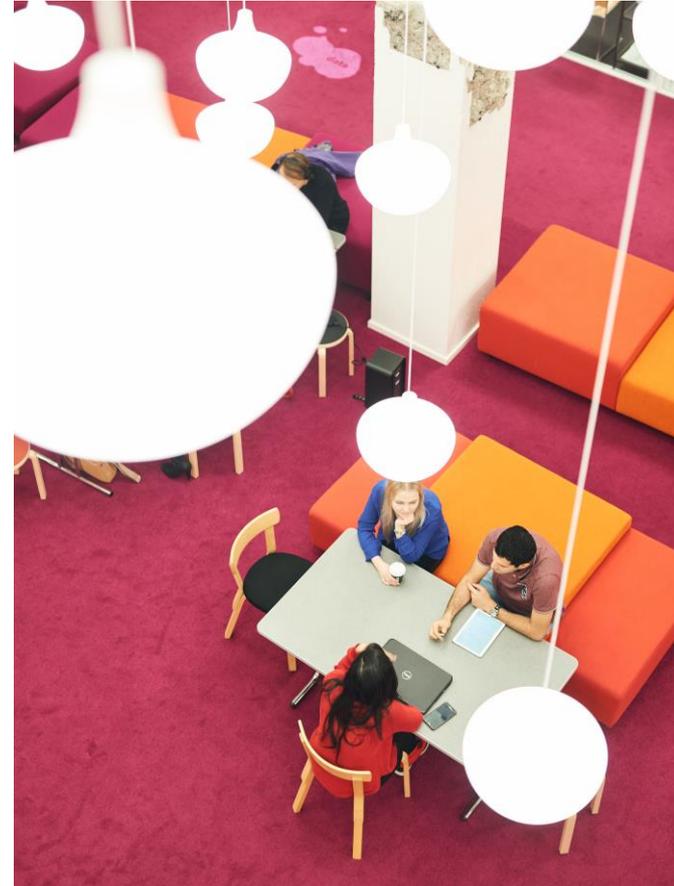
Course description

COURSE DESCRIPTION	
1	Name of the course PED-9001 Teaching assistant as a learning instructor
2	Level of the course The course is elective in Aalto University pedagogical training
3	Teachers in charge Samu Tikkanen, Maura Rata
4	Teaching period 13.10.-15.12.2022
5	Workload 55 hys (2 cr). <ul style="list-style-type: none">• contact teaching 13 hys• learning assignments 19 hys• working in peer groups 8 hys• reflection and independent work 15 hys
6	Osaamistavoitteet Learning outcomes After the course you will <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be able to observe the learning environment from the learning perspective• identify aspects to support students' learning process• describe ways to support students' study motivation• identify your role as a learning instructor
7	Content Main topics in the course: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback• Interaction• Motivation• Approaches to teaching and learning• Different kind of learners
8	Implementation and teaching methods Blended implementation (onsite and online): group works, reading group meetings, expert keynotes, individual reading and writing, information retrieval, reflection
	Assessment Pass/To be complimented
9	Study material Chapters from Innostu ja onnistu opetuksessa/Get inspired! A guide for successful teaching
10	Substitutes for courses N/A
11	Course homepage In Aalto.fi pedagogical courses' pages
13	Prerequisites -
15	Ilmoittautuminen Registration for course Webropol / Aalto.fi
16	Language of instruction English
17	Further information samu.tikkanen@aalto.fi

Learning outcomes for this course

After the course you will be able to

- observe the learning 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



One last reminder

Pass/To be complimented

The course is completed when:

- **All your course work is handed in.**
 - Including substitute assignment if you have missed a session.

If you can't find the substitute assignments, please contact us.

Thank you

**for your active participation,
and enjoy your work as a
teaching assistant!**

Happy holidays!