Teaching assistant as a learning instructor

**Aalto-yliopisto
Aalto-universitetet
Aalto University**

Day 1

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COURSE STRUCTURE

Pre-assignment
DL 7.9.

DAY 1
Interaction and feedback
Thursday 10.9. at 9:00-12:00
(Zoom)

Reading assignment
DL 17.9.

Group reflection on reading assignment
DL 18.9.

Orientation for the Day 2
DL 21.9.

DAY 2
Approaches to learning, levels of thinking about teaching
Wednesday 23.9. at 9:00-12:00
(Zoom)
**Reading assignment
DL 30.9.**

**Group reflection on reading assignment
DL 1.10.**

**Orientation for the Day 3
DL 2.10.**

DAY 3
Different kinds of students
Tuesday 6.10. at 9:00-12:00
(Zoom)

Code of Conduct
DL 27.10.

Orientation for the Day 4
DL 28.10.

DAY 4
Students' study wellbeing: issues related to learning and motivation
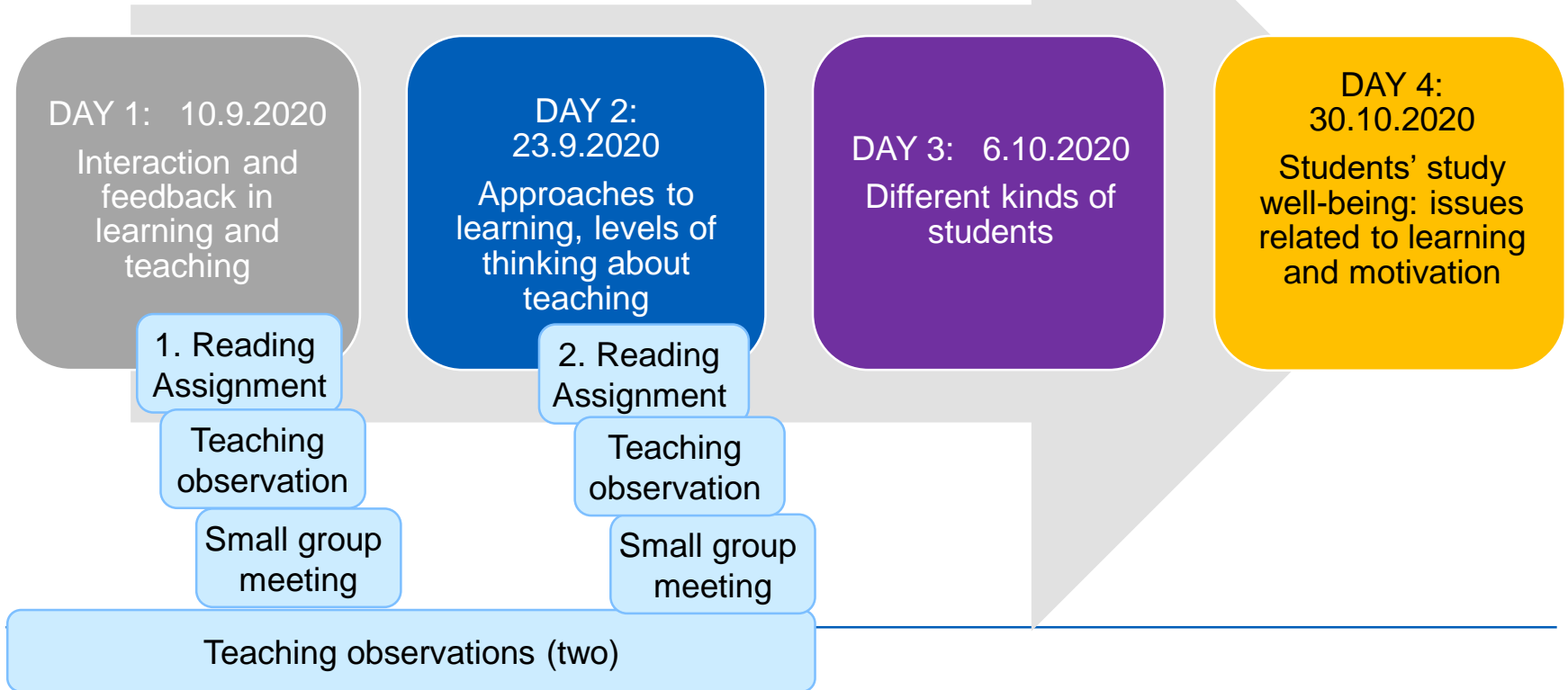Friday 30.10. at 9:00-12:00
(Zoom)

Course feedback
After the last session

Teaching observation 1 & Teaching observation 2
DL 22.9. & DL 5.10.

Course structure

DAY 1: 10.9.2020
Interaction and feedback in learning and teaching

DAY 2: 23.9.2020
Approaches to learning, levels of thinking about teaching

DAY 3: 6.10.2020
Different kinds of students

DAY 4: 30.10.2020
Students' study well-being: issues related to learning and motivation

1. Reading Assignment

Teaching observation

Small group meeting

2. Reading Assignment

Teaching observation

Small group meeting

Teaching observations (two)

Teaching observation

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.

Timetable today

09:00–09:50	Visitor, course assistant Petra Ekroos
09:50-10.00	Break
10.00- 12.00	Course practicalities and getting to know each other
	Group work: "good" course assistant/ teacher
	Break
	Interaction in learning and teaching
	Group work: Feedback
	Learning assignments for the next session and feedback of the day

Learning outcomes for this course

After the course you will be able to

- observe the classroom environment from the learning perspective and identify aspects to support students' learning process

- recognise ways to support students' study motivation

- identify your role as a learning instructor

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 x 2   *6 h*

      c) Reflective write-up   x 2   *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)

Cocktail-party

1. My name:
2. My favourite freetime hobby is…
3. I am interested in teaching because…

"Good" course assistant

Good course assistant?

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

Write down elements or capabilities

(2 minutes individual work).

Ideal assistant (continues in a group)

Group's discussion happens in breakout room and the workspace is in Flinga: https://flinga.fi/s/F9U9F6N

Introduce yourself briefly to each other
Share your ideas with your group members

Which elements are related to each other?

→ **group the elements / capabilities**

→ **name themes…**

Describing a "prototype" of a good course assistant

✓ Describe/ draw the course assistant that has the attributes and capabilities you have discovered

✓ Are there some contradictory expectations for a good assistant?

✓ You can personalize your prototype: Give her/him a name, age, discipline etc.

✓ Be prepared to introduce your work briefly
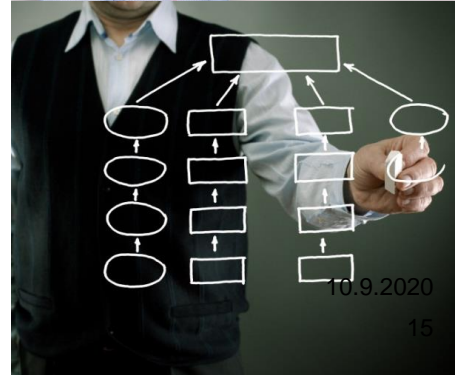
Short break – a cup of coffee?

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.

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

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

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

The conceptions of learning and teaching- where do they come from?

The learning and teaching environment

Teaching methods

Teaching practicies

Guiding skills

Approaches to teaching

Conceptions of teaching and learning

Theoretical knowledge

Self-image

Values

Conceptions of knowledge

Idea of human being

Teaching and learning experiences
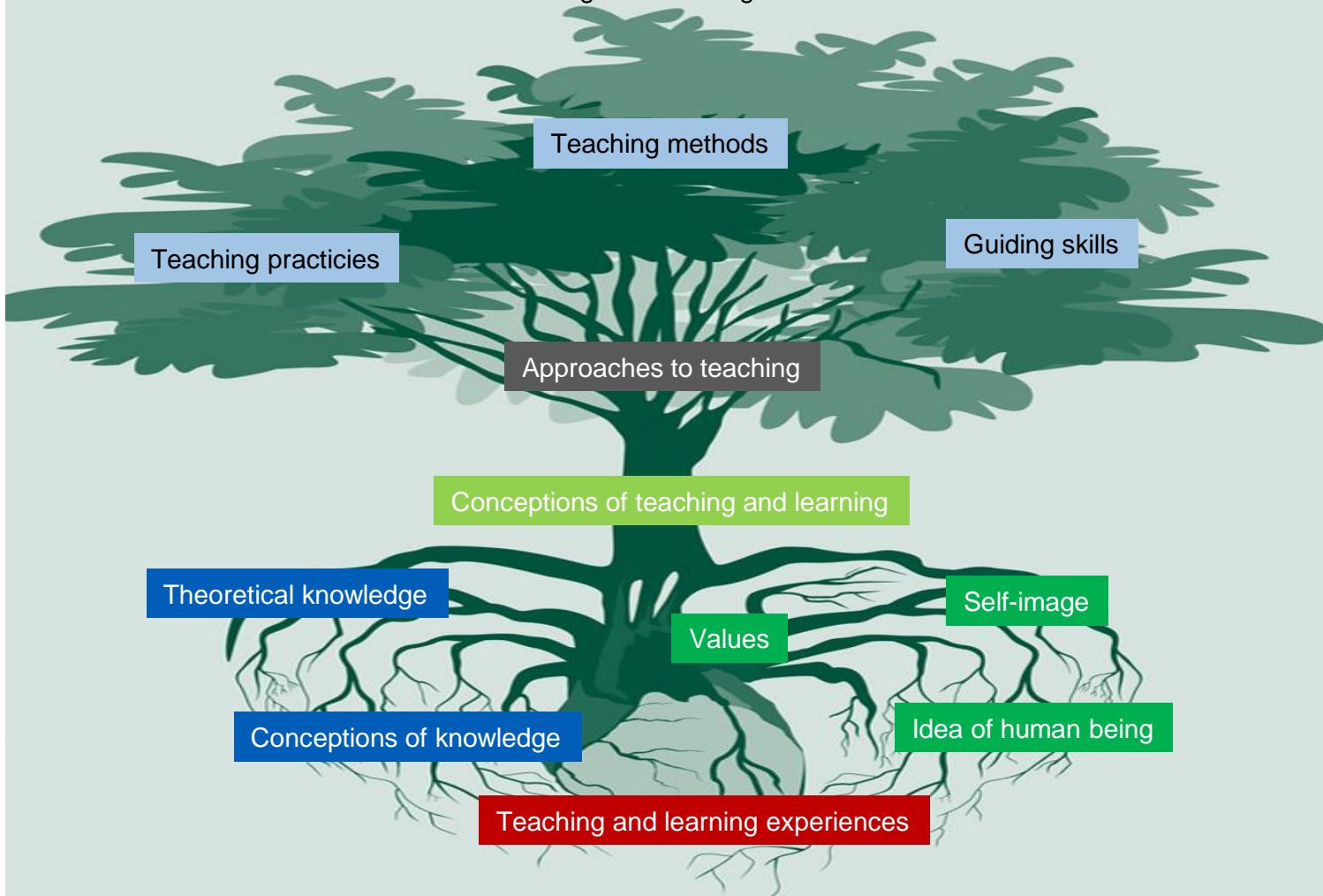
The growth environment: Culture, social background, political atmosphere…

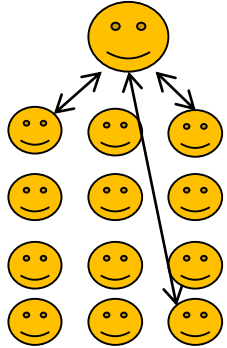# What is interaction? How do we create it?

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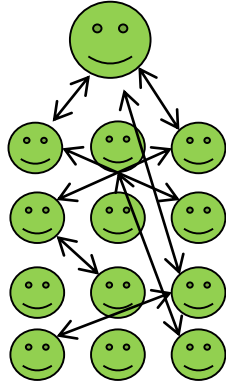Aalto-universitetet
Aalto University
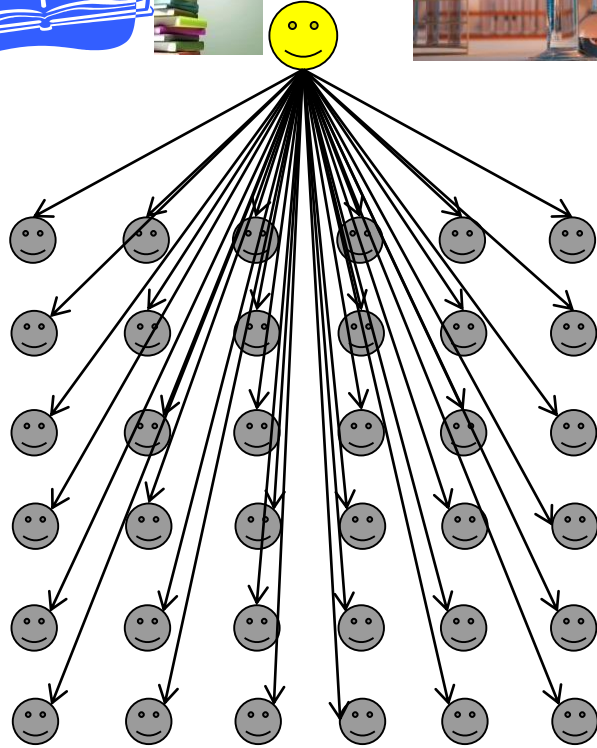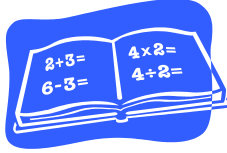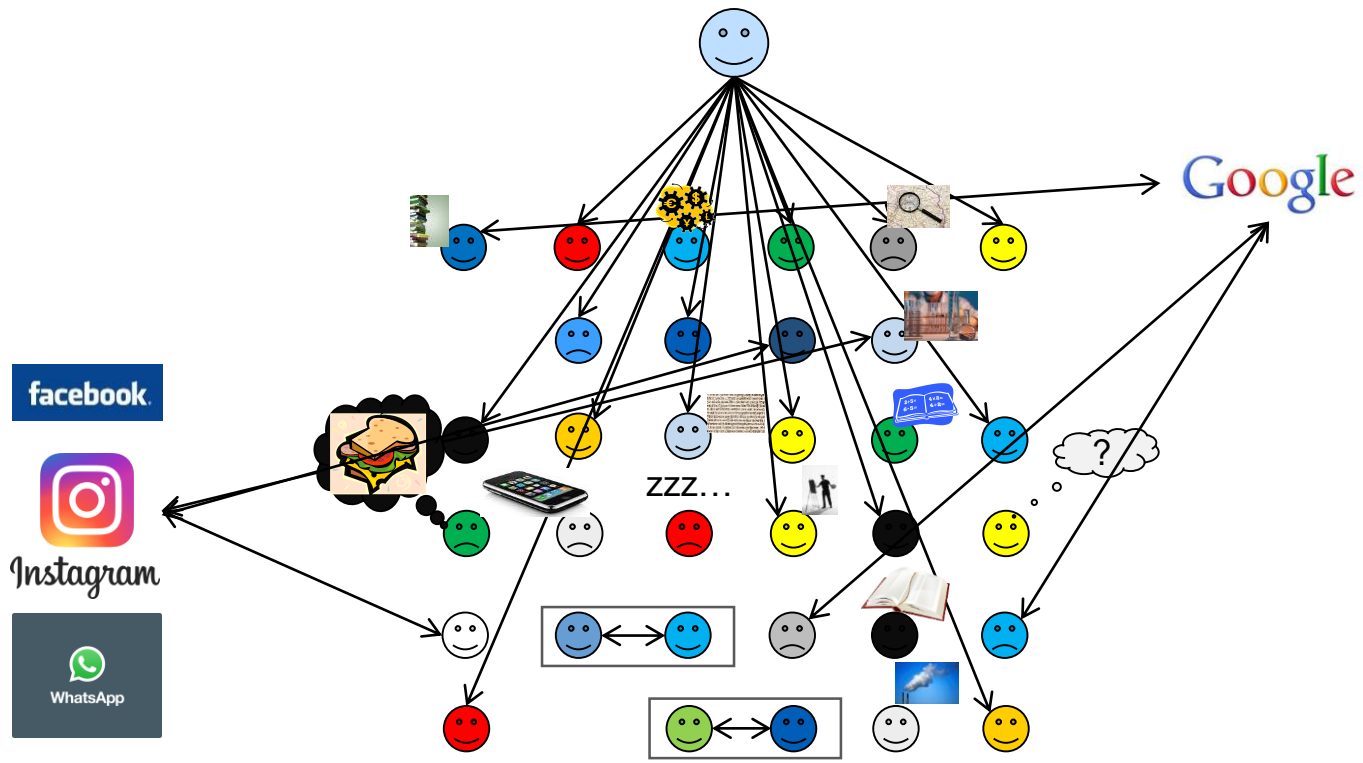
Picture: Miia Leppänen
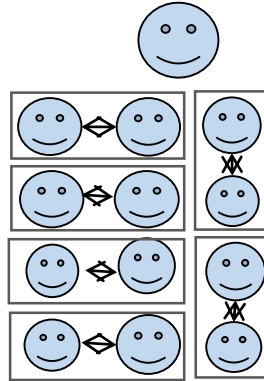
Examples of how to arrange interaction
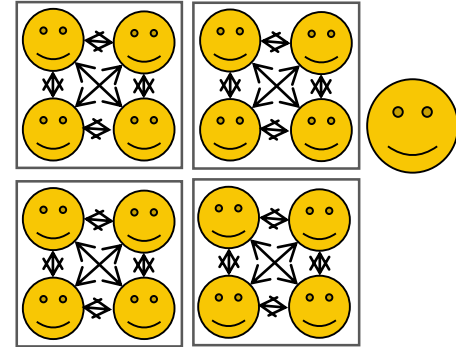
Between teacher and student

Teacher led group discussion

Discussion in pairs

Group discussion; teacher coordinates

Group instruction
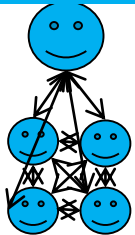
Personal instruction
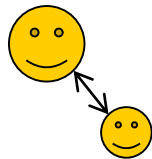
Group discussion, led by the students

?
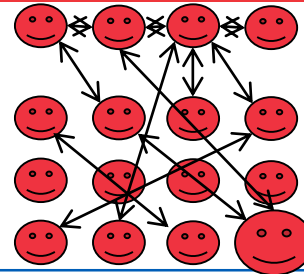
Interaction in teaching: why?

- 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)

Groups for group reflections before Day #2 and Day #3

Groups

Group #1

- Roberto
- Morteza
- Ville-Eemeli
- Aleksi
- Roozbeh

Group #2

- Oya
- Sakira (Seyda)
- Alpo
- Miku

Group #3

- Titta
- Giacomo
- Judit
- Konsta
- Daniel

Group #4

- Anni
- Dariush
- Juho
- Müge
- Jalal

Pros and cons

Teacher makes groups

- **Full control over what kind of groups (similar or versatile backgrounds)**

- **Quick (and dirty)**

- **Everyone is included**

- **Teacher can support by having rules and introduction in contact session.**

Students form on their own

- **Students have freedom to choose, typically friends (no exact need for new rules)**

- **An important criterion: possibility to meet on time**

- **MyCourses has Group Choice activity which makes easier to ask for group members**

Feedback

There are example pairs of constructive and destructive sentences. Read through and list rules of thumb for constructive feedback.

	Constructive	Unconstructive/destructive
"Up to here everything is fine, but can you tell me what happened at this point?"		*"You are not talented enough to do these tasks."*
"As I see, the challenge is to tackle this problem…"		*"This is not the right way to do it."*
"You did this part correctly, and <u>practice</u> this part some more"		*"You failed in this."*
"Can you explain me what was your objective…? How do you think you succeeded with this…?"		*"This was a failure. I was waiting for better performance in this."*
*"This is what **I observed**... This looks like… I think this is…"*		***"This is how it is**. This went like this because you always..."*
*"Do you feel that **you understood** what I meant… I hope **I understood** your question correctly...? Could you elaborate...?"*		*"OK, this is ready. If you don't have any questions, let's carry on."*

	Constructive	Unconstructive/destructive	
Up to here everything is fine, but can you tell me what happened at this point?	Is about an **issue/action**	Is about the **person**	*You are not talented enough to do these tasks.*
As I see, the challenge is to tackle this problem…	Justifies the **views**	Contains **judgements** (good/bad)	*This is not the right way to do it.*
You did this part correctly, and _practice_ *this part some more…*	Is useful for **development**	**Does not** necessarily **benefit** anyone	*You failed in this.*
Can you explain me what was your objective…? How do you think you succeeded with this…?	**Takes into account** the recipient's state of development, situation, ability to receive feedback, etc.	**Does not take** the recipient into account, is given only from the evaluator's perspective	*This was a failure. I was waiting for better performance in this.*
*This is what **I observed**... This looks like… I think this is…*	States **observations**	Makes **subjective conclusions / interpretations**	***This is how it is**. This went like this because you always...*
*Do you feel that **you understood** what I meant… I hope **I understood** your question correctly...? Could you elaborate...?*	**Two-way process**, the recipient has an opportunity to respond	**One-way process,** no chance to answer or reflect	*OK, this is ready. If you don't have any questions, let's carry on.*

What type of feedback have you received?

Recall a feedback session and analyse it with the material:
- 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 (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

Adapted from Boud, D. (1991). Implementing Student Self Assessment. HERDSA
Green Guide. No. 5. Second Edition. Sydney: HERDSA. Revised October 1994.

Additional materials about feedback

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

Evans (2013)

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

Evans (2013), p. 79

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

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…?

Try always to lead the learner to the right direction *by asking*, not telling the right answer.

listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask – listen – ask.....

Learning assignments
for the next session

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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

Learning assignments for the next session (1/3)

1. **Reading assignment: DL 17.9.2020**

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

   <u>Get inspired! A guide for successful teaching</u>

   Section 2 "What generates learning" pp. 9-18, and
   Section 3 "How do I create   an environment that supports learning?", pp. 19-26

   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 22.9.2020

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: DL 18.9.2020**
   - *Start your group work soon:* 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 read text.
   - Submit your notes and reflections in MyCourses (Day 1):
     - *What did you discuss?*
     - *What did you observe?*
     - *What did you think about the article?*

   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?

Please answer in Presemo:
https://presemo.aalto.fi/courseassistant

Thank you!