

Professional development and enhancement of teaching quality : how to integrate individual and institutional actions ?

bernadette.charlier@unifr.ch



UNIVERSITAS
FRIBURGENSIS

DIDACTIQUE UNIVERSITAIRE

did@ctic

A difficult relationship ?

- **A quality expert** : « The imposition of quality had more to do with managing mass higher education than with organizational and professional development » (L.Morley, 2003)
- **A professor** : « The most important challenge for the quality system in which teaching quality is included is to find practices that are meaningful for all the actors involved » (adapted from Gorga, 2009)

Our contribution

1. Clarification of concepts
2. The Fribourg University System
3. Effects on individuals, groups and the organisation
4. Issues and challenges



Clarification of concepts

■ Professional development :

« .. All natural learning experiences and those conscious planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. »

«It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents » (Day, 1999. p.4)

Clarification of concepts

■ Teaching quality

- ^ Often defined at institutional level
- ^ Two conceptions : essentialist or systemic
- ^ A question of power

How to integrate individual and institutional actions ?



UNIVERSITAS
FRIBURGENSIS

DIDACTIQUE UNIVERSITAIRE

did@ctic

The Fribourg system

- Based on needs analysis (2002, 2005, 2008)
- Related to practices and projects (personal projects, communities of practices, observations in the classrooms,..)
- Flexible (4 programs :introduction, certificate, diploma, modules « à la carte »)
- Opened to : experts, inputs from other programs
- Bilingual
- Enhance learning through the uses of ICT



A recent example : CoPs for professors

- Conception, creation and support for communities of practice for professors
- Deduction of quality-related aspects from all communities of practice



Some effects ..

- Did@cTIC certificate and diploma are chosen by assistants and lecturers to :
 - ^ Acquire certification useful for their career
 - ^ Become more confident in their own teaching skills
 - ^ Be recognized as teachers
- Several individual and team projects useful for the programs and departments
- A lot of data on « best practices » shared through the did@cTIC communities of practices and individually reused
- But ... there is little participation of professors

Strength and weaknesses

- Based on needs analysis
- Related to practices
- Focused on clear aims
- Trying to coordinate efforts on e-quality and evaluation
- Well developed teaching evaluation system
- Relations between professional development activities and the teaching quality evaluation
- Internal incentives for teaching quality



Issues and challenges

- Develop a coherent structural approach that takes both actors and structures into account and that translates into practice
- Reinforce a process-oriented approach, based on a systemic quality management concept with great emphasis on stakeholder needs
- Use teaching evaluation as a communication tool between students, professors and the institution
- Use teaching evaluation as a means to document a reflective process and to support professional development



Issues and challenges

- Integrate the concept of professional development in the career management of university teachers
- Integrate more informal learning processes through collaboration on concrete projects inside departments (i.e. programs design and revisions)
- Seek meaning and needs rather than conformity
- Avoid heavy procedures and high workload: “more time to think!”.



Thank you for your questions !



UNIVERSITAS
FRIBURGENSIS

DIDACTIQUE UNIVERSITAIRE

did@ctic