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# **Evaluating teaching in order to foster the professional development of teaching staff**

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# Outline of the presentation

- Evaluation of teaching **AND** professional development
- Evaluation of teaching **FOR** professional development
- Case study of Université de Lausanne:
  - Policies with regards to evaluation of teaching
  - Practices with regards to evaluation of teaching
  - Impact of policies and practices on the professional development of teaching staff and learning experience
- Lessons learned and recommendations

# Evaluation of teaching AND professional development

## **Two types of evaluation systems:**

- Quality control of teacher performance
- Support for professional development of teachers

## **Resistance to evaluation of teaching by students because:**

- Too much emphasis on teaching performance
- Students not competent to judge teaching performance
- Threat to “academic freedom”

## **University teachers as professionals, learning on the job:**

- Based upon experiential learning and reflective practice
- Depends upon intrinsic motivation
- Teachers draw from a variety of sources of information

# Evaluation of teaching FOR professional development

## Four essential principles:

- Confidentiality: - results confidential to the teacher  
- s/he decides what to communicate
- Responsibility: - evaluation process piloted by the teacher  
- decides what and when to evaluate
- Adaptability: - must correspond to the teacher's needs  
- must adapt instruments and procedures
- Reflexivity: - teacher asked to analyse/interpret results  
- various resources at teacher's disposal

# Case study of Université de Lausanne, Switzerland

Medium-size institution (12'000 students / 800 teaching staff)

Founded in 1537; university status in 1890; seven faculties

Specialisation in life, social, and environmental sciences

Teaching staff tenured, self-assessment report every 6 years

VP Quality Assurance & Enhancement responsible for policies related to evaluation of teaching by students

Director of Centre for Teaching & Learning responsible for practices related to evaluation of teaching by students

# Evaluation policies at Université de Lausanne

- Confidentiality: - teachers report **ON** evaluation results in self-assessment report, amongst other dimensions
- Responsibility: - teachers select representative courses and decide at which time to have them evaluated  
- minimum one course every two years
- Adaptability: - teachers can use any of seven standardised questionnaires or add/change/remove questions to fit their needs
- Reflexivity: - teachers provide an analysis of evaluation results in self-assessment report; reflection

# Evaluation practices at Université de Lausanne

- Confidentiality: - evaluation results sent directly to teachers; no copies sent to Deans or Vice-Presidents
- Responsibility: - teacher downloads questionnaire of his/her choice from website and distributes in class
- Adaptability: - teacher chooses which questionnaire to use  
- changes to the questionnaire discussed with CTL staff to ensure validity and reliability
- Reflexivity: - teachers receive guides to interpret results  
- teachers invited to meet with CTL staff if results are below our benchmark of 80%

# Impact on professional development of teaching staff

## **Macro level:** (statistics from teacher participation)

- Major increase in participation level over 10 year period
- 59 teachers participating in 1999-2000; 509 in 2008-09
- More participation than what is required (~ 400 teachers)
- Integration of evaluation teaching practice, commitment

## **Micro level:** (email questions to teachers)

- Awareness of what they are doing, their impact on learning
- Reflection on overall organisation of courses
- Reflection on objectives or learning outcomes of courses
- Dialogue with students about teaching and learning

# Impact on learning experience of students

## **Macro level:** (statistics from evaluation results)

- Proportion of courses over 80% satisfaction rate (2008-09):
  - Course objectives clearly defined 86%
  - Course well structured 87%
  - Personal reflection stimulated 81%
  - Learned a lot from the course 79%

## **Micro level:** (student comments in evaluation questionnaires)

- Before : *“Spend more time on important course notions and give examples. Repeat definitions and essential elements.”*
- After : *“Course is well structured and examples illustrate the content well. In addition, practical work is really useful to truly understand the content.”*

## Lessons learned and recommendations

- Work on changing the institutional culture on evaluation
- Favour multi-level, decentralised policies and practices
- Beware of over-enthusiastic teachers (don't systematise!)
- Build in mechanisms for review of evaluation system
- Clarify links with other professional development schemes
- Manage change with a joint top-down, bottom-up approach
- Repeat -- Explain -- Repeat -- Explain -- Repeat -- Explain

**For further questions**

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