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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