

Session B1 - English papers

'When you win, I lose': Reflections from the field of compulsory teaching development in Higher Education

Program text

This paper reflects on some of the implications of employing problem-oriented project-based learning in its compulsory teaching development program for assistant professors.

Abstract

Like many other countries, Denmark has introduced compulsory teaching development for new Faculty. Danish universities are obliged to offer some form of teaching development for its Assistant Professors, which is usually a 3-year appointment which sometimes but not always ends with the opportunity to apply for promotion to Associate Professor. In application to the position as Associate Professor, whether through internal promotion or external application, the applicant is supposed to attach proof of completion of a teaching development program and a teaching portfolio.

At the university in which I work we implemented in 2016 a new program. For many years, the compulsory program had consisted of 6 core units and 2 elective units, which mostly ran in the shape of day-long courses. The restructure, however, introduced the form of Problem Based Learning that the university utilizes in its entire undergraduate and Master's program namely problem-oriented project-based learning (Andersen and Heilesen, 2015), sometimes abbreviated to PPL and sometimes referred to as 'the Roskilde Model'. In the restructure it was argued that much would be gained from asking Faculty to enact the university's pedagogical approach rather than merely being instructed in it.

In this paper, I wish to offer a few reflections on some of the implications of employing PPL in our Assistant Professor program. Specifically, I will focus on the feedback from one of the participants to show some of the dilemmas we, as providers of this program, find ourselves in. One of the hallmarks of PPL in undergraduate education is its ability to engage and motivate students. However, what does that mean when it is employed in the development of Faculty, who have many competing and complex challenges on their time? The discussion in the paper centers on the notion of 'fairness' and how the university organization need to respond to the dilemmas presented here if it wishes to create ethical and sustainable academic development.

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Literature

Andersen, A. S. & Heilesen, S. (ed.) (2015). The Roskilde Model. Springer