

Strategic anchoring of learning and teaching development

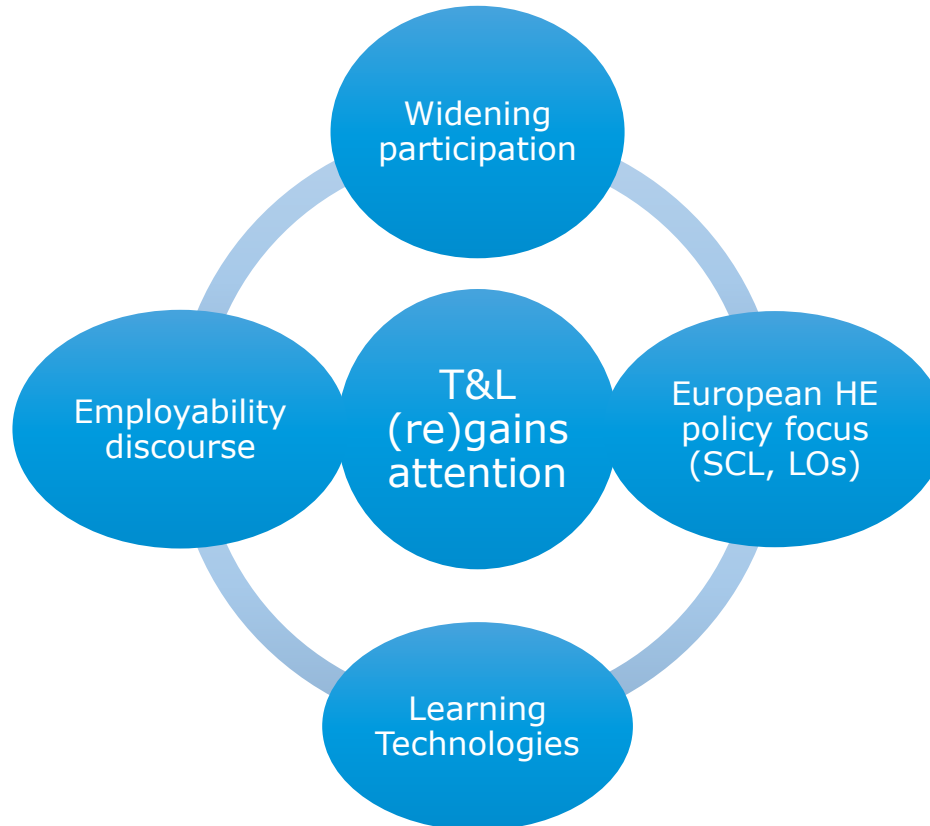


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The context



Learning and Teaching Strategies

- Purposes/Scopes mentioned in the LTS:
 - Provide a framework/a shared direction for T&L – ensure institutional coherence
 - Link strategic areas - take forward strategic goals
 - Make efforts to enhance T&L visible - articulate the University's commitment to T&L
 - Make basic assumptions on T&L explicit
 - Create a particular pedagogic identity
- Typical structural elements:
 - Period of validity
 - Introduction/Context: with references to other institutional strategies
 - Aims and aspirations
 - Action plans
 - Measurable Targets only in 5 LTS

Meanings of T & L in Learning and Teaching Strategies

- Sample Composition:
 - 34 strategies, 8 countries
 - Publicly available at the institutions' homepages
 - Inclusion criteria:
 - *Learning and/or Teaching* in the title
 - *Strategy/strategic, policy or plan* in the title
- Research questions:
 - Which institutionalised and shared perceptions of T&L are such policy or strategy documents actually based on?
 - What different, and potentially conflicting, meanings of T&L can be found on the level of the policies' ,underlying assumptions' ?
 - What are the roles attributed by LTS to the main stakeholders (faculty, staff, students, etc.) in the structures and processes related to teaching and learning?

Sample overview

Country	N°	Universities
UK	16	Aston, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Canterbury, Cardiff, Durham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Gloucestershire, Huddersfield, Leicester, Sheffield, Surrey, UCL, Ulster
Australia	5	RMIT (Melbourne), Adelaide, Macquarie (Sydney), Queensland (Brisbane), James Cook University (Townsville)
Ireland	4	Limerick, Galway, Cork, Maynooth
Germany	3	Duisburg-Essen, Mainz, Ilmenau
New Zealand	3	Massey University (Auckland), Wellington, Canterbury NZ
Denmark	1	CBS
Netherlands	1	University of Amsterdam
Iceland	1	Reykjavik
Total	34	

Method: Formal coding and hermeneutical reconstruction

Data:

„Natural“ data, i.e. the material is not co-constructed by the researchers

Selection based on principles of theoretical sampling and saturation (Grounded Theory)

Analysis:

Multi-step procedure involving the coding of the formal characteristics of each TLS as well as a reconstruction of the latent patterns of meaning of „teaching and learning“

The materialistic frame: Learning as use of resources

Learning is framed as a matter of the right infrastructure which are organised in „teaching and learning arrangements“. Teaching means to provide ample of different resources, knowledge is a commodity to be consumed. Students need to make use of opportunities, but are „supported“ by the institution (most notably its service units)

The instrumentalist frame: Learning as a means to an end

Learning is framed as preparation for the learners` future life and career. Teaching means to support skills development („re-skilling“ and „up-skilling“). Students are trained for the „real life“ and the necessary skills that are „defined“ by the institution.

The extra-institutional frame: Learning as an occurrence

Learning is framed as something that „happens“ anywhere and anytime, but usually outside of the university. Teaching is bound to the seminar-room and a fixed schedule. Students need to be allowed to choose the time and place of their learning – the university abandons its role and function as an educational institution.

The transformative frame: Learning as changing

Learning is framed as personal development far beyond the acquisition of skills or knowledge. Learning is very much regarded as transformation of one's self – which requires spending enough time in the system. There is no corresponding teaching notion.

The regulatory frame: Learning as an outcome

Learning is treated as the measurable and scalable result of a process that can be regulated but not fully managed by the institution – responsibility lies with the students. Teaching is one of the context-factors that can be regulated. The institution aspires to international standards and „high quality“.

Teaching & Learning Strategies and the absence of teaching

What is present: „Why“ and „What“

- Frequent mentioning of graduate attributes and mindsets
- Focus on conditions for teaching and learning (curricula, infrastructure, services)
- Issues that need to be dealt with (e.g. equity, sustainability, employability, new technologies)

What is absent: „who“ and „how“

- No mentioning of teaching methodologies, pedagogical and didactic concepts
- No explicit definitions of teaching and learning
- No references to teachers as actors: teachers as well as students do not appear in active roles in the LTS but as passive recipients of the action

Implications for practice

- Bring in...
 - ... the „How“
 - Provide a pedagogical framework
 - Include definitions and recommendations instead of buzzwords (e.g. student-centered learning)
 - ... the „Who“
 - Define the teachers' and the students' roles
 - Explain expectations of teachers and students
 - Make responsibilities explicit

Example: Uppsala University

1.2. Activity-Promoting Forms of Teaching

The University's Role

1.2.1. Choice of teaching forms will be guided by their capacity to stimulate student activity, promote in-depth learning and encourage cooperation. Forms of teaching must be varied, so that certain types of students are not consistently favoured or disfavoured. Teaching will afford students room for individual reflection, processing of reading and critical thinking, as well as for discussions with teachers and fellow students for the purpose of acquiring, broadening and deepening knowledge.

Students will be offered training in collecting and evaluating information.

Executive responsibility: The teacher

Enabling responsibility: The Chairperson of each faculty board

The Students' Role

Take responsibility for their own learning and contribute to that of their fellow students.

Cooperate with and show respect for all fellow students and teachers.

Work on the course materials individually and together with fellow students.

Participate actively and contribute to discussions and group work.

Reflect systematically on how they learn and develop good study habits and techniques.

Practice collecting information. Make use of the university libraries' services.

Implications for practice

- Bring in...
 - ... relevance for the stakeholders
 - Involve teachers and students in the development process
 - Highlight relevance for the daily business of teachers and students
 - ... evidence
 - Include measurable targets
 - Promote evidence-based teaching
 - ... the implementation process
 - Make responsibilities explicit
 - Be realistic and focused

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If you are interested in
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