Responding to feedback on teaching

All your brilliant ideas

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Opportunities for development

Update reading list (quick win)

> *It *could* be a quick win. Many find this quite a daunting task!*
> — LINDSAY JORDAN

Separating teaching from "real work"

Stephanie is presented as a professor on what we'd call the research pathway, but it's hinted that she doesn't consider teachin as "real work", which might be rooting some of the issues.

> *i read it more as teaching isn't her primary focus*   — ANONYMOUS

> *It's fair that it might not be a primary focus for lots of academics, but it's still real work, the separation could be harmful and lead to reluctant teaching?*   — ANONYMOUS

> *I completely agree about the separation. I think she could be unconsciously communicating to students that it is separate and less important work. Whereas a more interesting approach might be to see how the could feed into each other.*   — ANONYMOUS

Go through assessment with students - don't expect them to engage with handbook onlyy

Finding ways to test & check student understanding

Inclusive teaching

Understanding the importance of 'inclusive teaching' and that it does not mean 'spoon feeding'

Some thoughts:

1. Make materials available in advance

2. Plan and run a session on the assessment process with a Q&A – consider what is required and give students an opportunity to look at the assessment, break it down, discuss, practice? And clarify queries.

3. Run a session on the value of self and peer assessment

4. Scaffolding – not just 'dumping' information but building it up in chunks and ensuring students know why things are happening and have an opportunity to ask questions.

Checking in regularly to confirm understanding and theory which maybe quite heavy and "boring"

Repetition as teaching tool

Understanding that repetition is vital in teaching – having explained the assessment process in the handbook is not enough + some students do not understand the language of assessment terminology

accessibility and diversity learning

Her assumption that if you don't understand its because you don't attend is a bit wild. She probably could do some work around understanding learning styles and adapting materials accordingly

Include some of the techniques she has seen in other lessons she has observed

Improve information presentation design

more visual/engaging, simplified/structured, dynamic/relatable

Teaching rather than demonstrating knowledge

Stephanie could consider catering to the student group rather than trying to appear 'intelligent' or trying to perform. Catering knowledge to the actual students in front of her might be required

Using sessions for discussion and debate rather than transmission of content

disability awareness

Some students need the material before the class as they may need extra time to prepare etc.

Find ways to take more ownership of the evaluation process as a tool, rather than a departmental requirement. Understanding it as a research tool for own practice will make it easier to have strategies for response that don't feel imposed. E.g. if she had evaluated earlier (early/mid-point) there would have been less surprise and more space to build on feedback.

1)Stephanies ability of how to research at a complex level
2)What skills can she share with preparing her research for publication
3)What is her network how can they be integrated in to her teaching

Double check with students regularly if they're still on board with the whys and how's of the assignments. Reiterate the plan and the reasons behind certain "boring" tasks.

bias

She seems quite bias or prejudgemental

What does she mean by 'spoon feeding'?
She can also take on board suggestions from the students as constructive. Ask them to bring in texts they find interesting, explain the rationale behind her method of asking students to assess each other.

Check a range of diverse resources is allowing students to have access to information in different ways, not just diverse as in different forms, but also representing diversity in the resources.

Students are not researchers:

Stephanie comes from a research background and this is the only course she is teaching. Often research and teaching overlaps with each other for senior academics. She needs to put herself into the shoe of the students and simplify things from their perspective.

feed information on learning outcomes into teaching practice. It may not be enough to just put this crucial info in the course documentation and assume students will read and/or understand it

Make the classes more interactive

Rather than preaching from the pulpit. Makes the sessions interactive by asking students what they think. What should they be reading. Discuss conentious issues.
Have different teaching aids like videos.

be more inclusive and consider accessibility

consider being more inclusive with presenting information from the handbook, a student remarked the handbook was boring.

Actually, have a different starting point and believe that students want to learn and are genuine instead of lazy, arrogant etc.

use a variety of teach styles and methods, that allow students to interact with content rather than just listen or read information

Creating more student-led opportunities but explaining clearly why this is an integral part of the students learning at university

Her lessons need to be more interactive and learner centred

Student feedback is crucial.

I always ask students to fill out feedback forms after technical workshops, and I have adapted them to make them better based on these forms. Constructive feed back is good for the students, and good for the teachers. Stephanie took it too personally.

scaffolding

I feel Stephanie could be more explicit in why she thinks things are important. For example trying peer assessment. She could be clearer why students are doing this.

practicing transparency with students

students did not fully grasp the full value of engaging in assessments and 'they were fed up with being used as 'guinea pigs' or being 'experimented on'

practising transparency to explain value or process can lead to a healthier discussion and perhaps prompt changes in departments practice

Go on an up to date course

Better to be objective

Teaching might need to be objective. Utilising own research is not a bad thing but too focus on their own research make lose the aim for teaching for student sometimes.

Listen to students

Use what they have found useful from other lecturer and apply it to her teaching or methodology. What she thinks the students need is not necessarily what they want.

Tips to overcome her defensive reaction

re-evaluate 'irritatingly low scores'

Stephanie could consider why these scores were low - are the students struggling? this could help to enhance her teaching practice

Speak to others, e.g. lecturers, tutors, to better understand what is actually happening - get outside support

Changing her view of critique and feedback not as a personal attack but an opportunity for growth which will benefit both her students and her own work in the long run

Get inspiration from other lecturers - through observation / discussion

Don't take it personally

Learn not to take students feedback personally but to understand that they have a reason why they do not understand something or have other personal issues

Consider the situation from the students' point of view – try to see it as an opportunity to learn a new skill, rather than an inconvenience.

Ask a colleague to feedback to her on things gradually, of her choosing

Design her own questionnaire and/or talk to her students about what they find useful and what they need.

Employing outside support ie peers and colleagues for inspiration and to gain a better and meaningful understanding of what is happening within her class.

recognise emotions

step back from the feedback and come back to it once emotions have gone down a bit, when it's easier to be more objective

Implementing changes based on the student feedback can actually make the teaching experience more her as well as them!

Be more prepared

Ask for feedback more regularly so it does not come as a surprise at the end. Act on issues as they arise rather leaving to the end of the unit

Understanding that implementing a more beneficial and enhanced teaching methods will actual often reduce her workload on both short and long term

> "*She certainly did not have the time to spend ages rewriting the course with her research workload.* " — ANONYMOUS

> *how can short periods of reflection offer an alternative to completely re-writing content so that tweaks can be made to session content.* — ANONYMOUS

Evaluate at points throughout so that you can build trust with students and respond to their needs.

Empathy

Honestly imagine herself in the students position

Removing herself from the equation

Imagining someone else had recieved the feedback - how would she advise them to navigate it

Take a pause, don't invalidate her reaction but also allow time to percolate rather than avoid. Get inspired by looking around at other ways, or at what is inspiring to her.

Speak to the students about what they think they need. Don't assume as the lecturer you know everything about where your students are at in terms of learning.

Think of how to break down the text and discuss what value it holds for the students and why?

readjust her perspective so she doesn't take comments personally but views criticism as developmental for her teaching practice and for her students' progress

Shift the focus back to students and their needs. Research is important but benefits students mainly in an indirect way.

A clear set of questions in the questionnaire that address the knowledge transfer and not delivery to mark her success against the crit

Implementing ideas or processes from her 'real' work into teaching session

To make her sessions more relatable and help students understand the why

there's space for both styles of teaching - charismatic and more traditional...both have their value and advantages/disadvantages

understand that as educators we are required to keep up to date with new methods of teaching and content.

practising reflection and aligning her skills

Stephanie didn't consider teaching as a job it was almost a task to complete
understanding the value of the intersection of her roles could help with feeling better about the teaching elements and aspects of the role

Keep an open mind

Take the feedback as being constructive and use to improve your practice

Think not to be personal. And at least, half of teaching need to be provide for the student.

What are the questions we can play with?

It is interesting to see that there is an underlying hierarchy in which research is prioritised over teaching as more relevant and important to career building as an academic. (I am sure most of us are familiar with this hierarchy...)

playing with the idea of boring or boredom when reading

Should she teach?

The assumption that having knowledge equips you for teaching....
She doesn't seem to especially enjoy it or care that much

interplay between professional opinion and academic fact and the place of an observer to judge that in teaching efficacy

'letting students know where I am coming from'

Is this important for students to know, or does this lead them into a way of thinking? e.g. if I recite this information back to tutor I'll get a good mark.

Is it the position of tutors to create conditions to allow students to reflect on where they are coming from

I'm wondering if Stephanie being defensive is related to underlying personal challenges, or if there are structural / operational issues that influence her behaviour ...

Why are the students finding it "boring" - it's quite a generalised catch-all term. It could be the delivery, or it could be that the content is quite dense and could be broken down

Is she a teacher or a researcher?

Unfortunately in academia one needs to teach when taking research role. Often times when a researcher is not succeeding in getting grants they get "downgraded" to teaching only as punishment. None of that is good for the students or staff needing to fulfill a role they haven't exactly prepared for — ANONYMOUS

totally agree with the comment above. there is a structural problem here, of how higher education functions and how they fund themselves — ANONYMOUS

The approach of Max - the challenging nature of his teaching style and would appear to also not have a growth mindset?

Why does she teach?

What is a lecturer's job?

What is the purpose of evaluations?

What do teaching and learning mean and how do we know if they have happened?

Is charisma gendered?

Why is research valued more highly than teaching?

How do we break down thick texts and get students to engage with them?

why shouldn't she or the students question - critically and fairly - the government's healthcare agenda?

Should teachers bring their political personal perspectives to their teaching?

How can we communicate better about teaching in higher education?

Why can Stephanie and Max not have a more open conversation about their teaching approaches? Is it that there is no real standard of higher education so everyone develops their own way of doing things and therefore becomes entrenched in their personal method over time?

Could the department be doing more? Neither Stephanie nor Max seem particularly receptive to feedback, and the language indicates passive relationship with an imposed procedure, rather than a culture of support, reflection and practice development.

How do you generate a critical discussion in class about the value of a piece of writing?

peer observation and assessment are useful exercises to help understand assessment criteria (and potentially a lot of fun) - I wonder if the framing of the exercise is what made her students so annoyed about "being guinea pigs"

As her teaching is research methods, and she is a researcher- could she not get them to sit in her shoes, so they get real experience and she gets them to solve some of her research problems

SPACE - the first frontier! Where is the space in Stephanie's teaching for inclusivity and accessibility? Where is the space in Max's teaching for students to bring their own ideas and thinking into discussion and assignment?

context

Has she considered the difference between church sermon, speaking at a conference , writing a research paper and teaching. Because in 3 out of 4 the standard mode is very person standing (or whose name is) at the front imparting their knowledge

The acceptance of the charismatic teacher can come from the fame they already carry.

Support

How can Stephanie be better supported with her teaching? She seems to have little extra time amongst everything else she has going on

what social pressures, assumptions, and personalities effect our teaching practice?

Being a researcher expert in one field doesn't necessarily makes us good teachers. What pedagogic principles and practices shall researchers learn?

What are the priorities of teaching?

What does shoe want her students to develop after sessions with her? Maybe she hasn't defined her values as a teacher

What if you were the student in your own class?

Don't be afraid of being honest during observations.

Providing constructive feedback isn't a personal attack on someone's teaching. It is there to help you see what you are doing well on, and what you could do to make it better. Don't take feedback personally if its not perfect.

Talking TO students, rather than AT them

I found the text a simplified judgemental a non-realistic overview. Stephanie is described as a self-centred woman doing her research and not paying attention to the feedback. If she were so, her opportunity would be for me to have an open class discussion at the end of the lecture to allow the student to assimilate the theoretical information in their way. But to my knowledge, Stephanie does not exist, I have never met a

Stephanie and never will: all the people I met always were very student-centred. The university demands that no one has any time to do research and almost to prepare sessions. The university regulation of space and timetable barely allow the classes to be performed, never mind adding discussion sessions. These are added, but the complaint becomes different the following year. The reality is that institutions should be free and not a marketplace where students feel they are buying a product (I,e a fixed MA rather than a grade collated by a different chosen unit. This way, both Stephanie and the student would have the choice to pick what suits them best and select their preference. So Stephanie certainly is an option, and she can sue them. Still, they will probably all backfire another way, and she will just be monitored about something else without having the peace of mind to try her best but react rather than act on her will.

Where does the institutions responsibility come in?

role reversal with the students

Is she given the time and space by the institution to properly implement and research different teaching methods?

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