

PLA Learning and Teaching: Briefing rapporteurs

Kristel Jakobson, ESU

Let me start off by expressing my sincere gratitude for being able to be a part of this peer learning activity. It has been great seeing the national contexts, the opportunities provided and the challenges still ahead!

It's increasingly hard to have this sort of an overarching holistic view on the topic, as the matters are of national contexts, mostly related to local contexts and regional traditions. However, as a student, of course some aspects are universally understood - for example inclusion of students in the processes of monitoring and evaluation, but at the same time, it also very much varies from student to student, country to country.

I gather from the sessions we've had that Learning and teaching as a part of the governing culture in our institutions, needs a change. But then again, it should be in constant change. There shouldn't even be an understanding that the culture or a habit, tradition cannot be changed. Just because something has never been done before, doesn't mean that it won't work. So to steal a sentence from Tammy - enhancement should be a key element in all of the topics we discuss. And partly - I guess that's why this PLA session is happening. - to get a better understanding and gather best practices. I think there are quite many here in the room today.

Even though the cultural aspect was mentioned on several occasions, it's of most importance to note that the institutions, our higher education institutions do carry that culture of improvement, of analysis, evaluation, teaching and learning themselves. It is ours to influence.

Of course that all takes time. Just as yesterday, I started thinking about the very best practises of student involvement from the perspective of ESU, I did realise that there's still a long way to go. Because in an ideal world, we would have students involved in all matters that influence their education; in an ideal world the teachers wouldn't be only academics but also teaching professionals to ensure the smooth functioning of the teaching process; also in an ideal world all students would excel in their studies without any complications. However, that is an idealistic world.

But in the real world we're faced with many different challenges in reaching that ideal. For example the 21st Century skills. They cannot be simply a phrase taken from a document, but instead, making sure students are involved when defining them, is truly the key for providing a proper education that not only serves the society, but also the student, the learner, the future leader, the future expert in the field. So today's presentations on the future outlooks of higher education studies, was thrilling. Also, of course, skills for post covid might just be the ones complementing the 21st century skill sets. Fortunately or unfortunately, we have to adapt to the new reality and make sure the students who are taught, the science that is done, is up to it's standards, up to it's task of developing the society, educating the students. That's where I'd maybe highlight once again the slide from the Norwegian presentation about having these two cultures: science and teaching. How are we to make sure that the two don't collide, instead collaborate? I think it's the key element for obtaining 21st Century skills.

But also celebrating teaching as a skill on its own. It is sometimes forgotten that a good deed can go a long way. That is to say that thanking someone for doing their job in a successful, progressive manner, is important. But also involving the students in the process is truly valuable. As was the case with the Irish example, it ought to be celebrated that the students are involved to a high degree in the rewarding and highlighting of the best practices. Because in the end, there's two roles in the auditorium: the teacher/academic and the students. And we must not forget that the academic is

there to pass on knowledge to the students, thus better to evaluate this process than the student itself, in addition to the self reflection of the teacher.

I would conclude on an optimistic note. Thank you for exchanging the ideas, thank you for highlighting and inspiring good practices. It makes me look forward to the future of teaching and learning fondly as I see it in capable hands.

Thank you!