

# **Developing pedagogies as means for improving quality:**

## **Learning and Teaching as a European priority**

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1. The current policy context for HE learning and teaching
2. What does it mean in terms of:
  - University pedagogy development?
  - Teaching staff development?
3. The EFFECT project
4. A few (tentative) conclusions

# Changing role of university learning & teaching

- Over the past decade, efforts from European systems and HEIs to reform HE
- EU Modernisation agenda and Bologna process with emphasis on:
  - ✓ Learning outcomes & skills orientation (entrepreneurship skills, generic skills, research skills...)
  - ✓ Student-centred learning
  - ✓ Need to enhance access and retention
  - ✓ Overall quality of higher education
- Growing importance // Growing numbers of students // Increasingly diverse student body
- Studying in early stage for a lifetime “package”  
vs accumulating smaller “packages” of learning as life progresses, needs arise, etc.: change of paradigm?

# Changing role of university learning & teaching

This leads to questions:

- What are the skills that graduates would need?
- How can universities/ teachers demonstrate their role of proactively set the goals for learning (not limited to “responding to what labour market requires”)?
- How do we define/describe higher education learning and teaching?
- What could “quality teaching” exactly mean?

# L&T as a priority in policy making

In the Bologna Ministerial Communiqué, Yerevan, May 2015:

« *Enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching is the main mission of the EHEA.* »

## Promoting pedagogical innovation

Student-centred learning environments

Digital technologies

Link between teaching, learning and research

Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship

Effective learning activities

Enhancing academics' teaching competences

Students and stakeholders involved in curriculum design and QA

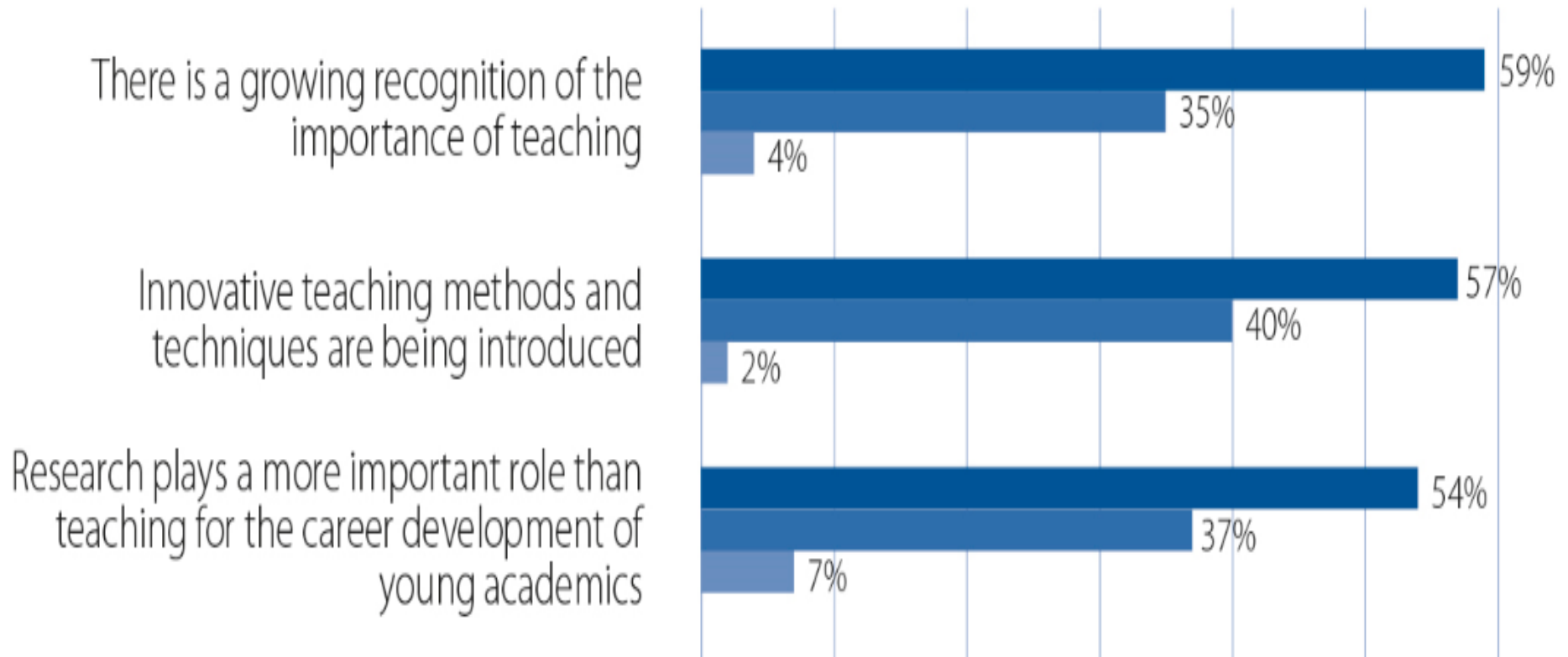
# L&T as a priority in policy making

- In the ESG 2015: focus on **learning and teaching** in HE, including:
  - ✓ Learning environment
  - ✓ Links to research and innovation
  - ✓ Student-centred learning
- Link between QA and academic quality: ESG 1.2 and 1.3
  - ✓ Example of an area where the expertise is located outside a QA unit: importance of cooperation between different institutional actors // institutional (primary) responsibility in QA
    - Learning outcomes
    - Student-centred learning

## Institutional approaches to L&T (Trends 2015)

- Teaching and role of teaching staff as priorities for HEIs
  - Most European universities have developed or are developing teaching enhancement initiatives.
  - However: are those efforts mainstreamed? Are they effective?
    - ✓ Most institutions (70%): voluntary courses for staff training
    - ✓ Some institutions : mandatory courses
    - ✓ Differences between staff categories?
    - ✓ Differences between institutions of the same system
    - ✓ Differences between countries
- => at the discretion of the institution

## Enhancement of teaching and the role of academic staff



*Trends 2015, Figure 22:*

*Do the following statements reflect the current situation at your institution?*



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# Innovative teaching vs effective teaching?

- “Innovation methods in L&T”
  - ✓ Often used as synonym for digital learning/e-learning, but goes beyond
  - ✓ What exactly is “innovative learning”? What can bring a CHANGE? Any approach other than auditorium style (flipped classes, PBL, etc.)?
  - ✓ On contrary, some “old” teaching can still be appreciated
  - ✓ “Effective teaching”?
- What are the criteria for effectiveness?
  - ✓ Quality-assured?
  - ✓ Peer recognition and evidence => not that easy to assess!
  - ✓ Sustainable and transferable => role of institutions
- « University L&T » is not monolithic: students experience several L&T methodologies in the course of their studies
  - ✓ Their experience will be « blended » anyway

# Where does research sit in/with L&T?

- Relation with research important, but several things are understood by that:
  - Research-led teaching (how research feeds teaching)
  - *Researching* teaching (research on L&T)
  - Teaching how to research (initiating students to conduct research)
- Pedagogical research (research on L&T)
  - How to transfer it in practice?
  - Credibility of pedagogic reform
  - Researching institutional practice
  - Role of teaching/learning labs
  - Interaction with Department of Education Sciences?

# The impact of digital learning

- Changing the teaching profession?
  - ✓ Teachers from “knowledge provider” to “learning coach”?
  - ✓ Visibility to teaching
- Student centred-learning + more and more diverse student body
  - ✓ Learn at own pace, independant from place & time, repeat, learn at own interest
  - ✓ Different learning needs, styles and knowledge gaps
  - ✓ Mass higher education, working/parent students, continued professional development
- Educational approach
  - ✓ Flipped classroom: listen to lectures at home, work through learning materials, discuss and collaborate in classroom
  - ✓ Active learning: better chance to active participation
  - ✓ Connected learning: working with others
  - ✓ Virtual mobility/ collaboration

# The impact of digital learning

- Digital technology to be addressed as a mean to enhance L&T, not as an end:
  - ✓ E-learning  $\neq$  learning innovation
  - ✓ Not a remedy for all challenges in higher education
  - ✓ Technically feasible  $\neq$  pedagogically, societally and economically useful or desirable

Not only a matter  
of online classes...

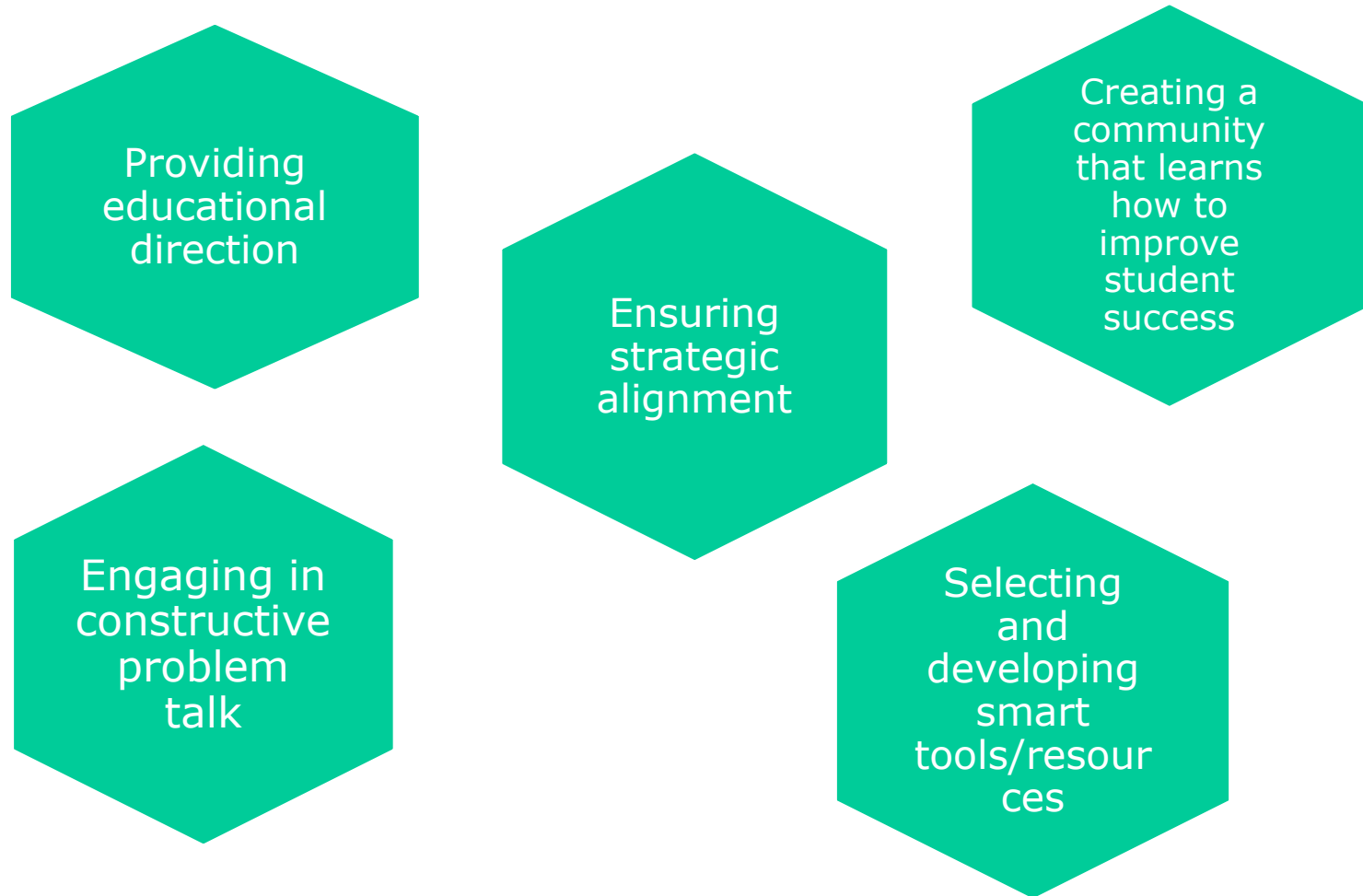
... where does  
digital learning start?



# How can impact and success be reported?

- Difficult to assess what's good teaching or even to define it: “it depends on what you are trying to do”...
- Tools:
  - ✓ Student evaluations, self-evaluation, evaluation/career progression schemes
  - ✓ Importance to use several tools and cross-analyse results
- Role of institutions and institutional strategies?
  - ✓ Leadership support
  - ✓ Sustainability, transferability
  - ✓ How can institutions promote teaching enhancement so to achieve valuable impact on students?

See Robinson and Timperley, “The leadership of improvement in teaching and learning: Lessons from initiatives with positive outcomes on students”, 2007



Leadership dimensions critical in fostering teacher and student learning

Robinson and Timperley, 2007

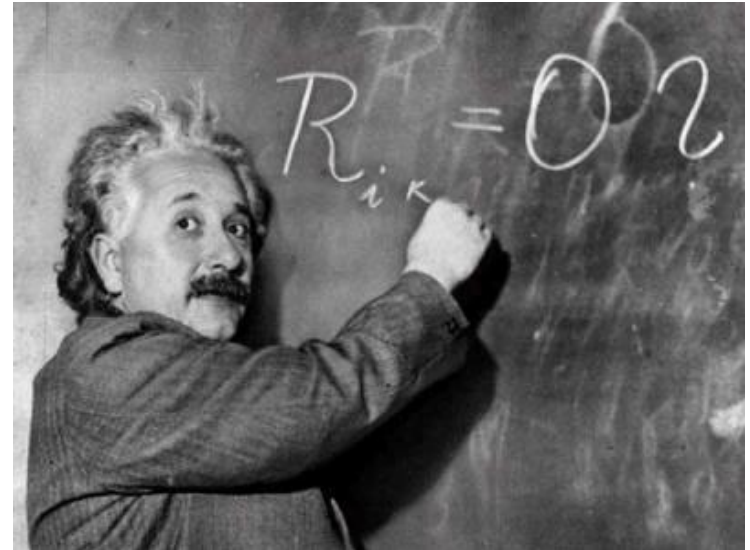
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# University teaching profession: a changing perception/role?

- Traditionally: Professor as a teaching researcher
  - ✓ Independent, self-reliant
  - ✓ Defining him-/herself as a teacher (with the right method) and/or as a researcher
  - ✓ ... role model?



# A changing perception/role?

- Diverse profiles of university teaching staff:
  - ✓ Professors, researchers, early stage researchers (doctoral candidates, post-docs), teaching assistants, “practitioners”, “experts”, students...
  - ✓ Variety in career development, type of inputs, etc.
  - ✓ “University L&T” is not monolithic!
- Recruitment practices and staff regulations may depend on national legislation: not much flexibility for HEIs or QAAs
- Careers still very much research-driven
- Teaching tends to/should (?) become a teamwork:
  - ✓ Relationship with colleagues (academic and administrative staff - no longer alone, peer-sharing)
  - ✓ Relationship with students
  - ✓ Growing influence of curriculum reforms (Bologna process): modularisation, defining LO, skills, etc.
- Importance of services and learning environment

## This leads to questions...

- University teachers are facing multiple professional identities:
  - ✓ How to balance them?
  - ✓ Place of teaching as part of an academic career?
- Different “profiles” for HE teaching?
  - ✓ Differences between disciplines, requirements for teachers, types of institutions, countries...?
  - ✓ Not that one approach is superior: how to combine, balance?
  - ✓ How do these profiles in their different national contexts relate to “teaching”, “pedagogy”, “didactics”, staff training, professional development, continuing education, etc.?
- Identify what are the pressures on, and challenges of teachers (resources, support, interplay with deans and services)?

# How to improve the situation of HE teaching?

- Staff development, enhancement:
  - ✓ A concrete enhancement course offer
  - ✓ As tools in specific areas: how to address innovation, digital learning, experimental-problem based learning, how to help students achieving their potential, etc.
  - ✓ To be adapted to national and institutional contexts
- Contribute to advocating and profiling the role of HE teachers
  - ✓ Part of the academic profession
  - ✓ Better recognition - among teachers, at institutions, in systems, general public
  - ✓ Issue of recognition in career paths
- Attention to conditions for teaching and learning environment offered
- Institutions to recognise and support teaching enhancement, and measures to support institutions in doing that

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## European Forum For Enhanced Collaboration in Teaching

- Erasmus K3 project, 2015 – 2018
- Teaching staff development/teaching enhancement AND institutional strategy
- Assessing the feasibility of a European-level structure for supporting the enhancement of university teachers





# Project consortium: partners and friends



## Aims & outputs

1. Facilitate exchange and collaboration between European actors
2. Identify good practices and develop new and innovative approaches
  - ✓ Develop and test new materials for teaching enhancement
  - ✓ Develop a manual of general principles
3. Support institutions in the development of strategic approaches
  - ✓ Inter-institutional peer-learning on strategic, centralised approaches to teaching enhancement
  - ✓ Develop and test a strategy support package/toolkit
4. Develop a model for a sustainable European structure
  - ✓ Feasibility study on the mission, activities, target groups, delivery modes, governance and ownership, and business model for self-sustainability



# Complements with other activities in L&T

- « Trends »- style survey on L&T:
  - ✓ To grasp a structural view of how L&T is carried out across the EHEA
  - ✓ Launch first half 2017
  - ✓ Preliminary results by autumn 2017
  - ✓ Final publication spring 2018
- EUA's Learning and Teaching Initiative
  - ✓ Following Trends 2015's conclusion: more attention needed on the L&T process itself
  - ✓ To facilitate the exchange of experience on L&T among EUA members and other interested stakeholders
  - ✓ 1st European L&T Forum: Paris, 28-29 September 2017
  - ✓ Prepared and complemented by thematic peer groups: call to be launched beginning December

## A few (tentative) conclusions

- Not only about individual improvement for teachers
- Not only about HEIs as recipients for creating an environment for teachers
- ⇒ Enhancing teaching // appropriate institutional strategy
- Broader vision than just upgrading teaching
- Relation with research very important and needs to be addressed as part of institutional strategy
- Recognition of the profession and professional identity of teachers?
- Improving quality of teaching:
  - ✓ Not only on time spent in classroom: general conditions for good learning and teaching
  - ✓ Incentivising rather than prescribing: how to motivate? How to find the right balance?
  - ✓ As a part of bottom-up QA: teacher-led quality improvement (also as an institutional goal), improves the HEI/helps the students

**Thank you for your attention!**