

21st Century teaching practices in universities

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Objectives

- Scope the current context of teaching in HE
- Identify current 'state of the art'
- Project some innovations and T& L 'futures'
- Consider possible actions for development
- Identify useful reading resources

The current context & challenge

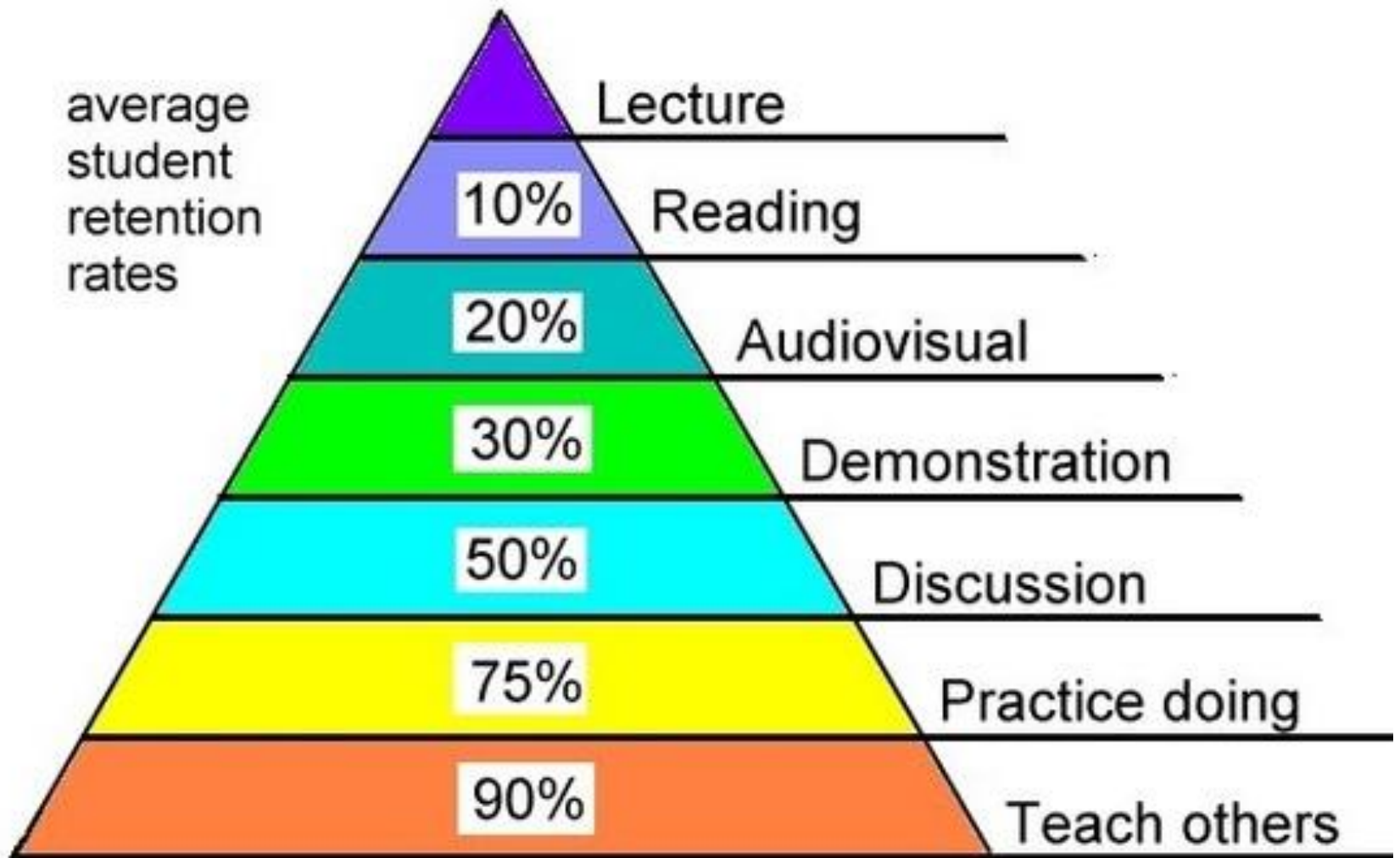
- Internationalisation
- E-learning
- More students to be taught than ever before
- Student body is changing
- Students Needs - learning experiences & VFM
- Vocational/professional/cultural orientations & knowledge transfer
- Interdisciplinary learning
- Curriculum change/flexibility
- Assessment practices & 'assessment for learning'
- Securing 'Quality Teaching'

‘...despite the lack of comparative data on teaching methods (and on the ways in which the effectiveness of teaching is assessed) there is a widespread and growing impression that they are less than adequate to meet the needs of universities today-an impression expressed by many as “a crisis *in* teaching” ’
(MacKenzie, Eraut & Jones, 1976)

‘the nineteenth-century model of teaching at higher level still holds sway and (teaching) has not changed much since. Fundamentally, higher education is still a process of imparting knowledge by means of lectures to those who want to acquire it’
(Hooker, 1997)

‘The fundamental changes in employment over the past 50 years imply a rise in the demand for non- routine cognitive and interpersonal skills and a decline in the demand for routine cognitive and craft skills, physical labour and repetitive physical tasks...Graduates are entering a world of employment that is characterised by greater uncertainty, speed, risk, complexity and interdisciplinary working. University education, and the mode of learning whilst at university, will need to prepare students for entry to such an environment and equip them with appropriate skills, knowledge, values and attributes to thrive in it’
(Henard & Roseveare, 2012)

Learning Pyramid



Source: National Training Laboratories, Bethel, Maine

What is 'good teaching' in 21st century HEI?

'Quality' Teaching is teaching that transforms students' perceptions and the way they go about applying their knowledge to real world problems.

'There is no contradiction between the imperative of good teaching and the imperative of research which critiques, refines, discards and advances human knowledge and understanding. Good teaching, in many subject areas, is only good to the extent that it is informed by the latest research. A good teacher, like a good graduate, is also an active learner, questioner and critical thinker. The good teacher aims to help the student be confident in handling the subject as it has developed so far, to be courageous in openness to new ideas, curious enough to seek new solutions and opportunities, and insightful enough to work well with others so that the flow of information and effort is maximised'

(High Level Group on Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe, 2013)

- A desire to share your love of the subject with students
- An ability to make the material being taught stimulating and interesting
- A facility for engaging with students at their level of understanding
- A capacity to explain the material plainly
- A commitment to making it absolutely clear what has to be understood at what level and why
- Showing concern and respect for students
- A commitment to encouraging independence
- An ability to improvise and adapt to new demands
- Using teaching methods and academic tasks that require students to learn actively, responsibly and co-operatively
- Using valid assessment methods
- A focus on key concepts, and students misunderstandings of them, rather than covering the ground
- Giving the highest quality feedback on student work
- A desire to learn from students and other sources about the effects of teaching and how it can be improved.

(Ramsden, 2003)

Characteristics of learners

- They like to be in control.
- They like choice.
- They are group-oriented and social.
- They are inclusive.
- They are practiced users of digital technology.
- They think differently
- They are more likely to take risks
- They view life as uncertain

(Jukes, 2010)

- becoming an independent learner;
- developing meta-cognitive skills;
- solving problems;
- acting on feedback;
- assessing one's strengths and weaknesses;
- acquiring generic study skills, e.g. communicating effectively, making effective use
- of technology to promote one's own learning;
- working effectively with others and;
- efficient time-management

(Allan & Clarke, 2007).

Innovations

- Theory & practice links
- Variations in teaching style
- Recognition of differences in learners
- Collaborative learning
- Advances in assessment practices
- Integration of technology
- Research & evidence-based
- Involvement of students in planning & delivery

Policy Change Levers

- Policy lever 1. Raising awareness of quality teaching
- Policy lever 2. Developing excellent teachers
- Policy lever 3. Engaging students
- Policy lever 4. Building organisation for change and teaching leadership
- Policy lever 5. Aligning institutional policies to foster quality teaching
- Policy lever 6. Highlighting innovation as a driver for change
- Policy lever 7. Assessing impacts

(Henard & Roseveare, 2012)

Supporting Quality Teaching

- New relationships regarding access to teachers, and a wider range of communication and collaborative working through learning platforms
- Re-designing of curricula
- Bridging teaching and research more intensively
- Re-thinking of student workload and teaching load
- Continuous upgrading in pedagogy, use of technologies, assessment models aligned with student-centred learning
- Creating of innovative learning platforms
- Providing guidance and tutoring to students with new means and methods
- Assessing impacts and documenting effectiveness of the teaching delivered

Some discussion points

- What three actions could be implemented within your institution to have a significant impact on awareness of quality teaching?
- How would you assess the current pedagogical skills of your teaching staff?
- What constitutes quality teaching in the eyes of the students in your institution?
- How effectively do the current leadership arrangements serve to foster quality teaching?
- Where is the most appropriate balance within your institution between mechanisms that ensure policy coherence and decentralised decision-making, diversity and innovation?
- What factors are most likely to foster or hinder innovations in teaching and learning in your institution?

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