





How do students define 'excellent teaching? Using student-led Teaching Awards to enhance learning

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Introduction

Overview of the presentation

- Introduction
- Main themes of "excellent teaching"
 - Care (Individual care & Caring attitude)
 - Students as contributors and collaborators
 - Adaptation of learning materials and learningenhancing activities
- Enhancing Teaching
 - Examples
 - What have we learned?
- Further Guidance
- Q&A

Learning Objectives

- An understanding of the students' view of "excellent teaching"
- Knowledge of how student-led Teaching Awards can be used to enhance learning.

Overview of our process



Main themes of "excellent teaching"

Main themes

- 1. Care
- 2. Students as contributors and collaborators
- 3. Adaptation of materials and learningenhancing activities



Defining care

"She has been incredibly supportive, and I always feel I can ask for her help and advice, whether in class, through email or office hours. <...> Throughout the semester I have been incredibly stressed about an assignment, yet she has been absolutely fantastic at helping me navigate my way through the task and has really helped calm my nerves."

- Nomination 18

Some features associated with care have been mentioned in 82% of the nominations:



- Responsiveness to emails
- Useful feedback
- Individual discussion of ideas and suggestions for future research
- Checking up on students in difficult circumstances

- Creating caring atmosphere in a class

"She always encouraged students to reach out to chat about any issues and offered comforting and wise advice every time."

- Nomination 98

"Although I personally never requested any extra sessions, she made it abundantly clear there was no shame in asking and that she would be more than happy to oblige." - Nomination 12

- Timely responses

"Whenever I contacted her, her replies were quick and so friendly. It is obvious that she genuinely cares about the wellbeing of her students, and this is very refreshing to see within a university setting."

- Nomination 232

Students as contributors and collaborators

Mentioned by 69% of the nominations

Treating students' contributions as valuable

Keen interest in students' views and perspectives

Approachability

Participatory, democratic, respectful atmosphere

Accounting for different backgrounds

"As he cheers us on, he also reminds us to not be so hard on ourselves as beginner students, and as someone who struggled with self-doubt at the beginning, I cannot thank him enough. I believe that he deserves to be nominated because he gave me something that I was severely lacking in my subject: self-confidence."

Nomination 145

- Early and mid-semester feedback

"She has provided strong assembler feedback as well as collective feedback and had engaged with us asking what assessment style we would like before making the executive decision. This made us feel included and prioritised." - Nomination 161

Students as contributors and collaborators - Conclusion

- Affirmed Representatives' behaviour (e.g. mid-semester feedback)
- Shared investment in the learning environment
- Practical approach for shaping "how" students learn

Adaptation of materials and learning-enhancing activities

Mentioned by **48% of the nominations**:

Practical elements of teaching

- Style of delivery of lectures
- Supplementary materials
- Activities which diversify a module or expand beyond it

Individual approaches and adjustments implemented by a teacher within a module or a school

Not just about being 'creative' or 'unique'!

"Her curricula are designed with great purpose <...> and she is able to explain how each reading and lecture contributes to overall learning goals."

- Nomination 29

"The module itself is also delivered and structured in a way that makes learning from it so easy and enjoyable <...>" - Nomination 302

Coherence

Evident module methodology

- EDI

"His dual delivery of lecture content, and the use of presentations designed to aid students with dyslexia have made the material more accessible"

Nomination 249

"He does everything in his power to make his courses inclusive, as well as making any students with disabilities feel welcome in the department."

Nomination 139

No special practice!

- A practical theme that's based on principles
- Students value:
 - Coherence
 - Organisation
 - Inclusivity



Enhancing Teaching



Enhancing Teaching: Examples

Student Reps

Gather student examples of what exemplary feedback from staff looks like; distil good practices and present this at student/staff meetings.

Work with staff on improving the feedback guidelines for your School Teachers

What specific materials and activities do students look for?

- Evident module methodology & structure
- Materials that can be revisited
- Actualised knowledge

Uniquely Positive

- Untapped wealth of student-generated data
- Empowers students
- A resource for teaching staff
- Snapshot of student views
- Thematic research questions

Further Guidance

Further guidance

- Check out the sparqs Resource Library for guidance on:
 - modifying your award process;
 - onboarding a researcher;
 - conducting the thematic review
 - Utilising findings to enhance teaching

Learning enhancing activities



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As it was previously mensioned in this paper, quanting enhancing activities are more difficult to calegorise due to diversity and module-specificity of the teaching practices methoded in the nominations For example, an axina practical class or a vielt to Special Collections sie not activities that can be as easily implemented across all modules as, for example, informational lecture sides and email cummanies.

However, there are some observable bends. The descriptions of learning-ermancing activities made by the students can be distinguished into the units which oversity a content module and those which expend beyond the scope of a single module 8 normalions featured a moture of perspectives. Out of 51 students who spoke of learning-entranzing activities, 27 (53%) spoke about "directifying" activities, 14 (27%) – about the "expanding ones 8 (16%) nonvinations featured a methors of perspectives. Only 2 descriptions did not correspond clearly to this classification.

Example

Students, who discussed toose activities which diversified a multiple poke about how well an activity fit into a module, how much it enhanced the teaming primers, and how thoughthough these seconds, in those types of descriptions feaching were prairied for providing a stimuliting class ownumment. "Diversitying' activities were deemed successful if they enriched the learning were commed succession in they horizone the earlings process, usually by privileg disclering with a charce in revise and to practice previously discled chirmater Scamples of articitiestime were most frequently discussed as an excellent way to diversity a module are additional practical sessions, online questionnaires (including those for collecting student feedback), and field hips to various sites and institutions

Activities which expanded beyond the module allowed students to expand their fronzons and come into contact with new perspectives on education, academic research,

and careers. The teachers who provided such activities and catego. The seathers who drowleds such aconeses were practiced for molivaling students to consider new options and Ideas in other modules, further studies, and career plans. Among activities described from this perspective were postgraduate-style research seminate, workshops or Q and A's addressing the teacher's own research, lectures of tutorials featuring external speakers or industry professionals. Less time- and effort-consuming examples concerned activities promoting good lesse writing and note-taking skills

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Such analysis of descriptive features of students' nonvinisions shows that learning enhancing activities can be seen as useful and successful on different scales, sometimes almotherenate Learning enhancing activities can actualise tecture materials and 'be' the whole module together m an engaging marrier, or they can lead a student lowards exploring a completely new path

Thus, the benefits that can come from the introduction of such activities into a module can range hom must interest of ternanding. Bluderts lend to pushely evaluate creating exposites to model stucture, no. However, the normalities draw that a activity of such soit is expected to have a predicted composite hall is create enough to students to be regarded as exempting of excellent leaders. Students expect an extra activity provided by their tracher to be useful either as an additional learning tool for a mobule or as something that promotes their further development

5.3 Practical steps

A wide valiety of techniques and practices fail under the umbrelle of excellent examples of adaptation of materials and learning, enhancing activities. These techniques and practices are often contentioal and specialized, meaning that their successful ness is perpended in reliation to a certain module or a discipline rather than in reliation to some generalizable chanded. However, the perminances for the Teaching Awards provide enough groups to address one approaches that are likely to result in more positively received evaluation

Evident module methodology and structure An idea that a divery replaced survey site/decime to (avoursal) reparticle by students might be to a abyout even maniformer However, the normalised meaning highlighting it as a sign of laximg accelerate suggest tables in the second something has address expensions on all university modules. Particularly from the perspective of the section, description particle to the perspective of the section, description and to tables the bits a creative somethy modules. morte of delivery or regarded as excell purpose and relevar revealed. Studentso

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Main Themes Summinis (D The in-depth look i

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Three main themes have been identified in the learning enhancings of midenais showe course of analysis of Teaching Awards nominations: gudents with oppo teaching are regard sides, risef regard engage deeps with have all been ment dedicated attude

Individual care and caring attitude

Among the multitude of characteristics and actions that students saw as worthy of the Teaching Award the descriptions of acts of care and of compassionate, understanding approach were usually signified as a top priority. The nominations also clearly show how much of an impact teachers can have on not only the academic performance, but also the university experience of a student in general.

Students as collaborators and contributors

Students highlighted the cases in which they believed that their opinions were Students ingningited the cases in which they believed that their opinions were given room to be voiced and heard. Students highly evaluated the efforts that teachers put into listening, acknowledging, and fostering critical independent thinking. However, what mattered to students was not only an ability to develop a critical perspective on the material, but also a chance to discuss ideas, guestions, and mistakes in a non-judgemental, respectful atmospher

Adaptation of materials and learning-enhancing activities

Students making the nominations for the Teaching Awards often acknowledged staff members' efforts to taler learning materials and class activities to the objectives of the course, and the effect that this can have on the quality of the education they receive. Students acknowledge the time that It takes to create a stimulating classroom environment and an an informative curriculum; and interpret it as a sign of deep involvement on behalf of the teacher.

The first theme appeared in 82% of the nominations analysed in the course of the project, the second one - in 69%, the third one - in 48%. Thus, these themes are not occasional or accidental - and indeed reflect the core values in students' perceptions of excellent teaching

In addition, two further themes have been explored: Inclusivity and diversity and online/hybrid teaching. These themes have been singled out as worthy of additional analysis due to their topical and timely nature. Inclusivity and diversity are the among the main core values of the University. Additionally, as the University starts the transition back to the pre-pandemic teaching, this round of Teaching Awards represented the last opportunity to explore the perceptions of excellent online/hybrid teaching that have been formed in the last three academic years.

A set of practical steps has been formulated based on the main findings of each theme.

Finally, some additional practical steps have been proposed. These include career advice, essay-writing advice, and clear expectations.

THESE THEMES ARE NOT OCCASIONAL **OR ACCIDENTAL – AND INDEED REFLECT** THE CORE VALUES IN STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF EXCELLENT TEACHING.

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The idea of "excellent teaching" can feel subjective or intangible, but this process can help break the student view into thematic building-block with names and examples.







Thank you

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