

Personal information

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1. Pedagogical idea/basic view

Teaching is in my view an activity that conveys knowledge and develops skills as a mutual learning experience for students and lecturers. In the following, I will outline my reflection on three teaching and learning dimensions that I consider of general importance.

It should be noted beforehand that 'teaching' is not a uniform practice that can be ultimately based on a one-size-fits all approach. I have experienced very different teaching situations ranging from an undergraduate lecture with more than 100 students to graduate seminar groups with less than 10 attendees. This means that a first general principle of teaching is flexibility – flexibility to adapt techniques, structures, and content to the specific teaching situation and also to respond flexible to different student 'needs' on a daily basis. A second general principle is experimentation and adaptation. It is important to allow oneself as a lecturer to try out different ways of teaching in terms of methods and content. Only an interaction with students can show what might 'work' better in teaching than something else and experimenting is an important element of progress.

Teaching objectives

From the viewpoint of my teaching area of International Relations, there are three major, interrelated objectives in teaching: first, the dissemination and facilitation of significant theories, approaches, and knowledge of my discipline. This is largely the main, traditional pillar of university education and continues to be an important objective.

The second objective is the fostering of general skills, which are foremost critical, analytical thinking. While I encourage students to reflect on the context of assumptions and established ideas, to consider nuances and different sides of complex problems, I also underline the importance of a solid knowledge base to this aim.

Third, my objective in teaching is also to relate the content of courses to current events of international relations and the life reality of students. Bridging the gap between theory and practice is often perceived as challenging by lecturers as well as students. Ultimately, it is important to show the meaning and value of analytical perspectives to so called 'real-life issues'. I will outline methods to this end further below.

Principles and methods of teaching

A central principle of SDU is research-based teaching. It is important to align this principle with the teaching objectives outlined above and to demonstrate to students the importance and value of research findings and concepts for their education. This can be achieved in a twofold way: first, by constantly showing the analytical relevance of concepts in empirical context by referring to examples and explaining what insights we can acquire from using a concept as an analytical perspective. The diversification of readings by also using newspaper articles, policy briefs, or academic blogs can be helpful to exemplify the range of perspectives and approaches as well as to demonstrate conceptual thinking. Second, I strive to offer in segments of my courses content based on the substance of my current research field of AI/technology in international relations and security. By showing how university research can have an impact in the world of policy-making, the link between research and practice can be made. At the same time, I am also aiming at connecting research issue to broader questions of the student's life experience with AI/technology, for example social media or generative AI such as ChatGPT.

A second important principle I would like to emphasise here is active learning that takes place outside of the classroom. It is crucial to support students with their learning experience outside of the limited contact hours and explain the importance of this learning element. While there are institutionalised support elements such as student learning groups and exercise classes, I also use different suggestions to support students, depending on the course structure and their educational level. These can be the expectation to formulate questions on the mandatory readings that will be the basis for discussions in seminars, the setting of guiding questions if specific learning objectives should be met, or the use of reading diaries.

In terms of methods, my central method is activated learning. Typical seminar situations are a switching between knowledge dissemination (lecturing on theories, concepts, and examples) and student activation in form of question to the plenum, the watching of short film sequences highlighting a specific issue, work in small groups based on questions, online surveys, quizzes, and world clouds (based on apps such as *Polleverywhere*) or image description and interpretation. Apart from the lecturing parts, my role as a teacher is to facilitate and guide active knowledge and the acquiring of transferable skills. This can also be supported by a change of teaching format by including simulation games or guest lecture that are both elements of my teaching.

Feedback and evaluation

Feedback as part of the student-lecturer relation is one of the most important, but also most challenging aspects. Often, class size and a perceived social distance between students and lecturers can hinder direct and open conversation about the effectiveness of teaching as well as mutual expectations. Even exam feedback is often not given to an optimal extent due to structural and time-constraints. To address this, I always underline to my students that they can approach me personally during class breaks and by email whenever they feel they need to. I am also offering feedback on exams both in writing and verbally. Creating a friendly and supportive atmosphere in course can be key for effective feedback to students.

But it is equally challenging to receive open and constructive feedback from students about teaching. The instrument of anonymous end of term evaluations suffers from major shortcomings such as bias, low response rates, and inaccuracies. For that reason, I often use a "non-official" midterm evaluation and in-class discussions in smaller groups. It is also very important to take up suggestions and to explain how these can be implemented in the running course. Also, I strive to have a brief conversation in all courses to explain the characteristics and function of good feedback.

In terms of my personal development as a teacher, I consider it crucial to regularly rethink and update teaching approaches and techniques. Central part of this is self-reflection about what might be working or less working and the willingness to invest additional time to change course structures, content, and approaches.

Undervisning og vejledning

Great Debates

Cecchini, M., Huelss, H. & Vanhuysse, P.
01/09/2023 → 29/09/2023

Human Rights in International Law and Security

Wanigasuriya, B. A.
01/09/2021 → 31/10/2023

Indledende Statskundskab

Johansen, A. I., Bonnesen, L. & Huelss, H.
01/09/2021 → 31/01/2022

Indledende statskundskab 17,5 ECTS

Starke, P.
01/09/2021 → 31/01/2022

Indledende statskundskab for sidefagsstuderende

Roederer-Rynning, C. & Starke, P.
01/09/2019 → 31/01/2022

International Political Organisations

Schmitt, O. & Keating, V.
01/02/2018 → 31/08/2023

Master's Thesis Lab

Huelss, H. & Mennecke, M.
18/09/2023 → 13/11/2023

Supervision experience

I have supervised a total of 13 student projects at the University of Kent and University of Southern Denmark since 2019 until completion. This comprised 10 MA students and 4 BA students.

Topics included: "*Enforcing Norms through Trade: A Case Study Analysis of the European Union's Normativity through trade-based Conditionality*"; "*Fear of Terrorism: A Theoretical-Conceptual Perspective on Responses to Fear of Terror*"; "*Self-determination vs. Influence: British and Danish Sovereignty and its Effect on European Defence Integration*"; "*The Pandemic's Effect on Trust in Government in Estonia*".

Previous Teaching Experience

Before taking up my first position at SDU in 2020, I have been involved in the following teaching activities:

Graduate teaching (Master)

- Co-convenor of PO831 'The European Union in the World' (spring term 2020), School of Politics and International Relations, University of Kent, co-taught with Elena Korosteleva.
- Convenor of PO959 'Europe in Crisis' (autumn term 2019) at the School of Politics and International Relations, University of Kent.
- Convenor of 'Social Constructivism in International Relations and European Studies: Approaches, Applications and Debates' (spring semester 2009), Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen.

Undergraduate teaching (Bachelor)

- 'The European Union as an International Actor' (autumn semester 2009), Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen.