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Formal teacher training

I have an educational background of public health (PH), and I finished my PhD in PH in 2017. I joined SDU in 2018 and started my teaching at the master's level since 2019. I have been enrolled in the ''lecturer training program'' (LTP) provided by University of Southern Denmark (SDU), which I plan to complete by May 15, 2021. From 2019, I have taken several courses on university teaching and learning provided by SDU which for instance included the following topics: the role of the teacher; students as Learners; research-based teaching; setting up a course in its-learning; how to design and facilitate engaging learning activities in its-learning; evaluation and empirical data collection for pedagogical development project; effective feedback and feedforward; and online, blended and flipped learning.

In January 2018, I also completed a formal online, self-paced training entitled, Community Health Workers Instructor Training, which was provided by National Community Health Training Center of Texas. This is a mandatory course for the instructors/trainers of community health workers training program in USA.

Administrative tasks relating to education

Since 2019, I took over the responsibility of coordinating a module entitled, PH ethics (4 ECTS), for MSc in PH students and my administrative tasks include preparing course description, organize student e-learning (its-learning) activities, communicate with the students, develop the rubric for assignment grading, and evaluate the students' performance and provide feedback. In March 2021, I have been assigned a responsibility to work in a group of four colleagues to revise a specialization course on ''global health'', which is currently ongoing and is assumed to be finished by September 2021.

Experience as a teacher, examiner, and supervisor

At SDU, I have been primarily teaching the module PH Ethics as the only teacher of the module and I have been working with other colleagues in other modules namely, State of Global Health (7.5 ECTS), PH Research on the global scale (7.5 ECTS) and Empowerment and Social Policy (7.5 ECTS).

As a teacher of the module 'PH Ethics', my tasks include: planning and preparing the face-to-face teaching or online live teaching, developing cases for group work, facilitating (face-to-face and online) group works, developing asynchronous learning activities (e-tivities such as online quiz, discussion boards) and grade the final assignments. In the module 'state of global health', I give an online lecture on the topic, global health surveillance, for 2 hours and in 'PH Research on the global scale', I am a co-teacher and my tasks include checking for relevant online videos, participating in e-discussion sessions when required, and grading the assignments as one out of two independent graders. In the module 'empowerment and social policy', my tasks a teacher include conducting problem-based teaching on 'how to analyze quantitative data in empowerment research', which includes giving lectures on the use of statistical methods in empowerment research for 2 hours, facilitating and supervising student group project works and providing feedback. Alongside the teaching activities, I had supervised four master thesis students in 2020, and in 2021, I have been supervising one student.

In 2019, I worked as a coordinator of a collaboration between SDU and King Saud University (KSU), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and as part of the collaboration, I, along with two other colleagues from SDU, organized a course entitled, Tackling major health challenges on population, community and individual levels: from theory to practice (4 ECTS course) which was primarily targeted to health professional working in Saudi Arabia. My tasks related to teaching were assisting in developing the syllabus, giving lectures, and facilitate group works. My administrative tasks were developing the pamphlet for the marketing of the course, communicating with the collaborators from KSU, providing necessary support to the collaborators to locally organize the course, developing the final report etc. Besides this, I have an experience of teaching the undergraduate students of PH and other health science disciplines at a Nepalese university from 2011 to 2013 and from 2007 to 2009, I was also involved in training community level-health care workers in Nepal.

Methods, materials, and tools

All the courses I have been teaching have both face-to-face and online activities, as I am mostly involved on blended learning and flipped learning methods.

Face-to-face teaching: The face-to-face teaching includes primarily lecturing, classroom discussions and presentations and student group works (case analysis or problem solving). Basically, the face to face lecture and discussion is aimed at increasing knowledge and understanding of theories and frameworks, whereas small-group activities emphasize increasing the skills necessary to analyze, evaluate and reflect on PH problems through teamwork and problem solving. For instance, the group work of PH Ethics is based on Case-based learning (CBL) with elements of role playing in which

students take up a role to see and analyze a moral problem and reach out to appropriate solutions. The module 'empowerment and social policy' is based on problem-based learning in which students try to work in a group to solve an empowerment research-related problem. Generally, my teaching day consists of two hours of lecturing followed by a two-hour groupwork session. For the groupwork, the students will be working on the cases throughout the module in a systematic way using and applying the concepts and approaches that will be presented in the classroom.

Live online teaching: In 2020 and 2021, due to Covid-19 restrictions I switched most of my face-to-face teaching to online live teaching. However, I faced challenges to use the tools that I used in face-to-face teaching into my online live teaching, and I found students on online teaching a bit more silent and less interactive. Later, I learned to use tools such think-pair-share, and poll everywhere via creating break-out rooms as well as I started making use of discussion boards and the group features of its-learning in the teaching.

Asynchronous online learning: The online asynchronous learning activities I regularly use in my teaching consist of watching films/videos, reading online materials, taking interactive self-assessment quizzes, and having online group discussions. I work as a e-moderator and provide the comments and encourage other fellow students to comment on. These comments provide an immediate feedback towards what students have learned, and what they think is important on the topic.

I sometimes include mind mapping or concept mapping or discussion at the beginning of my class so that I have an idea how much students have understood about the topic. I then use the most relevant examples from the discussion board for class discussion and reflection. I often discuss with the students whether they perceive that the workload is heavy, as if it is too heavy, they may tend to go for a surface approach to learning, which is not what I intend. Therefore, students' feedback can be very useful to nicely articulate face-to-face and online activities, so that these activities complement each other to facilitate students' learning process.

Educational development and applied research into teaching

As a requirement for the LTP, I conducted a pedagogical study to experiment with and study the effect of using student facilitators in small-group CBL discussions and examine how well the student group facilitation worked well academically and pedagogically. I learned that using student facilitators is preferable rather than not using the student facilitators, however facilitating an ethical discussion can be very challenging for students in a small group setting. With adequate instructions and preparation, such as providing topic-readings and groupwork instructions in advance and clarifying further the CBL scenarios as well as students' roles, these facilitators can be prepared, and the facilitation can be effective. These findings were presented and discussed during the LTP-2020 Introduction day which was June 8th, 2020.

Reflection and future development

Each day of my teaching I spend a few minutes discussing with students about whether the learning goals are being achieved and what has worked well and what has not in relation to teaching methods and contents. Based on the relevance of the feedback received, I adapt my teaching methods and contents. Students' interaction in the class as well as in their group works is crucially important in two of the courses I teach (case or problem-based learning). Therefore, each year I make significant changes in the way group works are conducted to promote democratic participation of all the students. Along with all these positive experiences I have had so far and the teaching and learning tools I have learned from the LTP, I think I have evolved very much as a teacher in the university level.

However, I still think that I need to incorporate more elements of blended learning in my teaching by developing relevant cases for the students to work with, make use of relevant tools of its-learning especially for asynchronous learning and also make the use of social medias, and perhaps make use of relevant videos and podcasts in the teaching. Now, my teaching commitment is more than continuing my efforts of becoming a teacher at the university level, it is also to supervise junior colleagues (e.g., research assistants, PhDs) and contribute to further develop and improve the PH education in the university.