The teaching portfolio – a way to advance towards SoTL

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In the literature on teaching and learning many examples are found of how reflection can be used for learning and development. Some of them deal with how teachers can gain insights about teaching and learning through the writing of a teaching portfolio (e.g. FitzPatrick & Spiller, 2010; Jones, 2011; Trautwein et al., 2015). However, studies on what such insights may actually bring into teaching practice are scarce. Our intention was therefore to explore what impact teachers’ writing of a teaching portfolio can have on their practice and professional learning (Pelger & Larsson, 2017; Pelger & Larsson, 2018).

The study was conducted through a questionnaire, where 26 academic teachers answered open-ended questions about the possible insights, effects on teaching practice, and effects on collegial exchange that the portfolio writing entailed. The teachers came from three faculties at Lund University – Engineering, Science and Social Science – and, as a preparation, all of them had attended a workshop on portfolio writing. In their responses, a majority of the teachers reported on insights they gained through the writing of a teaching portfolio, and how these insights contributed to changes in teaching practice. Some of them also described changes in their collegial exchange and the way they talk about educational issues with colleagues.

In our presentation we will show examples of the impact that the teachers experienced that the writing of a teaching portfolio had. Based on Kreber’s (2002) three competence levels, excellence, expertise and scholarship of teaching and learning, we will discuss how the impacts reflect academic teachers’ professional learning and development. We will also discuss the potential of using reflective portfolio writing as a tool for change in an emerging academic community of practice characterised by a scholarly approach to teaching and learning.

References


