

Part-time teachers' concepts of assessment, assessment practices and experiences of participation at the open university

ABSTRACT

In our presentation, we present preliminary findings from a study on part-time teachers' concepts of assessment, assessment practices and experiences of participation in academic teaching at an open university. By part-time teachers, we refer to experts in a particular field who teach specific courses and modules at the open university. Not all of them have even a part-time contract, but they work on an hourly basis. Open university provides academic university education and gives possibility to complete parts of an academic degree and progress along alternative route to a university degree (Haltia et al. 2021). Universities, including open universities, employ many part-time teachers who have no pedagogical studies. In Finland, the pedagogical competences of those working in permanent employment at universities have only in recent years started to receive political attention (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017). However, there is no mention of part-time teachers or the needs of their pedagogical competence in the political reports on education policy. This situation is worrying because university education is expected to provide students with a broad range of expertise and competences beyond disciplinary subject knowledge (source). University teachers are expected not only to have a good understanding of their subject area, but also of general competences for lifelong learning, pedagogical and assessment skills (European Union 2008; European Union 2018). International and national research on part-time teachers is lacking even though they are playing an increasingly large role in the teaching of students in higher education. (e.g., Ott & Dippold, 2018). In our study, we contribute to addressing this research gap by examining part-time teachers' assessment conceptions and practices as well as their experiences of participation within open university.

Data was gathered through mixed methods approach to achieve a holistic and a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The questionnaire had structured and open-ended questions, and the respondents were open university part-time teachers from various disciplinary subjects. The questionnaire included the dimensions e.g. assessment concepts, pedagogical practices and experiences of participation. The theoretical framework of our study is based on the assessment literacy model of Xu & Brown (2016), the so-called TALiP model (Teacher assessment literacy in practice). Through the concept of participation, we draw teachers' personal approaches to assessment and pedagogical practices into a broader social framework. Experiences of participations are known to be linked to well-being at work (Lindberg & Vingård, 2017). In turn, the well-being of university teachers is known to be related to job performance, teaching quality and student satisfaction (Gulati et al., 2018). The results of our study are important to quality of assessment and development of teaching in higher education.

Keywords: part-time teachers, assessment, concepts, assessment skills, assessment practices, participation, open university

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PRESENTING AUTHOR 1 PROFILE PICTURE

No Response

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No Response

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