

## Teaching portfolio

### 1. Teaching CV: A list of any lecturing and supervision tasks, including specification of academic fields, scope, level (bachelor, master, continuing education, PhD) as well as any external examiner tasks.

Teaching portfolio

Lars Bo Henriksen, Professor, Phd Department of Planning Aalborg University

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#### Background

Since my employment at Aalborg University, I have been teaching a wide range of courses and supervised at all levels in English and Danish.

I have a background as a teacher educated at Aalborg Seminarium, 1978-1982. In Denmark being a qualified schoolteacher means having finished a four-year education to the level of B.Ed. After graduating from teacher training college, I worked as a teacher for three years at different schools in the Aalborg area. I also worked as a social worker in two problem families (alcohol abuse). This work continued through my study years at Aalborg University.

Due to my background as a teacher I was exempted from enrolling in the pedagogic courses for assistant professors at the university. Instead I was asked to give some lectures in the course and I was asked to supervise assistant professors joining the course (see encl. 1).

Soon after my employment at Aalborg University I was appointed study program coordinator for the new bachelors and masters programmes in International Technology Management (today called Global Business Development).

To document my educational and pedagogic qualifications, I enclose the following: List of courses, list of PhD students, list of membership of evaluation boards (Encl. 1), student evaluations of PhD course (Encl. 2) and certificate from the teacher training college (Encl. 3).

#### Teaching philosophy - The hermeneutics of teaching and learning

In all my teaching at Aalborg University I have tried to avoid what is known as teacher centred teaching. I have always tried to be true to the core of the PBL principles of student centered and problem oriented teaching and learning.

Hermeneutics offers an alternative to the teacher centred model (Gallagher 1992). Hermeneutics is concerned with the problem of understanding – what does it mean to understand something? (Gadamer, 1962). Any learning or understanding builds upon some previous knowledge. Our language in particular, but also all our prior experiences and what we have gained from our upbringing. Gallagher (1992) offers a model of learning building on hermeneutic principles. This understanding of learning includes the elements tradition, self-transition and production.

#### Tradition

"Understanding is to be thought of less as a subjective act than as participating in an event of tradition, a process of transmission in which past and present is constantly mediated" (Gadamer 1962 p. 277).

Gadamer uses the term "prejudices" to refer to the knowledge that is a precondition for any learning. This is to be thought of as a kind of pre-knowledge and certainly not to be confused with its meaning in our daily use of language where prejudice has several negative connotations. Prejudices are not subjective; they are not our private constructs. They will always be part of a shared horizon of meaning within which the knowledge, that is to be learned, makes sense. The horizon, that the prejudice is established within, is part of a tradition. Not tradition as in our ordinary language, where tradition is often viewed as representing something old, perhaps authoritarian or superstitious but certainly something that by any means should be avoided. Just as in the anti-traditionalism of modernity, for example. But in order to establish an understanding of texts, of social phenomena or of understanding itself, it is necessary to rehabilitate the tradition (Gadamer, 1962, p. 277).

Gadamer uses the German word "überlieferung" in his own work – a term which is much more apt than the word used in the English translation (namely that of "tradition"). Überlieferung means that something is handed over or passed on from one generation to the next. Tradition represents knowledge and an authority that is able to help us understand by acting as the prejudices that are a prerequisite for any understanding. In this sense engineering is a tradition and engineering students are introduced to this tradition through education. Tradition represents knowledge – e.g. engineering knowledge - and is affiliated to the authority of knowledge in a particular field - without necessarily acting authoritarian. Authority here is to be viewed in a positive sense. The tradition is a possibility for the engineer to know what it takes to be an engineer - through dialogue and with tradition, it will be possible to develop the tradition and the knowledge that it represents. In this sense tradition is essential and the process through which students acquire this knowledge is known as Bildung. Bildung is the German word for education and is every bit as untranslatable as Überlieferung. Bildung signifies the process and the result of the process of education and a student will be "Gebildet", when he graduates.

#### Self-transcendence

"Horizon" is the individual starting point, but fortunately we are able to let our horizons meet other horizons. Thereby we

are able to understand each other, understand texts, understand traditions and thereby learn something. Through a description of other horizons, understanding and learning become possible. This allows understanding and learning to be described as a "fusion of horizons". A teacher centred approach focuses on teaching the content of traditions, but in most cases in a way where only the teacher, and not the students, is active. A student centered approach, however, requires the students' active participation in the fusion of horizons and in the event of tradition. This is because traditions, in order to be kept alive, should be challenged and questioned by those who participate in the tradition. Only in this way may tradition renew itself and pass on (Überlieferung) meaningful knowledge. Active participation is therefore essential when one adopts a hermeneutic slant on education. Through the fusion of horizons and the active participation of students in the event of tradition, students transcend their own self – and are changed in the process. Their horizon is broadened and, over time and through active participation, they gradually acquire the knowledge of a tradition and are capable of not only questioning their own prejudices but of changing them as well.

#### Production

Being changed, being part of a tradition and having expanded one's horizons is to have learned something. But to fully understand the knowledge of the tradition, the knowledge has to be applied, or to be able to apply is to have fully understood and thereby learned. But the knowledge of the tradition is a general knowledge and that general knowledge has to be applied to a specific situation. A student's knowledge of theories and methods gained through his studies at the university has to be applied to a specific research project in a specific situation. When he is able to do that, and he has demonstrated that he is actually able to apply, then we can say that he has learned something. As Gadamer put it - Alles rechte Verstehen ist Anwendung – 'all true understanding is application' (Gadamer 1962). Therefore, being e.g. an engineer, and thereby being able to apply knowledge to new and specific situations, is to be able to produce new knowledge specially suited to the situation and to the specific problem. Production then is not necessarily the production of a physical product, but of the production of new knowledge. This is to have learned something: to be able to produce new knowledge linked to a specific situation on the basis of a tradition.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg (1962) Truth and Method. Crossroad. New York.

Gallagher, Shaun (1992) Hermeneutics and Education. State University of New York Press. Albany.

#### Cases

Below I will briefly present two cases where I have tried to apply the hermeneutic principles to real life teaching and learning situations. First, the PhD course in social science theory and method and second, some considerations concerning my PhD supervision.

##### Case 1: PhD course: Social science theory and method

Description: "This course addresses a key issue in contemporary debates in method and social science theory, with special emphasis on the problems of the life-world sciences. The aim of the course is to develop and discuss a problem oriented research practice and epistemology connected to the research in organisations, business companies and institutions. The main objective is to find methods that will allow the participants to diagnose real problems that go beyond the surface of legitimisation processes so problem solving can become a vital part of the research process. The following aspects will be covered:

- The problems of science in the context of the life-world
- Scientific level of ambition: understanding, explanation and problem solving
- Understanding and diagnoses
- Dialogue strategies and language
- Ethical problems in the study of organisations "

The idea behind the programme was originally to introduce PhD students with an engineering background to research methods suitable for entering organisations and doing participatory research. Later, however, PhD students with other educational backgrounds also signed up for the course. The programme presents theories and methods of participatory social research (tradition). This is done through a short (power point) presentation followed by class discussions (dialogue) in a conventional class setting. Step two involves asking the PhD students to present their own projects and methods and then discuss the presentations in the class. The idea is to make the students active and to make them reflect upon their own projects. In this, the discussions become more relevant to them and this, hopefully, leads to the self-transition mentioned above. Not only should the course enable to the students to produce their own knowledge; they should also get a 'concrete product' - in this case be able to produce a thorough description of their own method in their own projects.

#### Reflections

The course has been held four times now in its present form (I have previously held similar courses at the Department of Production at Aalborg University). The first time the course ran, I was very eager to present as much stuff as possible and this led to me talking too much and using power point slides too excessively. Therefore, I decided to cut down on the number of slides and allowed much more room for discussions. Also more time were devoted to the presentation of the students' own projects. This allows the lecturer to use the presentations as reference points and as cases when we discuss the theories and methods presented.

The challenge for me in this course is to actually keep quiet! That is, not tell the students what to do, but through a true dialogue of Socratic questioning, let the students make their own conclusions concerning their projects and their project methods. Judging from the feedback of the students we have been quite successful in achieving this (see encl. 2).

Case: PhD supervision

Since my employment at Aalborg University I have been involved in PhD supervision, PhD courses and seminars for PhD students. Supervision of PhD students is one of the most interesting and challenging activities I've been involved in at university level. The PhD students, who have been under my supervision, have all finished their studies and most of them within the time scheduled. The reason for this could be sheer luck and the fact that the students are very good. But I take my role as PhD supervisor extremely seriously and I like to think that this may have something to do with the success of my PhD students. My main idea of PhD supervision is to be there for the students whenever they need their supervisor. And so, together with the students, I make a tight schedule and arrange supervision hours quite often – preferably every week. Meetings are always held with a purpose, with an agenda, and preferably, with a working paper to discuss. This might seem rather time consuming and beyond the scope of supervision, but I find that it is time well spent. Frequent meetings do not have to be very long – a short chat in the corridors can do a lot. Furthermore, the challenge is not to take over the projects but to let the students drive the process, let the students do the work, and let them produce the new knowledge - that is a PhD.

**2. Study administration: A list of any study administration tasks, e.g. study board membership, head of studies or semester or course coordinator, accreditation, etc.**

Head of The Planning PhD programme

**3. University pedagogy qualifications: A list of any completed courses in university pedagogy, PBL courses, workshops, academic development projects, collegial guidance and supervision, etc.**

Ba Ed

**4. Other qualifications: Conference attendance, editorials, presentations, etc. relating to education, 'University Teaching Day', etc.**

Ba EdType your answer here...

**5. Teaching activity development and teaching materials: A list of any contributions to the development of new modules, teaching materials, study programmes, e-learning, collaboration with external business partners, etc.**

Type your answer here...

**6. Teaching awards you may have received or been nominated for.**

Type your answer here...

**7. Personal reflections and initiatives: Here you may state any personal deliberations as regards teaching and supervision, any wishes and plans for further pedagogic development, plans for following up on feedback/evaluations from students, etc.**

Type your answer here...

**8. Any other information or comments.**

Type your answer here...