

# Chapter 41

## Implementation of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through an On- Line Masters Program

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In this case study, the introductory course in an international masters program in medical education (MMedEd) called “Scholarship of Medical Education” is described. Some of the background to why the MMedEd was started and the underlying ideas and principles of the program are provided. The individual course, which consists of 10 weeks part time study on-line with an introductory face to face meeting, is described in terms of the intentions and pedagogical principles underlying the design, the teaching and learning activities, and how the students were supported to achieve the intended learning activities, as well as the challenges and concerns that arose throughout and after the course. Finally, some solutions to these problems are discussed.*

### **ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND**

#### **Centre for Medical Education**

This course was set in a medical university, Karolinska Institutet, in Sweden, and provided by the Centre for Medical Education there. The university is a research intensive university which is internationally famous and provides undergraduate educational programs as well as postgraduate education. Within the

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### **Implementation of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning**

University our centre is organized as a part of a department. Our centre has four main tasks. One task concerns the provision of teacher training courses for lecturers and PhD students involved in undergraduate teaching to create a scholarship of teaching and learning (see explanation in the next paragraph). The second task concerns the strategic work in relation to the university, where we are trying to apply our knowledge of Higher Education literature and research in the support of teachers, committees and boards in the strive to enhance the student learning experience. The third task regards researching the area of medical education in terms of student learning in different medical education contexts, professional development and the use of technology to support teaching and learning. The fourth area is handling issues of evaluation within the university context. The development of a Masters Program in Medical Education was intended as a way to provide an extended competency development for lecturers and health professions staff involved in the teaching and learning of students at different levels as well as patients to develop a scholarship of teaching and learning, which is described below, and to provide a basis for people who would like to engage in research of medical education.

A concept that has become central to the activities of our centre is the pursuit of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. The concept, that was introduced by Boyer (1990), takes as its point of departure the on-going conflict between research and teaching that has become prevalent during the 20<sup>th</sup> century at Higher Education institutions all over the world. Whilst research is an activity that receives resources, rewards and recognition, teaching stands at the opposite end, leaving little to strive for in the eyes of academics (D'Andrea & Gosling, 2005). However, the concept of scholarship was introduced to overbridge this diversification so that principles of good research could be applied to the teaching and learning context in a way to make teaching recognized and rewarded, and the allocation of resources aligned with good teaching.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning has been debated and discussed in numerous articles in higher education journals (e.g. *Studies in Higher Education*, *Journal of Higher Education*, *International Journal of Academic Development*). Kreber (2005) has described four different ways of understanding what a pursuit of scholarship of teaching and learning means, out of which the interpretation made by Trigwell and Shale (Trigwell & Shale, 2004), is the one we have aligned our thinking to. In their article they suggest that scholarship can be viewed as knowledge, as practice and as learning outcomes both with students and teachers. At Our Centre these ideas have been developed into a model for how teachers and educational leaders can go about the scholarship of their own practice, as teachers and learners respectively. By investigating their own practice as teachers the aim of scholarship of teaching and learning is to create opportunities for student learning as well as learning for the individual teachers, their colleagues and the organization they work within, to enhance and develop teaching and learning practice (Trigwell & Shale, 2004). The process of being scholarly about your own practice also aims to create collaboration between teachers as well as between teachers and students. The model, which describes the scholarship process, and which can be seen in Figure 1, constitutes six different activities which together are intended to aim for the enhancement of the student learning experience. The activities are not intended to be carried out in a linear way. Instead the practitioner (teacher or student) is encouraged to go back and forth between them. For instance, a teacher who is concerned about whether or not students actually understand the metabolism will look into her practice by *investigating* the design of learning activities, how well they work to promote student learning, *document* students' understandings, *explore existing knowledge* of e.g. how students understandings of the metabolism differ, by asking colleagues and perhaps search for articles in relevant journals, *develop* the teaching and learning activities and assessment so that they are aligned according to what was found, *make public and/or share* her work in

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