

04.7.2024

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Title

The scholarship of teaching : a comparison of conceptions held by experts and regular academic staff

Publication year

2003

Source/Footnote

In: Higher education. - 46 (2003) 1, S. 93 - 121

Inventory number

16650

Keywords

Lehre ; Vorlesungskritik ; Hochschullehrer : allgemein

Abstract

Over the past decade the scholarship of teaching has received considerable attention in the higher education literature as a reaction to the widely cited Carnegie Foundation's report "Scholarship Reconsidered" however, the concept has remained devoid of a unified definition. A recent Delphi study conducted with a selective group of scholars whose expertise lies in the area of university teaching and learning indicated the extent to which these "experts" agreed with each other on important features and unresolved issues they associate with the scholarship of teaching. Building on the results of the Delphi study, the present article discusses the results of a second survey comparing these "experts' "conceptions with those of a larger group of scholars whose expertise lies in a different academic field ("regular academic staff"), in order to identify the similarities and differences in the conceptions of the scholarship of teaching held by each of the two groups. While regular academic staff were found to associate the scholarship of teaching more with good or effective teaching "experts" pointed to notions such as peer review and scholarly standards. The discussion of the results focuses on the notion of consensus reached within and between the two groups. It is argued that in

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order to promote changes in policy with respect to what is to count as scholarship, identifying and reporting "experts" conceptions, though clearly necessary for promoting more enlightened discussions on the issue, will remain insufficient. Policy change in academe is more likely to ensue as a result of the wider academic community reaching consensus on the meaning, and nature, of the scholarship of teaching. The wider academic community includes "experts", as well as colleagues in departments and disciplinary associations. The article concludes by exploring the notion of consensus through the lens of critical social theory. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Kreber, Carolin, E-Mail: carolin.kreber@ualberta.ca