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Understanding teacher agency in universities: why and how lecturers shape and navigate university teaching practices

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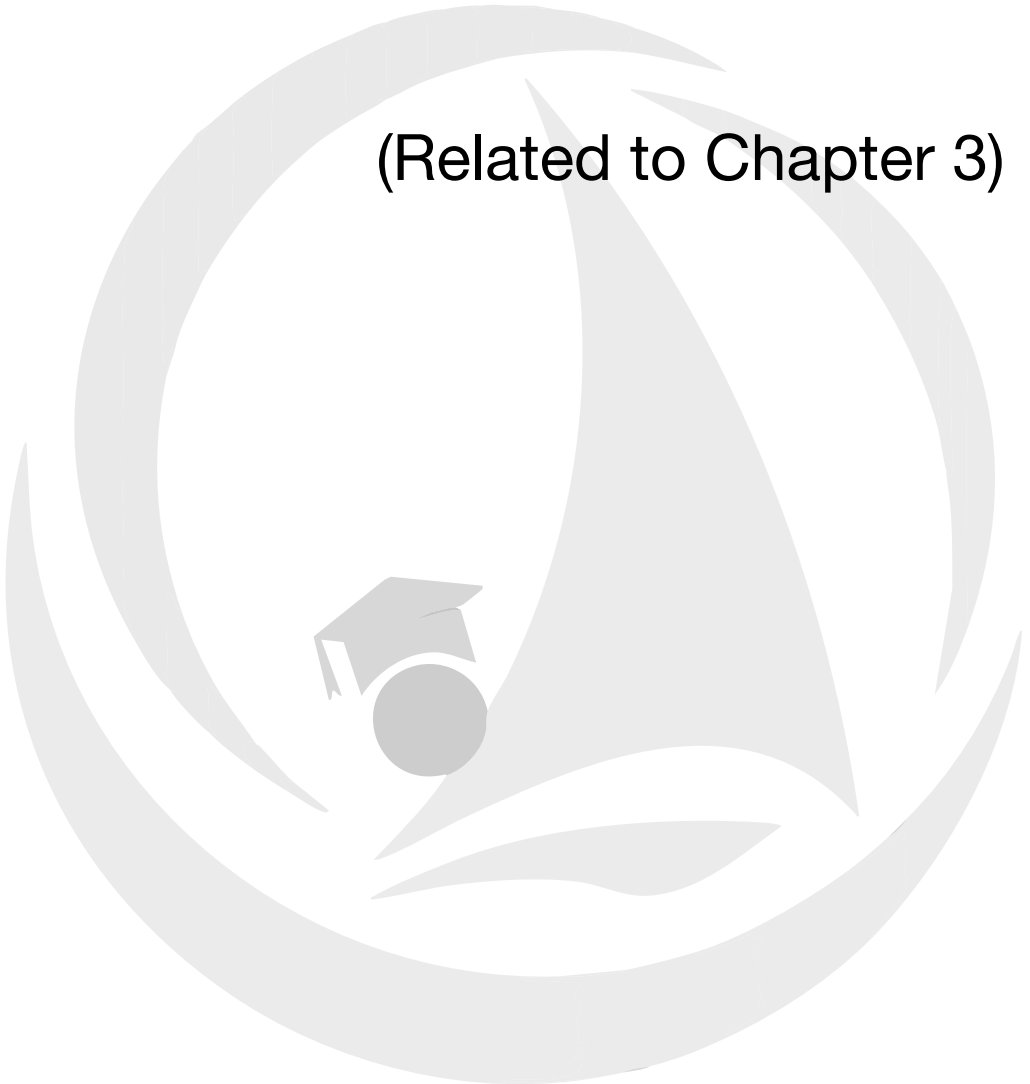
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Appendices

(Related to Chapter 3)



Appendix A. All codes and how often they are applied.

Code	Applied
1 dealing with rules and requirements of university	7
2 difference in pre- knowledge	7
3 insufficient preparation of students	6
4 passive unmotivated students	5
5 dealing with conflicts with colleagues and management	4
6 no suitable teaching space or organizational preconditions	4
7 dealing with complaints and unexpected questions from students	4
8 dealing with workload	4
9 too little time for teaching preparation	3
10 technical problems	3
11 managing student expectations	3
12 administration	2
13 student hurt by joke	2
14 being thrown in at the deep end	2
15 dealing with controversial topics in college	2
16 dealing with individual (problems) student	2
17 not enough seats for students	2
18 too little time for educational innovation	2
19 much freedom per individual but little coherence between courses	2
20 implement changes in course	2
21 difference in teaching drive between colleagues	2
22 balancing workload and offer personal guidance	2
23 didactic choices	2
24 change of job position	1

Appendix B. Four different forms of one scenario.

	First- person	Third- person
Open-ended	<p>TITLE: Unprepared students in lecture</p> <p>The third lecture of my course was about to begin. As usual, students had to read an article to prepare for the lecture. During the lecture, there came little response to my questions. Only the few students who always actively participate made any attempt to answer my questions. When I tried to involve others in the discussion, I didn't succeed. I asked who had read the article I had sent in advance, but it turned out that only a handful of students had prepared as instructed. I realized that most students had not prepared the lecture, so I knew I had to come up with a solution.</p>	<p>TITLE: Unprepared students in lecture</p> <p>The third lecture of Dr. Johnson's course was about to begin. As usual, students had to read an article to prepare for the lecture. During the lecture, there came little response to Dr. Johnson's questions. Only the few students who always actively participate made any attempt to answer Dr. Johnson's questions. When Dr. Johnson tried to involve others in the discussion, he didn't succeed. Dr. Johnson asked who had read the article he had sent in advance, but it turned out that only a handful of students had prepared as instructed. Dr. Johnson realized that most students had not prepared the lecture, so he knew he had to come up with a solution.</p>
Completed	<p>TITLE: Unprepared students in lecture</p> <p>The third lecture of my course was about to begin. As usual, students had to read an article to prepare for the lecture. During the lecture, there came little response to my questions. Only the few students who always actively participate made any attempt to answer my questions. When I tried to involve others in the discussion, I didn't succeed. I asked who had read the article I had sent in advance, but it turned out that only a handful of students had prepared as instructed. I realized that most students had not prepared the lecture and decided to use the situation as a learning opportunity by suggesting discussion groups to encourage future preparation and simplifying the content to re-engage the entire class.</p>	<p>TITLE: Unprepared students in lecture</p> <p>The third lecture of Dr. Johnson's course was about to begin. As usual, students had to read an article to prepare for the lecture. During the lecture, there came little response to Dr. Johnson's questions. Only the few students who always actively participate made any attempt to answer Dr. Johnson's questions. When Dr. Johnson tried to involve others in the discussion, he didn't succeed. Dr. Johnson asked who had read the article he had sent in advance, but it turned out that only a handful of students had prepared as instructed. Dr. Johnson realized that most students had not prepared the lecture and decided to use the situation as a learning opportunity by suggesting discussion groups to encourage future preparation and simplifying the content to re-engage the entire class.</p>

Appendix C. The 23 final scenarios.

TITLE: Students' personal problems

I'm a lecturer at this university. During one of my courses, I noticed that one of my students had been struggling in class for some time. The student was not meeting the deadlines, seemed unmotivated, and hardly interacted with other students. I had a conversation with the student, and she told me that things were going badly at home and that was why she couldn't keep her attention in class. I knew I had to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Workload

As a lecturer, I experience constant pressure to teach, conduct research, publish articles, and attend conferences. It feels like a constant struggle to get everything done within the tight deadlines set by the university. I am aware that this pressure is a result of both the high standards set for university teachers and our own passion for the job. It feels like there are never enough hours in a day, and at times I feel overwhelmed. I know I have to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Coherence between courses

One of the things I appreciate most about teaching at the university is the freedom I have to develop my own courses and shape my teaching in the way I feel best. I take pride in developing courses that can inspire and challenge my students, and I enjoy creating a unique learning experience for them. At the same time, sometimes it seems my colleagues and I are all working on our own "island." It seems that this individual freedom comes at the cost of a lack of coherence and consistency across the curriculum. So I knew I had to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Technical issues

Well in time, I arrived in class to get everything ready for my lecture. However, the computer was very slow in starting up and eventually crashed completely. While my students entered the class, I tried to restart the computer. My heart rate accelerated as I watched the clock tick away and realized how much time we were losing. I realized how dependent we are on technology nowadays! I knew I had to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Student expectations

As a lecturer, I notice that students increasingly expect individual feedback and guidance. Students' expectations seem to have changed since my own student days, and this puts additional pressure on me as a lecturer. I appreciate that students value feedback and guidance. I understand that this is a crucial part of their learning process, and I do my best to meet their expectations. But one day, I felt completely overwhelmed by the large number of emails I received from students who asked for feedback or a one-on-one meeting. So I knew I had to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Students differ in prior knowledge

I walked into the classroom, ready to start my subject's introductory lecture. It was the first lecture of the new academic year. First, I did a small recap of the basics, assuming these were still familiar to the students, and then introduced some new definitions and concepts. However, as I looked around the room, I noticed that many of my students struggled to keep up with the content. Some of them just stared blankly at their notes; others flipped desperately through their textbooks; only a few students were able to keep up. To verify whether students indeed struggled to keep up, I asked which of the students were familiar with the basic concepts. It turned out that there was a large variety with regard to their prior knowledge. For some, the new concepts were easy to understand, but for others, even the basic information was completely new. When I realized these differences in students' prior knowledge, I knew I had to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Unprepared students in lecture

The third lecture of my course was about to begin. As usual, students had to read an article to prepare for the lecture. During the lecture, there was little response to my questions. Only the few students who always actively participated made any attempt to answer my questions. When I tried to involve others in the discussion, I didn't succeed. I asked who had read the article I had sent in advance, but it turned out that only a handful of students had prepared as instructed. I realized that most students had not prepared for the lecture, so I knew I had to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Students' views on teaching quality of colleague

As a lecturer, I see it as my responsibility to put time and energy into the preparation of my classes and constantly look for ways to improve and innovate my teaching. However, I am told by students from other groups that their instructor is often poorly prepared, cannot provide appropriate answers to questions, and has already failed to meet the promised review deadline a couple of times. I hesitate to bring this up with my colleague: on the one hand, I do not think it is my responsibility, but on the other hand, my professionalism tells me that students have the right to a quality education. So I know I have to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Educational re-design

As a lecturer, I'm ambitious to keep improving my teaching and engage my students more, but constraints from the curriculum and my department hinder what I can achieve. There is no real incentive to improve teaching, nor are proper facilities provided. Still, I see it as part of my job to constantly look for ways to improve my teaching, so I know I have to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Implementing changes in course

I'm teaching a new course in which I want to experiment with some new teaching methods. However, the university requires me to send in the course description and grading procedures far in advance because of the long and tedious procedures for creating the study guide. Since I am currently busy teaching other courses, I feel hampered in implementing these innovations. On the one hand, I see it as my duty to further develop my teaching; on the other hand, I feel that my current teaching also deserves full attention. I know I have to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Students' unexpected questions

The students were in their seats, and I welcomed everyone. Before I actually began the lecture, a student raised her hand and asked a question unrelated to the lecture's topic. However, when I listened to the question, I found it an interesting question nonetheless, and, as I appreciated the idea that the student asked the question, I wanted to accommodate the student. I knew I had to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Balancing professional responsibilities

I value the personal mentoring of my students, as I believe personal attention contributes significantly to their success and well-being. I enjoy taking the time to have one-on-one meetings with my students and provide individual feedback, but I find that this becomes increasingly difficult as my student numbers increase. I find myself in a tight spot and have to make choices between my mentoring role and other duties, such as teaching and research. I struggle with this balance, so I know I have to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Lecture preparation

At the last moment, I had taken over a lecture from a colleague. When I started with the lecture, I soon realized that important slides were missing. I felt like I was thrown into the deep sea without a life jacket. I hadn't had enough time to prepare the lecture because my colleague hadn't saved all the slides. This frustrated me because I knew how important it was to provide students with a well-structured and organized lecture. I knew I had to come up with a solution.

TITLE: View on teaching

It was the first time my colleague and I taught a particular current course. To prepare for the course, we divided the topics among ourselves. Beforehand, I was very excited to teach the course with my colleague. However, I discovered that we held completely different views on what good teaching entails. Conflicts arose over things like whether class attendance would be compulsory, the amount of feedback we would give, the method of grading, etc. These were long and exhausting debates; discussions ran high, and we struggled to understand each other. I knew I had to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Interaction in online teaching

I stared at my computer screen in frustration as I tried to lead an online discussion with my students. I found it hard to feel the same energy and connection as I did in the physical classroom. I missed the spontaneous conversations, body language, and in-person conversations with my students. I felt isolated and uncomfortable in this new environment. Still, I didn't want to give up because I felt I should be able to teach my classes properly even in this situation. So, I knew I had to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Administrative tasks in thesis supervision

As a lecturer, I find the administrative hassle surrounding thesis supervision particularly time-consuming and frustrating. It feels like it never ends. I have to fill out all kinds of forms, keep track of deadlines, prepare reports, answer countless emails, and attend meetings. It seems more like an administrative job than supervising students. I would like to spend more time giving feedback and guidance to students instead of being stuck in a bureaucratic system. It is time for a more efficient way of working. I know I have to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Controversial topics in course

I taught a course that included some highly contested and controversial topics. I knew that these topics could lead to heated debates and even division among the students in class. Although I felt I was usually well-able to lead class discussions about sensitive issues, it seemed to become increasingly difficult to maintain an atmosphere of respect and understanding in class. What I feared did indeed happen: students felt attacked, and discussions got out of hand. I knew I had to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Being overwhelmed as a new lecturer

As a starting lecturer, I felt overwhelmed. The first period of teaching felt like a big pandemonium, full of challenges, like supervising students, preparing and delivering courses, and doing that in an inspiring way. Although I understood that it is normal to experience these challenges and I still had to build routines, it also felt like I was thrown into the deep end, and I had no idea where to start or how to manage all of these tasks. I knew I had to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Taking offense at joke

A student came up to me after the lecture. He said he felt offended by a joke another student had made during class. I felt uncomfortable because I was not aware of this situation, but I knew it was important to create a safe learning environment where students feel safe and free to express themselves. I took the student's concerns seriously because he was genuinely upset. I knew I had to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Unmotivated students

I have been teaching at this university for several years now and have encountered many difficult students, but I had never experienced a class like this one before. Many students seemed uninterested in the material. Some students were sleeping; others were looking at their phones or talking to each other. When I asked who was interested in the subject, only a few hands went up. When I realized that the subject did not interest students at all, I knew I had to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Change of job position

I have accepted the position of educational director and find it difficult to be the manager of former colleagues. I feel I am in an awkward position and don't really know how to handle this situation. It occurs to me that my attitude toward my former co-workers has changed and that I am struggling to make choices that affect them. I want to find a way in my new role and find the right balance between collegiality and leadership. Still, I notice from the side of colleagues and myself that there is friction because of my new role. I know I have to come up with a solution.

TITLE: Pedagogical choices

As a lecturer, I feel I need to continuously develop. This means that I have to use new pedagogical approaches. But I'm reluctant to change my pedagogical choices too drastically, since I am afraid that the students will not understand it and therefore will not perform as well. I still want to keep looking for ways to improve my teaching and challenge my students without disadvantaging them through poor teaching, but traditional ways of teaching feel more comfortable and may be safer. I know I have to come up with a solution.

TITLE: University rules

I'm an enthusiastic and dedicated lecturer, but I feel restricted by the rules and requirements of the university where I work. I have to follow a strict protocol for deviating from an exam date. Currently, a good student of mine is unable to take the exam due to personal circumstances. I want to accommodate her by offering another date, but because of all the rules of the university, she has to take the retake. Neither of us wants that, so I know I have to come up with a solution.

A