A study of teachers' reflections on teaching and learning

According to Schön [1] professional knowledge is to a high degree based on tacit knowledge. For university teachers, tacit knowledge includes knowledge about what works – and what does not work - when teaching a specific class of students a specific subject in a specific context. However, it is important to make tacit knowledge explicit for at least two reasons: Firstly, for the individual teacher it may support a more conscious linking of observations and experiences from own teaching practice to general principles of teaching and learning. This linking could enable a systematic analysis and development of own teaching in order to improve student learning [2]. Secondly, it is also beneficial to make one's tacit knowledge explicit in order to discuss teaching and learning with other persons, e.g. during peer coaching of less experienced colleagues, or collaboration on teaching development with colleagues. This unfortunately seldom takes place and leaves teachers in a limbo of solidarity. Therefore, the authors have developed a board game for university teachers to articulate and share their reflections on teaching and learning in a collective process. The game consists of a board and a deck of cards, where each card contains a statement related to teaching and/or learning. The purposes of the game are to support a team-oriented approach to teaching and thereby to strengthen communities of teaching practices [3], i.e. to develop groups of colleagues, who acknowledge the individual team members’ different ways of teaching and how a manifold of teaching practices fertilises the students' building of skills, competences and attitudes towards becoming professional engineers. The game has been played at two international engineering education conferences, at an annual education day at a university abroad, and at several faculty meetings at the authors' university. Data have been collected on the selection and ranking of cards. These represent the players' reflections on teaching practices and learning, and on consensus reached within groups of players – reflections which influence and are influenced by teaching practice. This paper documents an explorative study of the players' reflections on teaching and learning based on the selected and ranked cards. In this first study the data has been analysed focusing on the following two questions: What kinds of attitudes towards teaching and learning do the selected cards represent? And which cards are selected most often?