

## BOOK REVIEW

# Cases on Quality Teaching Practices in Higher Education

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*Cases on Quality Teaching Practices in Higher Education*

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## INTRODUCTION

The book covers issues related to teaching excellence, changes and paradigm shifts in teaching culture of higher education institutions, leadership capability building initiatives, enhancement of teaching and learning, and teaching awards and recognition programs at national level and at universities of different sizes and scope around the world. Authors from Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, UK, and USA share their experiences, research findings, and observations, make a compelling case for the importance of recognizing and celebrating teaching excellence, summarize ways to organize and maintain a successful faculty

development and faculty rewards programs, and offer solutions, recommendations, and future research directions.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The book is a collection of 22 chapters. Many chapters have supporting tables, graphs, and figures to complement content, summarize ideas, and present data visually. All chapters have references to publications and online resources. As all chapters carry the uniformed format (abstract, main text, conclusion, and references), the book is user-friendly and easy to follow either for quick review or detailed reading.

The book is useful for several reasons. First, it provides many examples of research-intensive universities where research and teaching do not compete, but complement each other (yes, it is happening!); secondly, it outlines a number of ways to establish new or reimaging existing university-wide programs to define, recognize, and celebrate academic excellence; and finally, it

lays foundation for pedagogical action research leading to improved practices, sound policies, strategic decision-making, and increased dissemination of findings through publications and workshops.

Several chapters contain case studies of faculty improving their teaching and enhancing student learning and assessment with technologies: clickers, lecture capturing software, screencasting, high quality digital imagery, interactive web-based resources, and videos. Specific examples are given for the programs in accounting, engineering, medicine and art which will be helpful for faculty teaching both graduate and undergraduate students in a broad range of disciplines. Practical advice is given for fostering inquiry-based learning and teaching, enhancing self-directed independent reflective learning, and developing integrated and holistic professional development programs.

Highlighted below are leitmotifs throughout the book:

- Teaching professional development sessions and technology workshops should be holistically combined and integrated, rather than separated;
- Faculty are motivated to improve their teaching by both extrinsic (course release time, stipends, awards, promotion and tenure requirements) and intrinsic rewards (supportive teaching culture, collegiate discourse, collaborative scholarly activities), with latter being not less prominent and important. Combination of both might be the most successful;
- There is a need to agree upon the definition of quality teaching and its benchmarks, which might then make it more straightforward to support and develop quality teaching, recognize and reward it;
- High quality, effective, innovative, mindful, and reflective teaching should go beyond content delivery and lead to deep learning and achievement of high quality outcomes in collaborative, technology-rich, inquiry-and research-based, and authentic environment;
- Research and teaching should be viewed as related activities;
- Peer-review of teaching can and should be organized as one of the mechanisms of faculty academic development and might lead to meaningful formative and summative performance review of teaching;
- Faculty engagement in professional learning communities might lead to willingness to reflect on and improve one's teaching practices and strategies;
- Teaching should not be happening in isolation. By making it collaborative and public it might be possible to boost faculty motivation and desire to innovate;
- Changes in teaching culture do not happen overnight; consideration of change management processes, faculty buy in, strategic cross-institutional planning collaborative and collegiate initiatives, and project management techniques might greatly facilitate sometimes painful processes of paradigm shift and achieving systemic change in institutional culture.

As the content of the book contains examples from different countries with different educational systems, and even different terminology for certain concepts (e.g., faculty ranking, promotion and tenure system, etc.), readers are advised to familiarize themselves with these difference to put things into perspective. Several chapters of the book describe different technologies used to engage students and/or create instructional materials. I would recommend for readers to review these chapters conceptually, rather than focusing on specific tools, which might not be readily available at their universities or which are replaced by comparable technologies.

## SUMMARY

I would *recommend* this book for faculty interested in improving their teaching strategies and those organizing or leading university offices/ programs of faculty rewards and recognition.

*Dina Vyortkina is the Director of the Office of Information and Instructional Technologies (OIIT) at the Florida State University College of Education. She has been involved in faculty development activities and enhancement of learning, teaching, assessment, and research with technologies for more than 10 years both in the USA and UK. Her expertise involves, but is not limited to instructional design, performance improvement and human resource development, pre- and in-service teacher preparation in the area of blended and online learning and teaching, faculty professional development for face-to-face, blended, and fully online instruction, technology integration in higher education, and information and communication technologies for educational administrators and school leadership preparation programs. As a faculty member at the FSU School of Teacher Education, she is teaching online classes in Blended and Online Learning and Teaching program (BOLT; <http://coe.fsu.edu/BOLT>). Dr. Vyortkina is a reviewer and program committee member for SITE--Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education International Conference, Ed-Media -- World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia and Telecommunications, and Global Learn Asia Pacific-- Global Conference for Learning and Technology.*