

QUICK TALKS

TITLE: Faculty clusters: sustainable educational development at ETH

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Abstract

In an educational development programme for faculty at ETH a certain number of places in each course are reserved for former participants' colleagues. We introduced this scheme to enhance the sustainability of the programme by 'going further together', to quote the conference theme. As Bolander-Laksov (2021, p. 2-3) confirms, for educational development to be sustainable, 'local cultures could play an important role'. Roxå and Mrtensson (2015, p. 202) explain that meso-level microcultures 'influenc[e] the interactions between formal development activities and informal learning during day-to-day practices'. This means that the type of microculture which faculty 'return home' to (Bolander Laksov, 2022) after an educational development programme is decisive for its outcomes with regard to teaching and student learning. Several clusters of faculty members were identified among alumni of our educational development programme whose members either co-teach a course or work in the same research group. Our investigation aims to reveal how a faculty cluster operates in practice: Specifically, we will find out if and how it influences a) faculty members' everyday teaching activities, and b) shapes the microculture with a view to teaching and learning. A written survey was distributed to the faculty members who form these clusters. Then, focus group interviews were conducted to deepen the insights gained from the survey. This method was tested on one faculty network cluster, with plans to repeat the process. This is important on the one hand to develop or adjust the specific strategies used in the programme to make its outcomes sustainable within our institution, and on the other hand, to deepen our understanding of the links between individual development and sustainable educational development for an entire institution.