

Teaching Sabbatical: Final report

In December 2013, I found out that I had been awarded a teaching sabbatical scholarship at Haverford College (HC) in Pennsylvania. HC is a rather small, private liberal art undergraduate college, situated about 1 mile west of Philadelphia (15 minutes by regional train which costs about 5 dollars). Philadelphia is the fifth largest city in the US and it takes about an hour by train to New York City and about 2 hours to Washington DC. We really appreciated the location of the college, and that the railway system, at least in this part of the country, is well extended, as well as easy and pleasant to use. (We did not rent a car during our stay, and we really did not feel a need to, although new friends were extremely helpful in driving us to hard to reach places.)

HC is located right between two smaller communities – Haverford and Ardmore – along the so called *Maine Line*, a term for the settlements that started during the early 1800 around the railway from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh. Today, some of the wealthiest towns in the US can be found along the main line. We stayed in Ardmore, at the edge of the College Campus, just minutes away from my department (and about as close to the day care where we had our daughter). Ardmore has about 12 000 inhabitants of which about 80% are non-rasified, with a median age of 38 years and a median income of \$42 000 per person and year. HC is a high-ranked college, listed as number 11 in the USA by Forbes. It belongs to a cluster of colleges – HC, Bryn Mawr and Swarthmore – which are separate in most aspects but which allows their respective students to swap courses, a so called Tri-Co arrangement. The yearly tuition for a freshperson is \$61 000 including room and board. From the second year, the students are not required to stay on the meal plan unless they want to, which will reduce the tuition somewhat. The campus has one of the oldest planned college gardens in the US and consists of 81 hektar of elm, oak, maple trees, and squirrels, and includes a large duck pond featuring Canada geese and turtle, among other things. Sixty-one percent of the about 135 teachers live on campus whereas this is true for 98% of the about 1200 students, of which 52% are women, 35% rasified, 10% international. Half of the students spend some time to study abroad. The student/faculty ratio is 9:1 and 82% of courses have less than 20 students.

HC was founded in 1833 by a group of New York and Philadelphia Quakers. Nowadays, the College is religiously independent but Quaker values such as dignity, tolerance and respect still remain a central part of both academic and social life. One aspect of this is the so called honor code which guides college life. One example of this is the use of unproctored exams and students taking care of all disciplinary issues.

Preparing for the semester at Haverford College

Preparations for the upcoming stay begun immediately. Right before the winter holiday I started to have e-mail conversations and a Skype-meeting with the head of the department Dr Benjamin Le. We agreed that I would teach his course in social psychology since he would be partly released from his teaching responsibilities during that semester. However, I was given much freedom with regards to both content and form. I decided to create a fusion-like course, including an introduction of basic social psychology during the first half of the course and then an introduction of select applied social psychological topics during the remainder of the course. During the early spring I wrote a short course description which was to be decided on by the College Board. Ben was very helpful during all

of this although I felt that I pretty much stumbled in the dark concerning what to expect of the students (the level), what I should/could use as exams, how the grading system works and many more practical questions. Even if Ben and I had many discussions about these things, I found it hard to fully understand them until I had actually started to teach the course (which of course in itself poses a sort of paradox in regards to my planning).

I had hoped that I would be given the opportunity to co-teach, and had also written this in my application. However, I really enjoyed teaching this course, and I tried to sink into the American higher education system through my students and through other available resources.

Searching for housing

During the spring of 2014 there were a lot of other practical issues that had to be dealt with, parallel to my regular work and to the planning of the upcoming course. A planning trip was to be scheduled at the beginning of the spring, where I would be visiting with the College for about a week. I choose to schedule my trip quite early, so that I would be able to visit with potential day care centers since they required early registration (including a non-refundable fee of approximately 150-200 dollar), in order to be able to offer a place. The Visa application also required quite some work; a lot of different documentation from different authorities as well as visits to the Consulate was required, and I had to fill in a specific document which was to be signed by the College. The whole process did take the whole spring semester (I received that final document in June), so I really recommend starting this early on. Insurance had to be taken care of. Private insurance is not cheap and it may not cover requirements by the College.

We arranged for our house to be sublet and we spent a lot of time trying to find housing in the US. Unfortunately, the College did not have enough housing arrangements this particular semester so in May we were told that they could not offer us anything (we had been given hints of this as early as in March). It was, however, quite difficult to find something else that would be affordable and livable (not easy to find furnished apartments/houses for less than a year). For instance, prices off campus tended to be around four times as high. The College did offer us something in the end.

Searching for a day care and losing our day care spot in Sweden

We spent much time looking at different day care options. My future colleagues – including professors at different departments – were very helpful at this stage, sharing personal experiences. Finally, we choose a day care within about 5 minutes walking distance from our apartment. Our 2.5-year old spent 4 days per week there. The first couple of months were periodically quite tough, with some cultural differences, misunderstandings and issues relating to our child not speaking English. But, in general our child was very happy to be around children her age, and she soon found new friends among them. Also, she started to pick up the language – understanding about 95% of all spoken language and mixing Swedish and English when talking, during the second half of our stay.

Unfortunately, we lost our Swedish day care spot since we were not allowed to keep it when being away for more than 1-2 months (rules in Stockholm County). So, we had to quit our spot and put ourselves back in the queue again, hoping for a new offer in time for our return. And, crossing our fingers that we would be able to come back to this particular day care since we had been so very grateful for our spot there. We were quite devastated by the fact that we lost our spot; the queue turned out to be very long (we had place 68...), and they would take in younger children primarily

rather than 3-year-olds. Miraculously, we were offered a space right before we went back home to Sweden, and were able to start the first week of January.

Other practical issues

Other things that we organized during the spring semester were among other things cell phone plans, Internet plan, a doctor visit for our child (required from the day care), and the trip over in August. It turned out to be quite hard to organize for some of the things when one does not have an American telephone number and/or a social security number. One example of this was the fact that we were expected to pay the first rent for the apartment plus a deposit in beforehand as well as the first month' payment for the day care (plus a registration fee). The latter I solved when I visited Haverford in February. But, for the rent I had to buy checks in Sweden which all together cost 100 dollars, and then I had to send them to the landlord. However, they were unable to cash the checks because I did not have an American bank account and a social security number. I could not cash them either, for the same reasons. The situation was partly solved when I paid an extra rent for the first month when we arrived in August. And, I applied for a received a social security number which made it possible for the checks to be cashed during the end of our stay.

The planning trip in the spring of 2014

I scheduled my trip in the end of February-beginning of March, which may seem overly early, but I wanted to decide on a day care as soon as possible in order to secure a place. I made sure that I would have some time scheduled with Ben, and he came back with a schedule including sit-ins on several of my new colleagues' lectures, scheduled coffee breaks and lunches as well as a dinner with faculty members. The schedule included a tour of the campus by one colleague as well as a different tour of various housing options (although, I was told at this point that there would most likely not be any available for us). This was nonetheless an interesting experience. In addition, I scheduled visits at a few different day cares. Finally, I sat in on the weekly department meeting.

Every person I met with during this trip was extremely helpful and expressed much interest in me and my teaching and research interests. I felt quite at home right away! The College appeared as a remarkably beautiful place, filled with resources, motivated individuals and both social responsibility and academic freedom. I realize in retrospect that it was probably very good idea to have scheduled meetings prior to arriving at the College since faculty members are generally very busy with their work.

The course

I was not able to start working on the more specific contents of the course, and this was not required by the HC either. I started working on it during the summer, and finalize each lecture continuously during the fall semester. I put together the lectures using material I had previously as a starting point. I worked out the examinations, tasks and assignments, and the proportion of the final course grade that I wanted each examination to consist of. The final course consisted of a mixture of lectures and work-shops and student-driven activities. It was named "Applied social psychology" and consisted of part basic social psychology and part applied topics such as learning in higher education, criminality and police investigations. I strived to make both the format and the contents applied such that student-activities during lectures could be in the form of an intervention as a "lived experience" and assignments and exams were formulated in order for students to be able to develop self-regulatory

skills. Apart from numerous individual and group-based tasks throughout the course (including for instance a task right before an exam where students were to first answer an exam question each and then to work in groups with a couple of answers in order to create a scoring template), there were three exams each contributing to the final exam. Two of them consisted of a test with part multiple-choice questions and part short-answer questions. One of these took place during the middle of the course (mid-term exam) and the other right before the final exam week (final exam). The third examination consisted of an individual paper which students were to continuously work on during the course of the semester. I included two peer-review sessions, one at the beginning and one towards the end of the course, where students would have a week to read another student's paper. After having given and received an evaluation, each student was to submit a short paper describing what they had used from the evaluation in the continuous work. Each of these activities was included in the final course grade. I also had the students work in groups of about four persons with a small field study, where they collected limited data on a freely chosen applied social psychological phenomenon and then discussed these studies (or rather reports that they later handed in) in a seminar.

During the mid-spring, the course was approved by the College which meant that the students could start signing up for it. The maximum number of students was 35, and about 20 students signed up. This number later dropped to 14 after the initial try-out period where students sign up on more courses than they intent to take and go to lectures on each course in order to try them out. I was quite happy with the smaller number of students though, because it meant that I would have more time for interactions with each student. The group consisted of all years i.e. some were freshpersons (who had a sufficient score in psychology from high school), some were sophomores etc.

The course started on September 3 and ended on December 20. The last week of the course was final exam week, which meant that there were no lectures to be scheduled that week. Otherwise I met with my students twice per week, Tuesdays and Thursday at 10-11.30 am. I also scheduled one office hour in association with each lecture (although very few of the students actually use this resource – when they wanted to meet with me, we set up a time, sometimes during office hours and sometimes not, depending on their respective schedule). However, I made an effort always to be available and always to be in my office during office hours. This seemed to be the general culture at the department.

When I started the course, I realized quite soon that the students seemed to be used to more support concerning their required readings (about 25 articles in addition to the chapters in the course book) than I had expected, and so I continuously worked in much more details about these readings into the lectures.

During the course of the semester I had the opportunity to involve two other persons as guest lecturers on the course, one of which was Ben Le and the other was a new acquaintance that I had made at a different University outside of Philadelphia and who was conducting research within an area relevant to the course. I was able to sit in on this lecture, which was very interesting.

Other activities during the semester

I was invited to an introductory seminar at the College just prior to the start of the semester. This seminar consisted of two half-days to which all new faculty members were invited. We received

information about everything from the honor code to the grading system, which was quite helpful (although, some things were not so evident until I actually started working with them).

There were only two weekly department meetings during the semester due to the recruiting of a new faculty member in biological psychology. However, those that I could visit were very rewarding to go to. I also visited a faculty meeting, which gave some insight into the unique discussion and decision format at this College (consensus). Further, I got to know faculty members at another University outside of Philadelphia and made arrangements where one of them would be a guest lecturer at my course and I will guest lecture through Skype during spring 2015 on one of their courses. These contacts feel very important since they both teach and do research within areas that relate to my own areas. Further, I was given the chance to get yet another image of an American higher educational institution, which differed quite a lot from the one where I spent my time. I am confident that this brought more nuances to my newly acquired perspective.

I co-operated with the HC library in order to help students with the writing process of their individual papers. The library was most helpful and made a tailored guide for the students upon my request, where they gave examples of how to search for relevant sources etc.

Also, since I was not able to co-teach, I decided to make my own course the center of my academic experience, using students as my sounding board for instance through continuous evaluations and also discussing it as much as I could with my colleagues (I was fortunate enough to share office space and so we talked a lot during the semester).

I also found ourselves gaining a better understanding of American culture, in which context one has to place the higher educational systems, through getting to know people more privately. For instance, with our new friends we experienced trick or treat during Halloween and were invited to tree trimming parties during Christmas, had play-dates and dinners, picked pumpkins and went together on trips. We also had many interesting discussions about possible similarities and differences between the Swedish and American higher education with many of the people that we befriended. In short, our private experiences have been very important as a background image and a context for my academic understanding.

Comparisons between HC and the Department of Psychology, Stockholm University

Student population

The student population seems to be quite different between these two departments; at HC the students come straight from high school, where they belong to the top 20% and they are used to spending a lot of time studying and doing other more or less voluntary scholastic activities including various types of sports. My own, quite non-scientific, polls indicate that students have not one day off per week, when they do not study or engage in something related to their studies, and their base-level of stress is generally quite high. They pay an enormous (even in American measures) amount of money for their four years of college, and a majority prepares to continue their studies for many years to come. They are extremely motivated and are used to being at the top in terms of grades. In Sweden, I would say that the student population is much more diverse. First of all, our department has a much larger body of psychology students, making them more anonymous. Second, many

students at my home department have other obligations parallel to their studies such as work (in some cases, needed in order to make ends meet financially). Students are generally older, or at least it is much more common with older students. Finally, even if we have programs and courses that are sought after, some students can be accepted through other means than grades from high school (such as the Högskoleprovet), which means that not all students belong to the top percentage in terms of previous grades.

Education and research

There is no graduate education at the department in HC. Faculty members teach full time and after 3 years they are entitled to a sabbatical semester (which, from what I understand, is very generous compared to some other places). I've compared the teaching burden for a full time professor at HC and a full time assistant professor at my home department and it seems to be roughly the same amount of "contact" hours with the students. This means that faculty members at HC also have some time for e.g. research (about 30%) even if they have a full time position. Doing research also seems prioritized by all faculty members. Most of them have their own lab and they engage students either when they write their theses or as research assistants. When students are involved in a faculty's lab to write a paper, as far as I understand, they are not obligated to conduct research that is in line with the faculty member's own on-going research, but rather a small group of students work closely with the professor to read past research within a specified subarea in order to arrive at some gap in the knowledge. At my home department, students work either alone or in pairs, either on a subject of their own choice or as part of on-going research. I also noticed at HC that research experience and track-record seem to be very highly valued throughout the recruitment process, and of the 150 applicants to the position they recruited for, all fulfilled criteria and the six candidates that were invited to visit HC were up-and-coming in their specified field. Thus, one cannot say that this College is only involved with education, but rather faculty members seem to be concerned with both research and education (despite the lack of graduate programs). From this point of view, I don't see any major differences (other than that we have PhD students at my home department).

Relationship teacher-student

At my home department, the student group is very large, about 1000 per year. This means that many – although not all – programs and courses consists of large student groups as well. In turn, this makes the contact with students in general less personal, is my experience. I often have a hard time remembering students' names, and also find it hard to track their development and progress. This anonymity of course brings about both positive and negative consequences e.g. students who perform poorly to begin with have a larger chance to redeem themselves and for students who have problems with social situations might be somewhat more comfortable among 70 other students where there will always be other students that pose questions and answer them. At HC, I think that it is a lot easier to know the students' names by heart and their past performances (in particular those that do good or those that do not so good). Teachers are expected to contact students that seem to be doing worse or for other reasons that one should highlight (e.g. a student who seems to have mental health issues etc.). I did also contact two students. This felt a bit awkward to me, mainly because I am not used to "interfering" in students' lives, but afterwards I think I actually liked this idea. Students are surrounded by so many resources and have a tightly knit security net which means that they are in quite good hands while being in a vulnerable situation (i.e. being in a vulnerable age, living on their own away from home for the first time, being forced to perform very good and at the same time having to figure out what to do with their lives). Also, at HC, there was quite a relaxed

climate between teachers and students where some would call the teacher professor whereas others would call them by their first name. Most of mine would call me by my first name, which of course is what I am used to from home. In general, student at HC do not really question the teachers competence and motives. I am used to having to motivate the forms and contents of my teaching. I think there are both positive and negative sides to these different approaches or cultures perhaps. Being questioned also means that one tries to make the teaching as see-through as possible for instance making the grading system a system that students can take part of. Not being questioned on the other hand also means more time to devote to the contents of the course, making it more in line with the research front (rather than just trusting the "introduction to"-book on some sections).

The institution's view of breadth versus specialization in education

I would say that the HC offers quite a broad educational foundation to their students, with little or no options for specialization. I do, however, believe that this is the case among liberal-arts colleges around the US and so I would not say that this is unique to HC. At my home department, we offer all levels, from basic level (A or 1) to graduate studies. Also, we have a broad selection of both elective courses and different programs which means that we have both the breadth and the specialization. However, I think that students at HC in general wanted many details about e.g. different research findings which indicate that even if their education is quite broad in nature, they wanted it to be as deep as possible. My experience from Swedish higher education is that the level of details and specialization is a progressive movement starting from not so many research article and separate findings to using quite a few articles and learning how to draw conclusions from them. I was quite impressed by the number of required readings that students usually had – and in my course at well – at HC, but after a while I realized that there was a variation among the students in terms of how many read each article, to what depth and with what understanding. This is also something that I later saw in the exams.

Competence development for teachers

From what I can discern, teachers at HC have about the same percentage of competence development time including for research within a full time position as do we at my home department (about 30%). They seem to be conducting a fair amount of research and also going on conferences all over the globe as well as engaging in editorial journal work etc. At the HC one could also engage oneself in a vast array of different competence developmental activities for faculty members including seminars on pedagogical topics. One thing that struck me was the integration of library resources with faculty member's work. At HC the library helped me to produce a package of tailored tools for the students to use when writing their individual papers – or rather I contacted the library and they did a lot of the work towards this end. If I compare the competence development to my home department it is difficult to see any major differences at the surface. However, I would say that there seems to be many more options to pursuit at HC. Also, it seems as if it less common to co-teach at HC beyond having guest speakers at the course. I think at my home department, there seems to be more collaborative work in teaching. But, perhaps this observation is not quite fair to make, since I only had a course of my own, and I do not really have any experience of co-teaching at HC.

Teacher recruitment

It was both a good and a bad thing, I think, that the department was in the midst of recruiting a new faculty member while I was there. The good part was that I got a unique chance to see what this process was like. The bad thing was that it took a lot of the time from current faculty members,

which meant less time for me to spend with them and for instance on departmental activities such as department meetings. The process seemed extremely rigorous, perhaps even more so than that at my home department (even if that also comprises a long and thorough process). About 150 candidates had applied for the position, and from what I understand, all of them fulfilled criteria. After a long and straining process, the current faculty had narrowed down the search field to six candidates from all corners of the country. Each candidate was to visit the department during about two days. During this time, they were scheduled to keep a lecture about their research and to which both faculty members and students were invited (and were encouraged to ask questions and afterwards to "rate" the candidate) and were among other things also to meet with students only during a lunch. It was really interesting to be able to watch this process at a distance, although I was not involved in the discussions about the different candidates. I did have some less formal discussions with some faculty members about this process and it seems as if they were also interested in how the individual would fit in at the department and how they interacted with the students. At my home department – at least when I applied for my current position – the process is quite similar to the point where the top candidates have been selected among all applicants, and by several reviewers. However, my experience from applying and being selected a possible candidate at Swedish Universities has led to quite different processes from that point on (being called to interview or not called, the interview being led by one person or by a group of people including representatives from the student population etc.). However, at no Swedish institution have I been asked to keep a lecture or being asked to spend one or two days to talk to possible future colleagues and students.

Pedagogy and its importance

From my experience of sitting in on different lectures at HC, it seems as there are quite different approaches to teaching and pedagogy. My guess is, about as varied as it seems to be at my home department. In other words, some teachers seem to use more classic lecturing and more traditional examinations whereas others seem to use more methods to include students into the lectures and the examinations. However, regardless of which approach teachers use, they all seem to be very interested in students' learning. I think that this might be the case even more so than at my home department, where I think there is a quite varied image of the student and what their and the teachers role is. It seems as if some of my colleagues view pedagogical competence development courses as something one needs to go through when it is required, but that one would not choose to do it of free will. I think this comparison may however be quite unfair, for many reasons. First, my home department belongs to a University, and as such, we are also very research driven. Second, my home department is a very large one, including many more interests and motives. Some are mainly interested in pedagogy. Some in research. Some in administration. These varied interests are perhaps easier to co-exist in my home environment compared to in a small liberal-arts college, where teaching is and has to be the absolute primary focus. A majority of graduate students in my discipline in Sweden also teach up to about 20% of their time during their graduate studies. Many of them also end up applying for and accepting what is theoretically a teaching position (*lektorat*). However, the focus on research in graduate school is overwhelming. For instance, it is usually called something with research (e.g. "forskarskola") and most if not all PhD courses concern the subject of interest, not pedagogy. Further, I don't think that any consideration is taken to the individual prospective PhD student's interest or willingness to contribute to or develop within pedagogy during the course of their studies, when they are considered for a PhD position. Perhaps one could discuss whether this is a good way to approach our future teachers in higher education?

The status of pedagogical merits compared to research merits

At HC, all of the candidates for the position that they were recruiting were up-and-coming within their respective specialization of that particular sub-field of psychology. They each had their own research lab or worked in well-known labs. As far as I understood, they each had numerous publications and had landed grants of some dignity. There seemed to be some variation in terms of their experience in teaching, and this variation and how it expressed itself during the days they visited with the department, also seemed to play a significant role. In the case of one candidate, for instance, it was difficult to put his own research into a context of education and also in the context of other research areas. Taken together, I interpret this as to mean that research is very important at HC, but in the end, pedagogical merits and interests can triumph. At my home department I would say that research merits still make out the most important aspect, at least when I have applied for positions. This also seems to be the case when being considered for a higher title within the Swedish system (associate professor, professor). And, as I have discussed earlier, this is certainly the case when accepting individuals to our PhD programs and when they graduate. Again, the different systems probably carries with them both negative and positive consequences, but in general I think that the Swedish system would benefit – not from just increasing the status of the pedagogical merits, but rather from increasing the merits involved with working in a more integrated fashion with both of these aspects.

Curriculum, courses offered and forms of examination

The Department of psychology at HC consists of 5 tenure track faculty members (2 full professors, 2 associate professors, 1 assistant professor) and about 6 visiting professors. Students majoring in psychology are required to take one general course in psychology as well as one course in method and statistics. In addition they are to take six more advanced (200- or 300-level) courses in various subareas, two lab-courses (300-level) and either two semesters of thesis work or one semester plus an additional course. The courses offered are more basic (rather than applied) to their character. The department has numerous visiting professors, and also co-operate with other universities which means that along with the courses that are always offered, there is also a number of courses that differ somewhat from semester to semester. The examinations seem to follow roughly the same structure with a mid-term exam and a final exam. Some courses seem to include a similar type of exam consisting of short-answer questions to be answered individually and within a specified time-frame (for instance 90 minutes). Many also include a paper that the students hand in during the final exam week. Apart from this it seems to be quite common to give smaller in-lecture tests and other types of assignments such as reading questions and oral presentations continuously during the course of the semester. From what I can tell, the forms of the examinations seem to be quite similar across the courses. At my home department, the most common structure is to place a final examination at the end of a course, which will decide the final course grade, along with other tasks and assignments that each are mandatory in order to receive the course grade. I would not say that it is common to use group work as a basis for final course grade. This was however used by some teachers at HC, where they had a system to tease out the respective student's contribution (which requires some time of observation on the teachers part). Also, the examinations at HC often consists of several different tasks (in my case, I had three roughly equal parts and where the last part also included four smaller tasks), all which contribute with a given percentage to the final grade. I think that this system is quite fair since the courses are much longer and thus it could be difficult to measure student's performance only at the end of the course with a large exam. Perhaps this system

could be more utilized at my home department, even if we usually have 5-week courses, at least in courses where the student group is not very large. The HC system does require quite a lot of administration. I would say that the grading system(s) and grades in themselves seem much more translucent at my home department compared to at HC. It seemed as there was no common method or practice concerning how to evaluate student's performances, and furthermore, the students did not always seem to know how the teachers did this.

Relation between the institution and its environment and the extent to which educational programs conform to labor market needs

In some sense, HC seems to be somewhat socially progressive in that it encourages students for instance doing social work or developing a discourse about societal issues. Students often take the chance to go abroad to work or study, sometimes in places where resources of different kinds are scant. On the other hand, the courses at HC generally seem quite basic rather than applied to their nature, which means that students do not receive a theoretical background to this societal work. I do believe that this is not a result of ignorance rather may reflect the fact that HC is a liberal arts college, aiming at providing a broad, basic yet rich educational foundation. Most students, about 70%, pursue graduate school within 5 years of graduation from HC, so the more specialized and/or applied approaches are given by other institutions. At my home department, I think that we offer both quite theoretical and basic education (in the form of elective courses) and also more labor market conforming education, for instance the Personnel, work and organization programme. It seems as if some parts of HC are more progressive in terms of making use of external agents for instance encouraging students to take part in externally organized seminars on the whiteness-norm, whereas others where perhaps less progressive. At my home department, there is also a variation in the extent to which my colleagues are involving/being involved by external agents. For instance, some of my colleagues, including myself, teach at other Universities and some are contracted by authorities to function as experts. Other examples might be inviting individuals from the outside to teach at our courses for instance lawyers or medical doctors.

Use of technology

The available technologies at HC and at my home department seem to be of about equal magnitude. At both places, each lecture room has a panel for connection to an already existing projector and also for connection to the Internet. From what I could tell, the teachers at both places seem to use the existing technology to an about equal extent, and with an about equal satisfaction. From my perspective, it was equally simple to make use of each system and only during the first lecture (and once during a lecture where I wanted to show a video-clip and could not get the audio to function) was there a need for me to ask a colleague for some assistance. At HC, there seem to be more options also for those with an extra interest in technology, for instance through using the library resources. At my home department, I've found myself a bit outside of the support-system when I have ventured off the existing technology map.

Distance education

I have not encountered any instances of distance courses neither at HC nor at my home department. A majority of students at HC (98%) live on campus, and so there should be no strong motive to introduce distance education. I am also guessing that this is how the College wants to provide education (with frequent face-to-face contact).

Special investments in education at the institution

I think the mere fact that HC takes onboard Stint-scholars is a sign that they invest in education. (Even if they do not pay for the stipend, they invest in the person in terms of making room for zher, trying to find accommodation etc.). They are obviously interested in bringing in different perspectives, although it was hard to see any system of integration at work. At HC, they do not invest in terms of offering extra time for special work (as far as I could see). This can be the case at my home department, where teachers for instance can receive extra hours for sitting in on a colleagues lecture. I am guessing that this sort of "extra" activities are expected at HC, and therefore no extra time is given for it. I also believe that my home department invests in education since they for instance have supported me spending a semester abroad. This upcoming semester I will work on using my experience at my department.

Lessons "learned" and "action plans", and some final words

I think that in general this experience has provided a new perspective on my own teaching and the context for my teaching. Even if I have already discussed some of the things that I have learned above, under different headings, I do also believe that my learning experience will have a continued life and gain additional dimensions, from coming back to my home department. I will give talks at both my home university's service for researchers (*Avdelningen för forskningservice*) as well as at my home department. Further, my hope is that I will get a chance (find some time) to formulate myself around questions that will use my experiences in issues that concern how faculty members work with integration of research and teaching.

I also think that my discussion above, and the comparisons I've made, may not be altogether fair. First of all, I do not really know what the pedagogy looks like at HC since I was quite busy teaching on my own course. I've gained a "lived experience" of teaching at an American College. But, I really do not know how representative this experience is. I've tried to use the students as indicators of the extent to which the forms and the content of my course has been within what they could have expected when taking a course at HC. From what I understand, some parts of the course seem to be quite similar to other courses, whereas other parts deviate quite a lot. Deviations are not altogether bad, as long as the students understand and agree with them. I have therefore strived to make them visible and to talk about them in a more explicit way (for instance that the course had an applied theme). Second, I lacked a natural context for pedagogical discourse since I did not co-teach and since many of the other teachers were very busy with their own course work. And so, my lived experience only to a limited extent became a shared experience in that sense. Third, I've taught one course, rather than 2.5 courses, which is the normal course load for a full-time faculty. This means that I've had less than half-time work on paper (much more of course, in reality). This reduction in work-load means that I've had more time than usual to reflect on my own teaching, to adjust it to changing demands and to interact with and give feedback to students. I think this has contributed to an overall positive experience. And to a general feeling of wanting to inform my home department in at least some small way.