Understanding University Teaching in Disciplinary Contexts: A qualitative case study among lecturers in two departments

PhD dissertation

Anna Bager-Elsborg

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**Supervisors**

Associate professor, Dr. Gitte Wichmann-Hansen, Centre for Teaching and Learning, Aarhus University

Associate professor, Dr. Gitte Sommer Harrits, Department of Political Science, Aarhus University
# Table of Contents

Preface.................................................................................................................................. 4  
Acknowledgements.............................................................................................................. 6  
Chapter 1  
Introduction.......................................................................................................................... 8  
1.1. Research aims ............................................................................................................. 11  
1.2. Terminology................................................................................................................ 12  
Chapter 2  
Literature on disciplines..................................................................................................... 14  
2.1. Discipline as epistemology ......................................................................................... 14  
2.2. Discipline as culture.................................................................................................... 15  
2.3. Teaching and learning in the disciplines ..................................................................... 17  
   Teaching and learning as determined by epistemology ................................................. 18  
   Teaching and learning as socialisation into disciplinary communities ....................... 20  
   Signature pedagogies .................................................................................................... 21  
   The scholarship of teaching and learning in the disciplines ......................................... 22  
2.4. Discussion................................................................................................................... 22  
Chapter 3  
Theoretical framework....................................................................................................... 25  
3.1. Moderate epistemological essentialism ...................................................................... 25  
3.2. Teaching and learning regimes ................................................................................... 27  
3.3. Theorising embeddedness ........................................................................................... 29  
Chapter 4  
Design, methodology and methods.................................................................................... 30  
4.1. Design ......................................................................................................................... 30  
   Research context ............................................................................................................ 30  
   Criteria for case selection ............................................................................................ 32  
   Case selection - pilot study .......................................................................................... 33  
   Case selection ............................................................................................................... 33  
   Recruitment of participants ......................................................................................... 34  
4.2. Methods....................................................................................................................... 36  
   Interviews ..................................................................................................................... 37
Observations .................................................................................................................. 40
4.3. Data analyses .............................................................................................................. 41
   Within-case analysis ...................................................................................................... 41
   Cross-case comparison ................................................................................................... 42
Chapter 5
Summary of the results ...................................................................................................... 43
5.1. paper 1 ......................................................................................................................... 44
5.2. paper 2 ......................................................................................................................... 45
5.3. paper 3 ......................................................................................................................... 47
5.4. paper 4 ......................................................................................................................... 48
5.5. paper 5 ......................................................................................................................... 49
Chapter 6
Discussion .......................................................................................................................... 50
6.1. Disciplines are more than knowledge ......................................................................... 50
6.2. Teaching is ascribed meaning in non-arbitrary ways .................................................. 53
6.3. Paradoxes and conflicts in disciplinary teaching ....................................................... 56
6.4. Methodological considerations .................................................................................. 60
Chapter 7
Conclusion and perspectives .............................................................................................. 64
English summary ............................................................................................................... 67
Dansk resumé ..................................................................................................................... 69
Appendix A ........................................................................................................................ 71
Interview guide .................................................................................................................. 71
Appendix B ........................................................................................................................ 73
Co-author statements ........................................................................................................ 73
References .......................................................................................................................... 76
Papers ................................................................................................................................. 89
This dissertation is a tribute to academic disciplines and their importance for all of us who practice them - research them and teach them. This is also a story about a political scientist who changed her trajectory and learned how to be an educational researcher and an academic developer.

Writing up the closing remarks of this dissertation, I began to think about how this project started and why I chose to study disciplinary teaching. Initially, I simply wanted to improve teaching and, to be able to do so, I wanted to categorise disciplines in my own faculty based on their epistemology. In that way, I figured, I would be able to predict the lecturers’ teaching approaches in order to address inexpedient teaching behaviour. However, as it is always the case when you start studying something, new and interesting ideas interfered with my plans. Theories about socialisation, tacit knowledge, and values as well as my conversations with the lecturers’ nurtured other ways of understanding teaching. This project started out as a quantitative project based on primarily psychological theories, and it ended up being qualitative and practice oriented. In that sense, this project has lived its own life and I have had the feeling that I had to hang on and see where it would take me.

In many ways, the PhD process has been a period of transition: a transition from student to researcher, a transition from political science to higher education research, and thus the replacement of a given literature and of my academic heroes. These transitions have been challenging and a huge gift. For better and for worse, my own disciplinary background has shaped the way I approached the project - even though I have tried to ignore its presence to allow a new identity to take over. Sometimes my disciplinary background made a lot of noise, for instance when I kept on thinking in causal relationships and put results in tables. At other times, it left me standing alone without answers, and I had to develop new strategies and learn new skills.

At times, this process has been lonely and frustrating, for instance when I have been unable to comprehend what data wanted to tell me, or when the same article returned ‘rejected’ for the fourth time. Especially in the beginning, I felt that the project was an annoying appendix to the rest of my work that I could do without. Recently, the project has begun to feel like a vital organ necessary for my well-being. Those who say that academic work is rational
and without feelings have not written a PhD dissertation. I think I have been through all human emotions possible.

In this process, I have been fortunate enough to be surrounded by an academic community that embraced my doubts, and that represents multiple disciplines, methods, theories, and ways of being an academic. In this place, I have negotiated the content of the project and discussed how to be a political scientist and an educational researcher. As it turned out, it did not need to be an either or.

At the end of it, I find that it has been a privilege to be in the company of this project in the course of the last four years. One could say that we have developed together. The insights reached during this process have provided me with new lenses through which I can observe the world, and I believe that I have found a way to combine my own two disciplinary practices.
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Writing a dissertation in a language that is not one’s own first language is a huge challenge. I am indebted to Karen M. Lauridsen for the help and guidance she has provided me. The hours she spent reading my texts as well as explaining to me the structure of English sentences and the use of prepositions and articles have been invaluable for me.

My colleague Kim Jesper Herrmann with whom I have shared an office for the last four years, deserves a special mention. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to grow into the role of researcher guided by and in cooperation with him. I look forward to our starting a new project together.

Thanks are also due to all of my colleagues at the Centre for Teaching and Learning, Aarhus BSS for their encouragement, their interest and their participation in my ups and downs in the course of the last four years. A special thank you to Mathias Elmose Andersen who helped me with the cover of the dissertation, and to Maja Hjerrild for her practical and administrative support.

I am indebted to Jacob Moesgaard, Inger Borch Hansen, Ida Nielsen, and Rasmus Borup Nielsen who spent hours transcribing my data, thereby producing the 500 pages of material this dissertation is based on. Their help has been most appreciated.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and my family for their support. Thanks to my friends for accepting that I have become more and more geeky and esoteric - especially during the last four months when I have not returned their phone calls or their messages. Most of all, I must express my gratitude to my family - my husband Jonas, my daughter Meta, my sister Line, and my sisters-in-law, Helene and Henriette for their unconditional support, for taking my mind off academic problems, for reminding me that I should also have fun, and of course, for their continuous, curious questions about the status of the ‘pdf’.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is about university teaching. More specifically, it is about lecturers’ understanding of their teaching and about how teaching makes sense in its disciplinary context. This is relevant when we want to understand teaching practices in higher education, but also in cases where we want to change existing practices. Hence, this dissertation also contributes to the debate on appropriate strategies in academic development.

University teaching is a cornerstone of higher education quality. Yet, lecturers are often recruited without pedagogical training and with limited teaching experience. They become lecturers because of their disciplinary knowledge and they are often left alone to develop their understanding of teaching and learning (Berthiaume, 2009). So, what do they do and where do they start? Most likely, they look to their colleagues to seek inspiration and they think back on their own experiences as students. Given this, it is not surprising that university teaching is disciplinary. However, the statement that university teaching is disciplinary is both highly self-evident and deeply problematic.

On the one hand, it is self-evident to claim that university teaching is disciplinary. Arguments supporting this claim are mainly that teaching is disciplinary simply because it is dissemination of disciplinary content knowledge conducted by disciplinary experts. In addition, disciplinary research is organised in activities that affect teaching. Laboratory work takes place in the natural sciences and rarely in humanities, whereas fieldwork and observational studies are crucial in anthropology and maybe less so in dentistry. It makes sense that political science lecturers would organise discussions whereas lecturers in mathematics would make students calculate mathematical problems. In that sense, the suggestion that teaching is disciplinary seems reasonable. Furthermore, most lecturers’ primary allegiance is to their subject or their profession and, therefore, the development of discipline-specific pedagogies seems natural (Healey & Jenkins, 2003, 50). The thought that disciplines have characteristics that influence behaviour is not new and has been
investigated thoroughly (Becher, 1989; Biglan, 1973a; Biglan, 1973b; Lamont, 2009; Neumann, 2001; Parry, 2007; Smeby, 1996).

On the other hand, it is problematic to state that university teaching is disciplinary, because teaching has generic characteristics, too. Universities across the world face the same kind of problems with the increasing number of students, the diversity of their student population, the shrinking financial support, and the rise in information technology (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1998). Furthermore, vast amounts of literature show that a number of principles for learning and teaching are applicable across contexts. For example, Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, and Norman (2010) share their seven principles of learning with reference to their applicability across domains: ‘They apply equally well across all subject areas, from biology to design, to history to robotics; the fundamental factors that impact the way students learn transcend disciplinary differences’ (Ambrose et al., 2010, 7). In the same vein, lecturers are preoccupied with the same topics and significant issues for teaching (Young, 2010). Among several examples are student instrumentality and the cross-cultural mix of students (Bunce, Baird & Jones, 2016; Macfarlane & Ottewill, 2001). Thus, university lecturers share conditions for teaching across disciplines (Kreber, 2010).

As demonstrated, higher education research has discussed the relation between teaching and disciplines for decades without offering a clear-cut statement. To understand as well as to develop teaching, much research has scrutinised factors influencing teaching (Gow & Kember, 1993; Kugel, 1993; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996a; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996b; Trigwell, 2012). Theories suggest that teaching is dependent on lecturers’ beliefs about and conceptions of teaching (Kember, 1997; Samuelowicz & Bain, 1992; Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001). These studies find that conceptions and beliefs are similar among lecturers across disciplines and contexts. In addition, variation in teaching conceptions is shown to explain variations in teaching approaches (Trigwell & Prosser, 1996b) and perceptions of good teaching (Entwistle, Skinner, Entwistle & Orr, 2000; Kember & Kwan, 2000). Furthermore, the change of teaching conceptions has been known to enhance the quality of teaching (Ho, 2000; Ho, Watkins & Kelly, 2001; Postareff, Lindblom-Ylänne & Nevgi, 2007). Thus, discipline is only one among many explanatory variables accounting for variation in teaching where also context, years of experience, gender and pedagogical development has been taken into account (Lindblom-Ylänne, Trigwell, Nevgi & Ashwin, 2006; Lueddeke, 2003; Norton, Richardson, Hartley, Newstead & Mayes, 2005).
Despite the valuable insights about teaching provided from this literature, crucial aspects still need further investigations. Firstly, the reasons behind lecturers’ choices and the meaning lecturers assign to their choices are mostly overlooked (Neumann, 2001; Trowler, 2012). Many studies focus on conceptions and beliefs as cognitive constructions, they focus on espoused theories to be revealed through isolated statements about teaching or metaphors for teaching (Emerson & Mansvelt, 2014; Emerson & Mansvelt, 2015; Wegner & Nückles, 2015). This is a problem because teaching is conceptualised as an individual, isolated act determined by cognitive structures, which downplays the social and contextual aspects of lecturers’ practices (Trowler, 2012, 26). Moreover, the conceptualisation of teaching conceptions as cognitive structures is in danger of creating a dualism between the lecturer and the outside world in which teaching can be changed solely by changing individual conceptions (Ho, 2000; Ho et al., 2001). To get a nuanced view of the interplay between individual thinking and contextual factors, there is a need for re-contextualising teaching and examining the reasons behind teaching behaviour.

Secondly, Neumann (2001) argues that disciplines need to be subjected to greater systematic studies due to their influence on lecturers’ beliefs and students’ learning. Several studies provide evidence that discipline characteristics are important for teaching and learning (Lonka & Lindblom-Ylänne, 1996; Smeby, 1996; Ylijoki, 2000). Based on discipline categories e.g. hard and soft sciences, claims are made about a causal relationship between discipline and teaching. However, most of these studies define disciplines as unitary entities with essential knowledge properties. Defining disciplines as having essential properties is problematic in several ways. The categorisation of disciplines based on epistemological structures creates a ‘black box’ approach to disciplines in which the mechanisms of influence disappear (Trowler, 2012, 19). Another weakness by defining disciplines as having essential properties is that they become static. Unless knowledge properties change, the discipline stays the same (Bamber, 2012, 103). Furthermore, in some studies, the knowledge properties determine behaviour, e.g. teaching methods or learning strategies (Donald, 2002; Neumann et al., 2002) and variation is impossible to explain. Therefore, disciplines should be studied without assigning essential properties to them, and the black box of disciplines should be opened.

Finally, the relationship between discipline and teaching is relevant not only conceptually and theoretically, but also practically in the work of academic developers. It has already been suggested that a disciplinary starting point is a prerequisite for being considered a
The authors suggest that teaching methods and curriculum design are so discipline-specific that academic development cannot be meaningfully conducted by outsiders. In that sense, the discipline defines a rather closed community. However, others have argued that taking a generic starting point is necessary and more efficient (Handal, 1999; Young, 2010). Young (2010) emphasised the need to acknowledge the shared features of teaching, learning and academic development. Consequently, the literature on academic development has avidly discussed the issue of discipline and its relevance for changing and developing teaching practices, without reaching an agreement.

With such disagreements in mind, there is a distinct need for further exploration of teaching in disciplinary contexts as it is understood by lecturers themselves.

1.1. RESEARCH AIMS
Given the need for more systematic studies of disciplines, this dissertation explores the relationship between discipline and teaching in two different contexts. By conducting a qualitative and abductive case study this project aims to 1) understand university teaching in disciplinary contexts and 2) contribute to the development of existing theories about teaching and learning in the disciplines. In order to do so the following research question has been developed: *How is teaching embedded in discipline?*

The appended papers contribute to illuminating different aspects of this question by taking different approaches. Paper 1, paper 2 and paper 5 are within-case analyses whereas paper 3 and paper 4 are cross-case comparisons.

The main contribution of this dissertation is the empirical documentation of how teaching is embedded and constructed in disciplinary contexts. I show how disciplines are of interest because they encompass much more than knowledge. They define a space for meaning creation. Because the discipline defines the boundaries of a workplace such as a department, it is a setting for interpersonal relationships among colleagues and among lecturers and students. Social and contextual aspects of the teaching and learning environment make some actions more likely than others. Thus, in examining the discipline as a context containing epistemological properties *as well as* institutional, social, and cultural aspects, I illuminate the complexity surrounding teaching.
Recent studies have documented how important the local context is for understanding the behaviour of academics, e.g. their willingness to take part in academic development work and the perceived support from their managers (Knight & Trowler, 2000; Roxå & Mårtensson, 2013). These studies showed how the meso-level is especially relevant for understanding practice because actions are sanctioned or acknowledged by colleagues in a specific community. However, they have not considered discipline a contextual factor. This study contributes to the existing literature by conducting analyses at the meso-level, and further adds to the literature by showing how the negotiation of meaning at the meso-level is embedded in a disciplinary understanding of the world.

In addition, this study unfolds existing theories by operationalising and examining theoretical concepts as teaching and learning regimes and moderate epistemological essentialism (Trowler, 2008; Trowler, 2014a). To answer the question of how teaching is embedded in discipline, it is necessary to define and discuss what constitutes a discipline in the existing research. This will be the topic of the literature review (chapter 2). Chapter 3 outlines my theoretical framework and revises the research question in the light of the theory. The fourth chapter describes the project’s methodological properties and in chapter 5, the results are summarised. Finally, the methodological considerations, the results and the implications are discussed in chapter 6. Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation and point to future perspectives.

1.2. TERMINOLOGY
In some instances, different wording is used. I will briefly account for this to avoid any confusion. The term ‘teachers’ and ‘lecturers’ are used interchangeably meaning the group of academics teaching in the two departments selected for this study. In papers the 1, 3 and 5 I used the word ‘teacher’ whereas in paper 2 and 4 the word ‘lecturers’ is used. In this dissertation, I use the word lecturer. This is not completely without problems because the term ‘teacher’ is so widely used in the literature, e.g., teachers’ approaches to teaching. Hopefully, the choice of the term ‘lecturer’ will help the reading of the text as a whole, avoiding phrases like ‘teachers’ teaching’.

One of the cases, business management, is named business administration in paper 3 and 4 in paper 2 the case is called business management. The study programmes are called Bsc. and Msc. in Business Administration. However, the group of lecturers teach management courses and are employed at the Department of Management (formerly known as
Department of Business Administration). The two names cover the same group of people. In the summary of the appended papers, my use of terminology follows the article in question.
Since early modern Europe, disciplines have functioned as unit divisions of knowledge (Stichweh, 2001, 13728). Discipline as a concept, however, is not easily defined or delimited. As the following chapter will show, it depends on the rules applied for such definition. In this chapter, I account for the chronological development in the conceptualisation of disciplines, starting with Kuhn’s work on paradigms in the 1960s.

In the beginning, disciplines were defined by their knowledge structures. Later on cultural and social aspects were added. The conceptualisations of disciplines influence the way disciplines are examined in the literature on teaching and learning. Consequently, this literature on disciplines is presented to account for suggestions on the relationship between disciplines, teaching, and learning.

2.1. DISCIPLINE AS EPISTEMOLOGY
In the early 1960s, Kuhn published his work *The structure of scientific revolutions*, which started a marked increase in the research literature on disciplines. Kuhn (2015 [1962]) described the sciences as defined by paradigms upheld by scientific communities until the paradigms undergo a revolution and are replaced by other paradigms. These paradigms set standards for legitimate work within the scientific communities they govern. A paradigm consists of a body of theory, which is subscribed to by all members of a field (Kuhn, 2015). During the 70s, Kuhn’s ideas were supported and elaborated further by Biglan’s (1973a; 1973b) significant work. In his study of the characteristics of subject matter in different academic fields, Biglan (1973a) found empirical support for Kuhn’s analysis of the paradigm and identified three dimensions: First of all, groups of disciplines tended to be more paradigmatic. Disciplines such as physical sciences, engineering, geology and chemistry were categorised as “hard” whereas disciplines such as education, history, and languages were categorised as less paradigmatic and therefore as “soft”. Secondly, in his study, in which he asked academics to compare a number of academic fields on similarities and differences, Biglan identified a pure-applied dimension. This dimension referred to the extent to which a discipline requires practical application. Accountancy, education, and
engineering have strong requirements for applicability whereas mathematics, languages and sciences have less requirements for applicability and thus, they are categorised as “pure”. Biglan’s third dimension he called life sciences/non-life sciences, reflected the discipline’s concern with living or organic objects of study (p. 198). The Biglan classification scheme has subsequently been the most popular framework for analysing disciplinary differences (Jones, 2011, 16).

Consequently, disciplines have most frequently been categorised according to the extent to which they were logically structured, had agreed upon methods and a shared body of theory (Donald, 2002). Thus, the definition of disciplines rests on knowledge structures and subsequent content and methods. This has been described as an ‘epistemological essentialism’ (Trowler, 2012, 18). When the epistemological features of a discipline are claimed to be more important than the individual characteristics, researchers bring to their discipline, there is an ‘epistemological determination of work’ affecting much more than the generation of knowledge (Clark, 1987, 89). In this sense, Biglan’s classification and derived theories represent a strong epistemological essentialism because it determines behaviour. Theories presented so far have defined disciplines by their cognitive structures only. Yet, the strong epistemological essentialism has also generated descriptions of the social dimensions of disciplines.

2.2. DISCIPLINE AS CULTURE

In the late 1980s, the famous book Academic Tribes and Territories (Becher, 1989) added social traits to Biglan’s classification scheme and started defining disciplines as tribes inhabiting territories. ‘In its very nature, being a member of a disciplinary community involves a sense of identity and personal commitment, a “way of being in the world”, a matter of taking on “a cultural frame that defines a great part of one’s life” (Geertz, 1983)’ (Becher, 1989, 24-25). Alongside structures of knowledge, came traditions, customs, and practices. In his book, Becher (1989, 79) used an anthropological approach to explain academic discipline’s territories. Empirically, he found that territories could be either urban, characterised by dense population, a high people-to-problem ratio and extensive cooperation, or rural, characterised by a small population, low people-to-problem ratio and with less cooperation between researchers. In addition, he distinguished between

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1 The book was later revised by Becher and Trowler (2001). The 2001-edition place more emphasis on the social context than the original which had strong focus on epistemology. In this review, I refer to Becher’s original work from 1989.
convergent and divergent disciplines to explain the extent to which the discipline members experience a sense of collectivity and mutual identity compared to a sense of fragmentation (p. 151). He found that these territorial characteristics had implications for communication patterns, publication, and citation practices as well as competition and collaboration among colleagues within communities. The theory created overarching categories of disciplines with essential properties – in relation to knowledge properties as well as social characteristics. Consequently, it was possible to categorise and to describe several aspects of the discipline. As an example, history is soft, pure, convergent and rural it is a description of knowledge properties as well as sociological traits. Based on this description, the theory would claim that it is possible to understand communication patterns, cooperation strategies etc. by means of the discipline per se. However, it becomes difficult to distinguish between discipline trait and derived behaviour. Further, it makes it difficult to understand variation between similar looking disciplines or between the same disciplines in different contexts.

Building on Becher’s theorisations, the interrelatedness of culture and knowledge has also been of interest to researchers in specific disciplines, especially within Science and Technology Studies (STS). For instance, Knorr-Cetina (1999) identified different cultures in two hard disciplines, experimental high energy physics and molecular biology, finding that researchers behaved differently and organised their work in laboratories differently according to their understanding of knowledge production. Likewise, she found that researchers in the two disciplines differed in their conceptualisations of core concepts such as experiments. In doing so, Knorr-Cetina (1999) unfolded and varied the Biglan classification scheme showing that the same activity, namely laboratory work, was interpreted differently in two hard disciplines. However, she still conceptualised the two disciplines as having defining properties based on epistemology and the variations were ascribed to the disciplinary differences and were not as such contextually contingent.

Similar to Knorr-Cetina (1999), Lamont (2009) elaborated on Becher’s theory by exploring how discipline characteristics influence the behaviour of academics. In particular, Lamont (2009) examined academics’ discipline-specific review practices. She found that, when reviewing panellists across disciplines developed shared rules, including the respect of the sovereignty of other disciplines; evaluations are largely shaped by disciplinary evaluative cultures (p. 6). The epistemological distinctiveness of disciplines and the cultural implications of these differences make them fundamentally different. ‘[D]isciplines shine under different lights, are good at different things, and are best located on different matrixes
of evaluation, precisely because their objects and concerns differ so dramatically’ (Lamont, 2009, 9). She concludes that the process of recognition of authority and value attribution goes on within disciplines and is difficult to translate to other disciplines. Therefore cross-disciplinary review work is a challenging task. In this respect, her study supports Becher’s notion that the tribe forms the basis for social life within a group. Each tribe has its own goals, values, beliefs, traditions, and ways of acknowledging their heroes and punishing disobedient members.

In sum, Lamont as well as Knorr-Cetina are typical examples of studies that support Becher’s project of defining discipline characteristics that influence scientific behaviour. Their understanding of discipline as culture has added to the epistemological explanation by suggesting that cognitive features spill over into the organisation of many other activities: laboratory work, speed of publication, citation practices, review and evaluation, and even preferences for activities in one’s leisure time (Becher, 1989, 106, Knorr-Cetina, 1999, Lamont, 2009). But despite the fact that Becher’s book added a social component, the structure of Biglan’s classification scheme remains influential and has been verified in many studies (Jones, 2011). This strong essentialism is characterised by its claims about the range of discipline features. Variation is difficult to conceptualise and change is difficult to understand.

The strong essentialism has not just influenced research about knowledge production and disciplinary research communities but also research on teaching and learning. Building on these theoretical assumptions, disciplines will have a strong, generative influence on teaching and learning. Thus, in the following section I will present the literature about the influence of disciplines on teaching and learning.

2.3. TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE DISCIPLINES
There are different understandings of how disciplines influence teaching and learning. This part of the review examines three ways of understanding this relationship, mirroring the conceptualisations of disciplines presented above: The first section addresses literature on teaching and learning as determined by epistemology. The second section examines teaching and learning as socialisation into disciplinary communities, and the third part shows how the conception of signature pedagogies has been used to understand how disciplines translate into pedagogies.
Teaching and learning as determined by epistemology

The popularity of the Biglan classification scheme becomes evident in the wide range of studies distinguishing between hard/soft and applied/pure disciplines (Jones, 2011; Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2006; Neumann, 2001; Neumann, Parry, & Becher, 2002). The categorisation scheme has been used to explore differences in preferences and actual behaviour among lecturers: ‘The findings of the study indicate that faculty in soft disciplines such as education, the humanities, and the social sciences emphasized deep learning more than their colleagues in the hard disciplines’ (Jones, 2011, 18). Similarly, in a study of university lecturers from Finland and the United Kingdom, researchers found that lecturers from hard disciplines were more likely to report a more teacher-focused approach to teaching, whereas lecturers from soft disciplines tended to be more student-centred (Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2006, 294). This conclusion is in line with the study by Lonka and Lindblom-Ylänne (1996) in which they concluded that psychology students were more likely to have constructivist conceptions of learning, whereas medical students were more likely to see learning as intake of knowledge. Authors explained the variation by differences in teaching methods adopted by the two disciplines. They argue that medicine across contexts is taught in ways promoting rote learning (p. 9).

The thought that the discipline requires a certain way of thinking and learning is also the recurring argument in Donald’s *Learning to think: Disciplinary perspectives* (2002). ‘To understand how students learn to think in a discipline and how structures of knowledge influence teaching and learning, we can look at what is done to promote thinking, and what kind of thinking, in a discipline and more specifically in a program or course’ (p. 23). Donald chose seven disciplines within different epistemological groups (hard/soft, applied/pure, life/non-life). She found that different disciplines had different methods of inquiry, ways of describing, and making inference. Accordingly, key concepts and ways of understanding them differed, learning tasks differed, and teaching methods differed (p. 272-274).

This corresponds with the conclusions from an extensive review conducted by Neumann, Parry, and Becher (2002). They examined disciplinary differences between hard and soft disciplines in their pure as well as applied versions. Table 2.1. provides a summary of the main conclusions.
Table 2.1. Overview of discipline characteristics (Neumann *et al.*, 2002).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hard Pure</th>
<th>Hard Applied</th>
<th>Soft Pure</th>
<th>Soft Applied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum</strong></td>
<td>Linear, quantitative, cumulative</td>
<td>Constructivist, qualitative, spiral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
<td>Knowledge testing, objective tests, multiple choice</td>
<td>Essays, oral exams, interaction, peer- and self-assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main cognitive purpose</strong></td>
<td>Logic, reasoning, using accepted scientific concepts</td>
<td>+ Practical skills, application of existing knowledge</td>
<td>Analysis, creativity, debate, intellectual breadth, personal growth</td>
<td>+ vocational applicability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characteristics of lecturers</strong></td>
<td>Strong commitment to research, competitive, single lecturer teaching, spend little time preparing teaching</td>
<td>+ focus external consultancy work, not willing to review study programme because of fixed knowledge base, many contact hours</td>
<td>Less competitive, knowledge translate into teaching easily, more often joint teaching, focus on review of study programme, preference for teaching over research</td>
<td>+ many contact hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching methods</strong></td>
<td>Large group lectures and small group laboratory work, problem-solving seminars</td>
<td>+ provision of practical experience</td>
<td>Small seminar groups, online teaching and learning activities</td>
<td>+ provision of practical experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table indicates that, the main distinction is between hard and soft disciplines and mostly a few features are added when moving from pure to applied disciplines. The epistemological characteristics become apparent in the curriculum and have consequences for a number of teaching and learning activities. Norton, Richardson, Hartley, Newstead, and Mayes (2005) continue this line of thought and conclude that ‘teachers in higher education use teaching methods that reflect their epistemological assumptions of their different disciplines’ and further that these assumptions directly influence beliefs as well as intentions about teaching (p. 553-554).
Furthermore, studies suggest that the interest in developing teaching varies significantly across disciplines (Lueddeke, 2003; Neumann et al., 2002, 411). As an example, Lueddeke (2003) showed that business lecturers were interested in strengthening their linkages with surrounding society, whereas academics from technology were more interested in online support systems, and finally that lecturers from the social sciences were more focused on student learning (p. 222-223), corresponding to the quote from Jones (2011) above. In sum, epistemological characteristics of the disciplines have been found to influence several aspects of teaching; conceptions of teaching, approaches to teaching (Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2006; Lueddeke, 2003), preferences for learning activities and assessment methods (Neumann, 2001; Neumann et al., 2002), time spent on teaching and preparation (Smeby, 1996), and methods of inquiry and learning outcomes (Donald, 2002).

Teaching and learning as socialisation into disciplinary communities

Similar to Biglan’s significant impact on theories about teaching and learning as determined by epistemology, Becher’s theory of disciplines as culture has affected a large strand of literature on teaching and learning. Within this strand, authors take a cultural perspective on disciplines, and they conceptualise students as well as graduate students as novices trying to be accepted into tribes penetrated by tacit norms (Gerholm, 1990; Kolb, 1984; Northedge & McArthur, 2009; Parry, 2007; Ylijoki, 2000). The enrolment into an academic field is the beginning of a socialisation process into a disciplinary culture.

For students, education in an academic field is a continuing process of selection and socialization (…). Over time, these selection and socialization pressures combine to produce an increasingly impermeable and homogeneous disciplinary culture and correspondingly specialized student orientation to learning (Kolb, 1984, 163).

The socialisation process has the end-goal of shaping identities. Parry (2007) argued that PhD students struggle to become sufficiently savvy to act within their academic communities, and that the success of the socialisation depends on students’ ability to learn through tacit cognition. Similarly, Ylijoki (2000) studied students and the moral order within four different departments in a Finnish university. Students tried to decode tacit norms of appropriate behaviour within the disciplines. They negotiated with their peers about the correct understanding of lecturers’ expectations, they fought to become competent members of the tribe and acquire the social identity following the competence.
Ylijoki argued that social and cognitive elements were interwoven, and students who failed to act according to taken-for-granted norms, were in danger of being categorised as cognitively incompetent by their lecturers (p. 341). Consequently, each discipline had its own inherent ethical standards affecting the teaching and learning environment.

**Signature pedagogies**

A third group of scholars focus on how disciplinary knowledge translates into pedagogies. One of the most dominant conceptualisations is Shulman’s ‘signature pedagogies’. Shulman’s concept contains the epistemological aspects as well as the cultural aspects.

Signature pedagogies are ‘types of teaching that organize the fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated for their new professions’ (Shulman, 2005, 52). Shulman argues that a signature pedagogy consists of three dimensions: 1) A surface structure containing concrete, operational acts of teaching and learning, 2) a deep structure consisting of a set of assumptions of how best to impart knowledge and know-how, and 3) an implicit structure encompassing a moral dimension of beliefs, values and dispositions (p. 54-55). Signature pedagogies become habits and routines to save time and cognitive capacity, which is a strength when pedagogy has to combine theory with practice. On the other hand, habits are also dangerous sources of rigidity and inertia. Signature pedagogies can become antiquated because new lecturers with no pedagogical training inherit old habits. Thus, the signature pedagogy is not necessarily an expedient pedagogy but a pedagogy developed in accordance with community values and sustained socially. This leads to certain ways of teaching – especially within the professions.

The concept of signature pedagogies has been applied over a wide range of disciplines (Chick, Haynie & Gurung, 2012; Gurung, Chick & Haynie, 2009) with the aim of acknowledging inherent differences in disciplines and the derived consequences for teaching. The outcome of the authors’ analyses outlines signature pedagogies in a range of disciplines, suggesting that it is in fact possible to define a best practice for each discipline. Again, essentialist arguments are presented and the prescriptive and the descriptive purposes are intertwined. As an example, Maier, McGoldrick, and Simkins (2012) find that a signature pedagogy of economics should consist of creativity and activities supporting students in learning to ‘think like an economist’ by incorporating real world problems and classroom experiments. Within this literature, it is assumed that disciplines share enough features to create one best way to teach the content.
Signature pedagogies have created a link between the higher education literature on disciplines and the discipline-specific literature. By applying a generic concept on specific disciplines, it gives priority to the discipline specific aspects of teaching and learning. So does the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) (Geertsema, 2016), which I will address briefly in the following section because it plays a rather influential role in many Higher Education disciplines.

**The scholarship of teaching and learning in the disciplines**

The scholarship of teaching and learning has revolved naturally around scholarly practices within the disciplines examined by the practitioners themselves (Healey, 2000). In some disciplines, lecturers’ interest in critical reflection about and dissemination of their own subject is a well-developed sub-genre. Especially within the professions, scholarly teaching is a topic of interest. Journals like *Medical Teacher, Teaching and Learning in Medicine, International Journal of Medical Education, Journal of Nursing Education and Practice,* and *The Law Teacher* are all dedicated to the development of teaching within those disciplines. It is also possible to identify a large number of publications and journals dedicated to how best to teach other disciplines (Macfarlane & Ottewill, 2001). It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to account for this extensive literature. Yet, I will include relevant points from the literature when discussing the implications of dissertation in chapter 6.

**2.4. DISCUSSION**

Traditionally, disciplines have conceptualised as ‘a body of knowledge with a reasonably logical taxonomy, a specialized vocabulary, an accepted body of theory, a systematic research strategy, and techniques for replication and validation (Dressel & Mayhew, 1974 in Donald, 2002). In the literature reviewed above, the epistemological traits assign to disciplines essential knowledge properties or knowledge drivers that generate specific discipline cultures, student identities, and meaningful ways of teaching and learning. Therefore, it has been assumed that disciplines possess defining properties, present at all times and in all places, that make it possible to recognise them and distinguish them from each other. In addition, it has been suggested that disciplines have the power to influence other phenomena, such as research behaviour or teaching and learning activities, in significant ways. As an example from the literature above, studies suggest that lecturers from the hard sciences prefer lectures and laboratory work due to the nature of their
curriculum whereas lecturers from the soft sciences prefer discussion groups and seminars (Neumann, 2001; Neumann et al., 2002).

As a result, disciplines become unitary entities because they are defined by their epistemology. However, a study by Quinlan (1999) questions whether it is in fact possible to describe disciplines as unitary entities. In a case study of a history department, she found agreements but also controversies about learning outcomes and teaching methods. Lecturers’ different reasons seemed to relate to their perceptions of the discipline. However, it could not solely explain the findings in her study. ‘While we might expect connections between an [sic] academics’ goals, practices and how they describe student difficulties, those connections also seem to be intertwined with these academics’ beliefs about an orientation to their discipline’ (p. 460). Going deeper into a single case showed differences in arguments relating to how best to teach the discipline.

Despite the urge to add knowledge to our understanding of disciplines, most studies treat disciplines as a static background variable. Consequently, studies rarely scrutinise the mechanisms that make disciplines different. The strong epistemological framework has difficulties capturing and explaining why the relationship between discipline and actions sometimes varies across contexts within the same discipline. Accordingly, claims about the relationship between discipline and teaching become deterministic in nature. In their texts, Shulman (2005) and Quinlan (1999) reveal aspects of conflict, variation, and inexpedient practices. They point to the fact that disciplines are played out by individuals and groups of individuals with preferences, ideas, and values. The purely epistemological definition of disciplines does not leave space for much variation or reasoning beyond what the knowledge of the discipline dictates. The reasons behind and the processes leading to this situation are overlooked when discipline determines behaviour. Disciplines appear static and the social aspects are only the results of knowledge structures. To allow variation to exist and discover how social structures work within disciplines we need to examine what disciplines look like when they are enacted. To get closer to an understanding of why lecturers do as they do, we need to investigate what gives meaning to lecturers’ actions; what are the social, practical and emotional conditions for teaching that enable or constrain actions? In order to succeed in this endeavour, a reconceptualization of disciplines that makes room for conflict, variation, and social context, is necessary. This is offered by the moderate essentialist position towards disciplines, which comprises the theoretical framework of this dissertation.
In this chapter, I account for the theoretical framework underpinning this dissertation. The first part explains the moderate epistemological essentialist position towards disciplines as a useful and an alternative conceptualisation of disciplines compared to the ones presented above. The second section introduces teaching and learning regimes (TLRs) as a tool to analyse complex educational contexts. In the last part of the chapter, I theorise on the term embeddedness which is a part of my research question.

3.1. MODERATE EPISTEMOLOGICAL ESSENTIALISM
The moderate essentialist position towards disciplines rejects the basic assumptions of much of the literature on disciplines presented in chapter 2. The main critique revolves around the suggested essential characteristics of disciplines based on their epistemological traits. A main claim of the moderate position is that disciplines do not have essential characteristics defining them across contexts at all times. Second, the moderate position suggests that influence of the disciplines on other phenomena, such as teaching, vary and is contextually contingent. There is no deterministic relationship between disciplines and behaviour. A strong essentialism foregrounds general statements about a phenomenon’s definable and necessary character, whereas a moderate essentialism allows for and demands context sensitivity and variation (Trowler, 2014). In the following, I unfold the moderate position.

The moderate essentialist position has grown out of social practice theory that emphasises the collective, symbolic structures important for understanding both action and social order (Reckwitz, 2002, 246). Instead of conceptualising disciplines as an isolated body of knowledge (Donald, 2002), disciplines are understood as practices. A practice is by definition social, consisting of “forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, “things” and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge” (Reckwitz, 2002, 249). When a discipline
is conceptualised as a practice, it cannot exist disconnected from the individuals and the collective practicing the practice. Consequently, there can be no underlying core with inherent knowledge properties existing across contexts. Taking a practice theoretical point of departure calls for an alternative understanding of disciplines. Trowler (2014) suggests a revised definition of disciplines as

…reservoirs of knowledge resources which, in dynamic combination with other structural phenomena, can condition behavioural practices, sets of discourses, ways of thinking, procedures, emotional responses and motivations. Together this constellation of factors results in structured dispositions for disciplinary practitioners who reshape them in different practice clusters into localised repertoires. While alternative recurrent practices may be in competition within a single discipline, there is common background knowledge about key figures, conflicts and achievements. Disciplines take organisational form, have internal hierarchies and bestow power differentially, conferring advantage and disadvantage. (Trowler, 2014, 1728, italics by this author).

According to this position, it is still possible to recognise disciplines across contexts because they share features and ways of understanding central phenomena. There is still common background knowledge, ways of understanding central concepts or figures within the disciplines. However, the understandings are not static, but dynamic and changing. Disciplines are enacted and unfolded in real life activities by practitioners. Practices form dispositions, making some actions more meaningful than others and creating what Trowler calls ‘localised repertoires’ – interpretations of the discipline. In Trowler’s definition, the practice has potential for conflict and competition. Competitive interpretations of the discipline can exist simultaneously among groups of academics. The disciplinary community is also embedded in an institutional setting, a higher education system, and in a national context, affecting which sayings and doings that are possible in the local context.

The phrase ‘ways of thinking and practicing’ (WTP) has been used ‘to describe the richness, depth and breadth of what students might learn through engagement with a given subject area in a specific context (McCune & Hounsell, 2005, 257). Here, the authors explore communities within defined disciplinary settings. They open up for the possibility of multiple and partly overlapping communities which share some but not all of their WTPs. Consequently, a discipline can share features and methods across contexts and groups of disciplines can share features. For example, authors would argue that all biologists emphasise natural selection and evolution as a part of the curriculum, but this
does not necessarily determine teaching behaviour across contexts. Sciences share mathematical techniques and ways of thinking and practicing can be similar, but the conceptualisation of the discipline is based on the discipline as a practice unfolded in a specific context (Entwistle, 2005; McCune & Hounsell, 2005).

The consequence of a moderate essentialist position is a much more complex and contextually contingent understanding of disciplines compared to a strong essentialist position. Following this, the next question is which implications this has for the understanding of teaching and learning behaviour. As already mentioned, the moderate position rejects a deterministic relationship between discipline and behaviour. In fact, Trowler (2014) argues that disciplines may have different meaning in the same context depending on the area of interest. Because discipline is a practice, it exists in a relationship between people and their surroundings. For example in the meeting between students and their lecturer, an understanding of their discipline will be negotiated. Similarly, in the research practice, academics will negotiate their interpretations of the discipline. Therefore, discipline as articulated in a research context might differ from discipline as interpreted in a teaching and learning context (Trowler, 2014a, 1724).

The moderate essentialism offers a different set of lenses to investigate the relationship between teaching and discipline as interrelated practices. Disciplines are negotiated practices - sites of struggle – where teaching is an embedded action. The moderate position forces us to examine more than knowledge properties when we want to understand a discipline and its role. To explore how discipline and teaching interrelate, the notion of teaching and learning regimes is a helpful analytical tool.

3.2. TEACHING AND LEARNING REGIMES
A teaching and learning regime is an analytical construct making it possible to deconstruct teaching and learning contexts to examine what makes actions and sayings meaningful. ‘The word ‘regimes’ describes what can be seen at the surface, and implies underpinning sets of rules/components that that are not visible’ (Trowler, 2008, 52). The TLRs define the borders of appropriate behaviour. This unfolds for example in the way lecturers talk, the way tables and chairs are organised, calling upon a certain way of using them, the content of the curriculum and the teaching methods usually applied. The TLR is not a determining structure but a negotiated practice with room for agency. The concept is, as is the case with the moderate essentialism, based upon practice theoretical assumptions (Trowler & Cooper,
Different (and competing) TLRs can exist side by side and they are always under construction. According to Trowler (2008), it is possible to deconstruct a teaching and learning regime into eight components for analytical purposes (see table 3.1).

### Table 3.1. Eight components of a teaching and learning regime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moment</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Identities in interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Power relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Codes of signification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tacit assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rules of appropriateness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Recurrent practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Discursive repertoires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Implicit theories of teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Trowler & Cooper, 2002; Trowler, 2008)

These eight components are not mutually exclusive. For instance, the tacit assumptions about students are connected to the implicit theories of teaching and learning, and the recurrent practice will naturally reflect appropriate behaviour within a specific context. The components are intertwined. They exist in a system of interrelated meanings.

The TLRs evolve through the interactions of a working group or a department over an extended period of time. Therefore, the department or workgroup level is of analytical interest because TLRs are sustained and developed at that level; this has been substantiated empirically (Roxå & Mårtensson, 2013).
3.3. THEORISING EMBEDDEDNESS
Together, the moderate essentialist position and the notion of teaching and learning regimes offer a theoretical framework for analysing how teaching is embedded in disciplinary contexts (Bamber, 2012, 105). I have deliberately chosen the term ‘embeddedness’ because it has no causal connotation, but accentuates the interrelatedness between ongoing activities, meanings, discourses, assumptions, teaching, learning, and research. The concept of embeddedness embraces the individual agency as well as collective meaning construction. Disciplinary dispositions and local values can condition behaviour but will not do so in all cases.

Aiming at an understanding of the embeddedness, my analyses in the appended papers extract and analyse disciplinary dispositions and constituting components of TLRs in two specific disciplinary contexts. The theoretical framework provides 1) a conceptualisation of discipline allowing for a non-determinant relationship between discipline and teaching, and 2) constituting components of teaching and learning practices that can serve as analytical guidelines. Guided by the theory it is now possible to unfold the main research question in more concrete terms.

To see disciplines as more than knowledge structures, it is necessary to ask how disciplines are interpreted and described by lecturers in specific local contexts and, further, to which extent these descriptions resemble descriptions of the same discipline in other contexts. The theories presented above suggest that teaching is organised in congruence with values and meaning in the local practice. Thus, is it possible to identify coherence between discipline dispositions and choices about to teaching?

To explore meaning construction around teaching, analyses need to investigate the reasons for lecturers’ choice of teaching methods: Which reasons are explicitly given and which reasons are tacit? Which assumptions about teaching and learning do lecturers express, and are we able to understand those when we know their disciplinary context?

These questions guide the analyses conducted and are formulated as concrete research questions in the appended papers.
CHAPTER 4

DESIGN, METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This chapter includes a detailed description of the design, methods, and analyses strategies used.

4.1. DESIGN

In order to be able to answer the questions asked above, a case study was conducted in a university setting. To unfold and understand local meaning construction among lecturers, it was necessary to explore their context and to explore how they made sense of their everyday practices. A case study design makes it possible to examine a context in depth and organise a study of shared meaning within a working group. Yin defines a case study as: ‘An empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon (e.g., a ”case”), set within its real-world context – especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’ (Yin, 2012, 4). Case studies are especially strong when the purpose is to understand meaning and investigate the context in-depth (Gerring, 2008, 37). The design was constructed as a multiple case design in order to be able to compare the two cases and, thus, understand both cases better. Choosing two cases made it possible to analyse each case in depth and still get the advantage of comparing cases.

In the next paragraph, I present the organisational context in which the case study was conducted along with the criteria for case selection. In the following sections, I account for the conclusions from my pilot study, the considerations regarding the case selection and, finally, the recruitment of participants.

Research context

The research is conducted with in the field of business and social sciences at Aarhus University. Aarhus University is one of eight universities in Denmark. Danish universities are financed by two sources of income: 1) State funding earmarked in the annual Danish Appropriations Act, and 2) income from research funds, the EU, and private investors (Ministry of Higher Education and Science). Part of the funding is allocated based on
students’ academic performance measured in terms of exams passed. Different study programmes receive funding at different rates, depending on the study programme’s requirements and expenditures. As an example, study programmes with extensive use of laboratory facilities receive more funds than study programmes with no need for special facilities. All Danish universities are research-intensive, and researchers are obliged to teach as a part of their employment unless they are exclusively financed by external research funds.

In 2007, Aarhus University went through a merger with other higher education institutions. One of these institutions was the local business school. In 2011, the business school and the faculty of social sciences were merged into the Aarhus School of Business and Social Sciences (Aarhus BSS), which has approximately 16,000 students (Aarhus BSS, 2014). The majority of university students enrol in master programmes after the completion of their bachelor degrees and, therefore, it is reasonable to consider a master a natural continuation of a bachelor programme.

I have chosen to research my own organisation, that is, the context in which I am employed and to conduct interviews with the people I regularly work with as academic developer. The choice of a well-known context has pros and cons. The pros are the possibility of getting access to the disciplinary environments, the knowledge and understanding of the context and the conditions surrounding the selected departments, the possibility of validating analyses as well as using results immediately in the local context (Trowler, 2014b). The cons are, first, the danger of being too familiar with the research context which leads to the researcher overlooking relevant aspects in data collection or analyses. Second, that the researcher has already established relationships with potential interview persons resulting in bias, or thirdly, that research becomes sensitive to existing power relations (Ryan, Kofman & Aaron, 2011; Trowler, 2014b). I have taken advantage of the pros and tried to avoid the pitfalls of taking the insider perspective. Knowing the organisation helped me get access to lecturers from the two departments. The knowledge of the organisation history also helped me understand lecturers’ answers related to local contextual factors, e.g. the history of the business school or recent developments in management decisions. In addition, my background knowledge made it possible to probe relevant questions. I deliberately avoided choosing my own background discipline, political science, to avoid being too familiar with the discipline or having internalised its values and assumptions.
The fact that I am a PhD student with no or limited power in the organisation appeared to be an advantage because it made lecturers enthusiastic about explaining their viewpoints and arguments to me in order to make me understand their teaching. Despite the fact that some of the lecturers mentioned that teaching is private and not at topic they discussed among their colleagues, they were willing to share their reasoning with me. Furthermore, the lecturers did not seem to take notice of my affiliation with the academic development unit. At the beginning, I feared that lecturers would describe teaching in ‘politically correct ways’, e.g. in ways they expected that I wanted to hear, or that they would apologise to me for criticising the unit. However, when lecturers talked about the Centre for Teaching and Learning they often referred to ‘they’ or a specific person they had been in contact with or a specific course they had attended. I interpreted this as having succeeded in balancing my position. On one hand, I was an insider which helped the conversation flow naturally because I did not have to ask about a lot of context. Several lecturers said ‘as you might know already’ during interviews, indicating a connectedness between them and me due to my position in the organisation. On the other hand, I appeared as an outsider asking open questions about their disciplines and their teaching. I did not know their discipline well but knew it well enough to start the conversation. This made lecturers speak freely about their worries and their colleagues. Thus, I was able to take a balanced position between the insider and the outsider perspective, which seemed to benefit the study.

**Criteria for case selection**

This section addresses the overarching criteria for case selection. To be able to answer how teaching is embedded in the two disciplinary contexts, it was necessary to choose disciplines that shared a number of features. By conducting the case study within the Aarhus School of Business and Social Sciences, it was possible to approximate a most similar systems design logic. The most similar systems design often implies a variable and causation logic aiming to control for some variables while creating natural variation on others (Seawright & Gerring, 2008, 304). Even though the purpose of this study was not to demonstrate causality or isolate variables, it was still relevant to ensure similarity on as many organisational aspects as possible in order to be able to compare discipline differences and similarities. Therefore, the cases had to be within the same organisational structure to ensure that the departments experienced the same structural conditions, e.g. financing and recruitment demands from faculty management.
Second, the cases had to be similar in relation to student numbers and teaching methods. Most departments within the Aarhus School of Business and Social Sciences teach undergraduate classes as lectures supplemented with small-class seminars. At the graduate level, teaching is mostly conducted as seminars with smaller groups (15-40 students). Cases were selected so this was a shared feature.

Third, all lecturers employed within this organisational setting have to participate in mandatory professional development activities. It is the policy of Aarhus BSS that all lecturers attend the courses offered by the development unit. Consequently, there was no reason to believe that the lecturers from the different departments would have been subjected to different degrees of development initiatives.

The criteria for case selection were the same in both pilot phase and in the final selection.

**Case selection - pilot study**

In my pilot study, I aimed at identifying differences in conceptions and approaches based on a hypothesised firmness of paradigms within disciplines of business and social sciences. I interviewed five lecturers in five different disciplines during the summer in 2013; political science, law, economics, business management and psychology. The analyses of the interviews showed that it was in fact possible to categorise lecturers according to their conceptions of teaching. However, the analyses also showed that the main reasons for lecturers’ actions were overlooked in this categorisation. Thus, other aspects than the psychological aspects were relevant in understanding how lecturers described their teaching. I noticed that lecturers explained their teaching in a number of different ways in relation to their departmental context, their own history and experiences, and the ideas of the two disciplines. This called for emphasising the collective and social aspects of teaching and discipline, and for selecting a limited number of cases so it would be possible to understand each case separately.

**Case selection**

In the final selection of cases, I aimed for selecting disciplines that were similar in epistemological structure to be able to unfold some of the theoretical assumptions in the
disciplinary literature. The majority of disciplines within the faculty would be categorised as soft applied sciences in Biglan’s framework and therefore would be expected to privilege the same type of teaching methods (Biglan, 1973a; Neumann et al., 2002). I chose two disciplines that met the criteria in similarities and in which discipline arguments featured strongly in the pilot interviews. This was the case in the interview from the Department of Law and as well as in the interview from Department of Management. The lecturers from these two cases had very different views on their disciplines, on their teaching and on their relationship with colleagues. At the same time, they both emphasised the applicability and usefulness of their disciplines for society.

**Recruitment of participants**

When planning the recruitment of participants, different criteria were taken into account. I wanted to ensure that I recruited 1) lecturers teaching different levels of the programme (undergraduate and graduate levels), 2) lecturers from different mandatory courses, 3) male as well as female lecturers at all career levels, and 4) lecturers with research as well as teaching experience. The purpose of this strategy was, firstly, to secure a sufficient number of interviews to reach saturation in descriptions of teaching and disciplines. Secondly, to maximise variation, and thirdly, to increase the likelihood of a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the ongoing teaching activities (Flick, 2002, 68). Yet, the aim was not to secure representativity because neither theory nor methodology would allow for generalisability purposes. See table 4.1. for an overview of participants.
Table 4.1. Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Male or Female</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Roger</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>Ph.D. Student</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Judith</td>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>bachelor /master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>bachelor /master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Henrietta</td>
<td>Post.doc.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>bachelor /master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>Assistant professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>bachelor /master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>John (pilot interview)</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bus.man.</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>bachelor /master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bus.man.</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>bachelor /master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bus.man.</td>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>bachelor /master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bus.man.</td>
<td>Natalie</td>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>bachelor /master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bus.man.</td>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bus.man.</td>
<td>Christine</td>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>bachelor /master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bus.man.</td>
<td>Neil</td>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>bachelor /master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bus.man.</td>
<td>Allan (pilot interview)</td>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>bachelor /master</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I wanted to use the same strategy for the recruitment of participants in both disciplines. Thus, in both cases I contacted the study director who is a central figure in the contact with lecturers, and who possesses legitimacy in relation to educational matters.

In the Department of Law, the study director informed all lecturers about the project and invited them to contact me. At that point, no lecturers returned the invitation. Later, the study director asked 15 lecturers meeting the criteria to participate in an email directly to each of them. Eight of them responded and were keen to participate in my study. In that sense, the invitation by the study director was a great advantage.

In the case of the Department of Management, I also talked to the director of studies. However, the director of studies organised several study programmes across two different departments – the Department of Management and the Department of Economics and Business Economics. Thus, it was difficult for him to point to relevant lecturers. Instead, I contacted the study coordinator at the Department of Management who recommended a couple of lecturers to be contacted. The rest I found through a search on the university website. I contacted them directly by email. Compared to the situation at the Department of Law, more lecturers rejected my invitation. Sometimes a potential interviewee suggested one of his or her colleagues as an alternative, and if I could see that this person would meet the criteria, I contacted this person. As a result, there was an element of snowballing in the
selection of participants from business management. A recommendation from a colleague made a positive answer more likely.

Especially in the Department of Management, I faced some difficulties recruiting participants meeting all of the selection criteria. I did not succeed in recruiting participants from different career levels as they were all associate professors (see table 4.1.). However, the eight associate professors were at very different stages of their careers. Some were young and newly appointed, others were close to retirement. After interviewing the lecturers, I concluded that a sufficiently degree of variation was achieved.

To sum up, seventeen lecturers participated in the interviews; nine from the law department, and eight from the business management department. Two of the participants were from the pilot study at law and business management respectively.

4.2. Methods
To be able to explore the lecturers’ own understanding of their disciplines and their teaching, it was necessary to hear their reflections about a number of different topics relating to their everyday teaching practices. As one of the main goals of this dissertation is to understand teaching in its context, conducting interviews in the lecturers’ own physical location was important. Individual interviews conducted in the lecturers’ offices were chosen as the primary data source because the interview as data collection method has several advantages. More than anything because it grants access to reasoning and values behind the interviewee’s behaviour – tacitly or explicitly. The interview form allows for complexity, apparent contradictions and competing viewpoints to exist at one and the same time, which is a characteristic of ongoing practices. Thus, the interview method allowed interview persons to express contradictory opinions in the same interview and to unfold lines of argument. This is highly relevant when trying to understand how disciplines unfold as negotiated practices because part of the negotiation took place in the interview situation. Next, the interview is a conversation which makes it possible to reflect in the situation and reach new insights - for the lecturers as well as for me as the interviewer (Kvale, 1997, 42). Simply being asked questions about their teaching from someone outside their context made lecturers reflect on their normal ways of doing things (‘I have never thought about it before, but I think that it is important that we teach them how to behave properly’). Further, the questions were so open that, prior to the interview, I did not know the range of answers
to my questions. Thus, the methods needed to reflect this and make room for unanticipated reactions and answers.

The individual interview created a space for confidentiality between the interviewer (me) and the interviewee (the lecturers); during an interview it is possible and necessary to develop a relationship of trust (Fog, 2004) because lecturers shared their thoughts, feelings and doubts about their teaching, which they rarely shared with their colleagues.

Data includes in-depth interviews with the 17 lecturers. Two pilot interviews were included in the data because I only made minimal revisions in the interview guide from the pilot phase to the next data collection phase. The interviews were supplemented with a limited number of observations described below. In the following section, I will describe the procedure of the interviews.

**Interviews**

The interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview is structured enough to guide the conversation, and open enough to allow the conversation to develop in the most interesting direction. Because lecturers’ knowing about teaching and learning in their discipline consists of explicit knowing as well as implicit knowing different questioning strategies were suitable. Explicit knowing and assumptions were expressed spontaneously. Implicit and tacit knowing was revealed through the conversation and investigations of reasons and arguments (Flick, 2002). The pilot study had shown which themes made lecturers reflect and which themes brought up spontaneous opinions.

The final interview-guide was organised according to these different themes (see table 4.2.). Each theme was approached with one main question and with several other questions relating to the same theme. This created many possible ways to talk about the same theme. In most interviews, the conversation developed naturally around the themes. The semi-structured interview allowed for things to come up and for lecturers to focus on the aspects of their practice that interested them the most.
Table 4.2. Excerpt of the semi-structured interview guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study programme</th>
<th>2. What type of study programme is this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description of the purpose of the study programme and values</td>
<td>d. Students who study here for five years, what do they learn? (Examples?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. What do they take away? (Can you describe what it looks like?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. What is the purpose of this study programme? (In this department, do you agree about the purpose of the study programme?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g. Do you succeed? (Examples?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of own role</th>
<th>3. How do you contribute to the education of students?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description of practice</td>
<td>h. What do you do when you teach? (Why is that a good way to do it?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i. What is the most important thing that needs to happen during class? (What is the purpose of your teaching?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>j. How would you describe yourself as a teacher? (What is your role?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>k. Is teaching important here in this department? (Is it important for you?) (Do you like to teach?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: See the rest of the interview guide in the appendix A.

In each interview, I presented the lecturer with an example of the study programme’s competence profile. The competence profile is an official document stating the purpose of the (master) study programme and explicating the skills and competences graduates are expected to obtain in their course of their studies (see table 4.3.).

The purpose of introducing this document was to be able to return to some of the themes brought up during the interviews and to explore to which extent the formal documents were known and accepted among the lecturers. In addition, it worked as a summary of the interview and helped validate some of the viewpoints brought up during the interviews. For example, one of the lecturers commented on each competence and elaborated on his point about student responsibility by explaining to me ‘As I said earlier, I’m not so sure that these students are able to take responsibility for their own development’ (table 4.3., MSc study programme in Economics and Business Administration, see last line).
### Table 4.3. Competence profiles from the two cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Master’s degree programme</th>
<th>MSc study programme in Economics and Business Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The purpose of the legal Master’s degree programme is to equip students with the necessary qualifications to work with legal issues in both the public and the private sectors. Upon completion of the degree, the student must be able to investigate, analyse and solve theoretical and practical legal issues. The degree programme also aims at providing students with the competences described below. The degree programme must equip you to work within the legal system, e.g. in courts, law firms, within the police and public prosecution, and public and private administration, as well as in international organisations. In addition, the degree programme must give you the necessary skills to qualify for admission to a PhD degree programme.</td>
<td>The research-based <strong>MSc study programme in Economics and Business Administration</strong> builds on the competencies and insights acquired in the BSc study programme in Economics and Business Administration. The study programme provides the graduate with specialist knowledge within the disciplines of the study programme that give the graduate high academic qualifications to develop solutions to issues pertaining to business administration in companies and organisations in the public and private sectors. The study programme also qualifies the graduate for further studies, including PhD studies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Intellectual competences** – as a law graduate, you can:  
- work independently, both alone and in teams.  
- work in a goal-oriented and structured manner and combine several legal disciplines.  
- work systematically with complex legal issues.  
- plan your own learning, including acquiring and communicating knowledge in a foreign language.  
- rapidly and independently familiarise yourself with new issues and large cases. | Through the study programme, the graduate has acquired knowledge that enables the graduate to understand and consider knowledge pertaining to the various disciplines as well as identify academic issues.  
Master the scientific methodologies and tools of the various disciplines as well as master general skills associated with employment within the areas studied.  
Assess and choose among the scientific methodologies and tools of the various disciplines as well as develop new analysis and solution models.  
Discuss professional and academic issues with both specialists and laymen.  
Manage work and development situations that are complex, unpredictable and require new solution models.  
Initiate and carry out, on an independent basis, monodisciplinary and interdisciplinary collaboration and take professional responsibility.  
Take responsibility, on an independent basis, for own professional development and specialisation. |
| **Academic competences** – a law graduate can apply legal methodology at a specialised level in order to:  
- identify and understand complicated legal issues and contexts.  
- analyse complicated legal issues using all relevant legal sources.  
- apply international perspectives.  
- take societal issues into consideration when solving legal issues.  
- take the societal aspects of law into consideration when choosing between different legal solutions. |  |
| A law graduate is able to communicate and formulate specialised legal issues, both verbally and in writing. A law graduate can reason at a high level and choose between legal solutions. |  |
| **Practical competences** – in the case of complicated legal issues within specialised fields, a law graduate can:  
- assess whether a case has been sufficiently examined.  
- make decisions.  
- give advice at a high level within several branches of law.  
- write legal documents. |  |

The individual interviews lasted between 55 minutes and 2.5 hours. The interviews with law lecturers were often longer than the interviews with the business management lecturers. After each interview, I made memos about interesting or surprising themes or topics I needed to examine further in the next interviews. In that sense, I ensured that each theme was saturated. Approximately 19 hours of interviews were transcribed verbatim by me or one of four research assistants according to a set of written guidelines. Transcripts were stamped with time codes to be able to return to the exact wording in the original audio file. A total number of 500 pages of transcriptions were produced.

Observations

I conducted a limited number of observations of teaching, presentations and meetings at the two departments. As described earlier, my focus changed from studying lecturers’ teaching conceptions to studying their reasoning; therefore my theoretical perspective changed as well. The moderate essentialism as well as the theory about teaching and learning regimes rest on practice theoretical assumptions. Practice theories emphasise the bodily aspects of human behaviour and the embeddedness of discourses in bodily practices (Reckwitz, 2002). Thus, observations are highly relevant when uncovering practices (Trowler, 2014c). Consequently, my idea was to supplement interviews with observations. However, lack of time and difficulties with getting access to relevant sites made it more difficult than expected.

At the Department of Law, I participated in a number of meetings with lecturers, and I was present once when a board of external examiners negotiated the level of grades in an end of semester exam. I observed a two-hour large-scale lecture as well as a three-hour small class seminar.

At the business management department, I observed lecturers as they participated in three half-day seminars organised by the academic development unit. Several lecturers presented their development initiatives to each other and colleagues from other departments. In addition, I observed three lecturers from business management as they participated in a development course encompassing 32 hours of classroom participation.

The material collected from observations was not sufficiently similar between the two cases or comprehensive enough to carry out independent analyses. Yet, the material has served as background knowledge in the analyses of my interview data. This is what Dubois and Gadde (2002) call active data. It is data associated with discoveries that would never have
been found through search. In observations of meetings or presentations of development initiatives, I was confronted with the lecturers’ ways of understanding their teaching which made me ask new questions and go back to my data to see if I could substantiate these ideas.

4.3. DATA ANALYSES
The teaching and learning regime construct is a relatively new theoretical framework for understanding teaching in local contexts, and the operationalisation of components is being developed. One aim of this dissertation is to contribute to the development of theories. Therefore, an abductive approach has been chosen as the overall strategy of analysis. The abductive strategy is a mixture of a deductive and an inductive strategy (Dubois & Gadde, 2002, 559) and has the clear advantage that it acknowledges the preconceptions and theories already known. At the same time, it is especially fruitful if the researcher’s objective is to discover new things and develop existing theories. Dubois and Gadde (2002) argue that the researcher’s original theoretical framework is developed through the continuous confrontation between theory and empirical observations. In this dissertation, the abductive approach made it possible to conduct explorative analyses as well as more theory-driven analyses. Concurrently with me obtaining insights and substantiating conclusions, my analyses became more and more focused and theory-driven. This point is explained further in the following sections accounting for the development of the analysis strategies. Elaborated accounts of the different strategies applied are described in each of the appended papers.

Within-case analysis

Papers 1, 2 and 5 are within-case analyses of law and business management respectively. Papers 1 and 5 are within-case analyses of law, and paper 2 is a within-case analysis of business management. The thorough within-case analyses of the two cases had the clear advantage of making it possible to describe and understand each case on its own terms (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014, 100-101). The aim was, with different analytical strategies (presented in the papers), to identify a coherent narrative within each discipline.

The research questions asked in these papers were open and explorative. For instance, in paper 1 I asked ‘How do teachers in a specific local setting understand and interpret the characteristics of their discipline?’ The purpose was to understand and describe the case guided by the moderate essentialist position, but without applying specific analytical
dimensions. Thus, the within case analyses were inductive in nature. I allowed data to guide the development of the analyses. Hence, it was apparent that different themes emerged as predominant in the two groups of lecturers. For instance, the law lecturers spoke explicitly about their discipline, whereas this theme did not feature explicitly in the business management data. Therefore, another analytical strategy was chosen in the analysis of business management data than the one that had been applied with to the law data.

Cross-case comparison

In papers 3 and 4, I conducted cross case comparisons between the two cases. Typically, one main reason for conducting a cross-case analysis is to enhance transferability of results (Miles et al., 2014, 100-101). Yet, in this case, the purpose was to deepen my understanding of similarities and differences between the two cases. The distinctiveness of each discipline came to the fore in comparison with the other, and conclusions that had not looked significant within the case suddenly stood out. For instance, business management lecturers uttered understandings of teaching as a private and individual action. In itself, this conclusion was not remarkable. However, compared to an understanding of shared responsibility and collectiveness in law, this finding became interesting and worth examining further.

Having identified the dominating themes and recurrent stories in each of the groups in the initial analyses, it was possible to approach data more deductively in the cross case comparisons. Research questions were more focused on specific activities (e.g. the method of instruction in paper 3) or concepts (e.g. the understanding of change in paper 4). The analyses were conducted as a search for constituting components in the two teaching and learning regimes; thereby the theoretical concept was substantiated and developed empirically.

In conclusion, the abductive strategy was immensely well-suited to this project because it encompassed the possibility of theoretical development during the analysis phase. The initial analyses were explorative and only thematically guided by the theory, whereas later analyses aimed at operationalising and unfolding the theoretical components of teaching and learning regimes. The combination of the inductive and deductive strategies was helpful in answering the research question of the dissertation.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

In this chapter, each of the five appended papers are summarised in relation to aim, results and contribution to the literature. Table 5.1. provides an overview of the papers displaying full title, research question(s), the case(s) analysed and the paper’s publication status.
Table 5.1. Overview of the appended papers, research questions, cases, and status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full title</th>
<th>Research questions</th>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 Discipline Context shapes Meaningful Teaching – a case study of Academic Law | • How do teachers in a specific local setting understand and interpret the characteristics of their discipline?  
• To what extent is their teaching shaped by the discipline context?                                                                                                                  | Law                         | Submitted, Journal of Further and Higher Education                                               |
| 2* Establishing a Method for Analysing Metaphors in Higher Education Teaching A case from business management teaching | • Which patterns of metaphors are present in conversations with teachers in business management when analysed inductively?  
• How does an inductive and structured approach to metaphor analysis challenge and supplement other metaphor studies in higher education?                                            | Business management         | Submitted with revisions, Higher Education Research and Development                             |
| 3 What reasons do teachers give for choosing the lecture? An interview study with teachers from two academic fields (Danish) | • How do teachers from two different academic environments motivate the lecture as a form of instruction?  
• Which values underlie their motivation?                                                                                                                                             | Law and business management | Accepted for print, Dansk Universitetspedagogisk Tidsskrift (Danish Journal for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education) (February 2017) |
| 4 How lecturers’ understanding of change is embedded in disciplinary contexts. A comparative case study. | • How is the understanding of change embedded in disciplinary contexts?                                                                                                                                                 | Law and business management | Submitted, Higher Education                                                                   |
| 5** Cut It Up and Put It Back Together: Cut-up and Collage as Tools to Overcome Academic Deadlock | • How do we avoid the pitfalls of counterproductive clarity and allow virtuous mess to take its place in the research process?                                                                                              | Law                         | Published, Journal of Perspectives on Applied Academic Practices (March 2016)                  |

*Written with Linda Greve, **written with Daphne Loads

5.1. PAPER 1
Paper 1 studies the shared features of a group of teachers from academic law. The unit of analysis was the shared meaning among teachers, which offered an understanding of the mechanisms that make the discipline influence teaching, and it illustrated how the discipline unfolds in a specific context. The principal theoretical assumption was that teaching is negotiated as a part of a social practice. This assumption was substantiated by the analyses which show that most teachers shared an understanding of the defining characteristics of their discipline. Still, competing interpretations existed and presented
themselves during the interviews. Results clearly indicated that there was an inner logic in the discipline of law and that this logic, with all its tensions, was also present in the teachers’ descriptions of teaching. The analysis identified a number of constituting dimensions in teachers’ description of academic law. Teaching descriptions were analysed in relation to these dimensions. The results show how teaching make sense in relation to the characteristics of the discipline. The teachers emphasised the structures, norms and values of academic law and applied these structures, norms, and values when they described their teaching practices.

This study adds to the existing literature in two ways pointing in slightly different directions. First, this article underlines the importance of discipline. Discipline characteristics feature strongly in teachers’ reasoning for how they teach, and tensions in discipline became tensions in teaching. However, this was not a deterministic relationship which is substantiated by the second contribution. The second contribution is that the article shows how similar descriptions of the content of academic law have different consequences for teaching methods in different contexts. The choice of method for instruction in this context was different from practices in for example Bergen in Norway (Wilhelmsen, 2014) and different from Shulman’s descriptions of legal signature pedagogy in an American context (Shulman, 2005). Hence, the article’s findings support the moderate essentialist understanding of the nature of disciplines and warn against analysing statements about teaching without considering the context.

This paper contributes to the overall research question in the dissertation by operationalising and illustrating different dimensions of disciplinary practice. The paper illustrates how the shared background knowledge is expressed, and how the values of the discipline have emotional aspects such as pride and duty. The dimensions are intertwined in the teachers’ understanding of their discipline. In some ways, the discipline’s logic is contradictory in nature. By separating the dimensions analytically, it is possible to show how teaching is embedded in the disciplinary context because tensions within the discipline was mirrored in the different teaching practices.

5.2. PAPER 2
The second paper makes a similar point, showing the dangers of isolating statements about teaching without considering the context. However, paper 2 is very different from papers 1, 3 and 4; firstly, because it has a primarily methodological focus and, secondly, because
it draws on another theoretical framework than the moderate epistemological essentialism. Paper 2 is an inductive search for the use of metaphors in business management teaching. The paper seeks to establish a systematic way of examining interview data with teachers by using an inductive and structured approach to metaphor analysis and by focusing on the temporary stability of metaphors (Group, 2007). The method presented in the paper is characterised by rigorous rules for identification and categorisation of metaphors and rests on different assumptions about the nature of metaphors than classical metaphor studies in higher education (Emerson & Mansvelt, 2014; Emerson & Mansvelt, 2015; Visser-Wijnveen, Van Driel, Van, Verloop & Visser, 2009; Wegner & Nückles, 2015). The analyses show how teachers spontaneously, without prompting, used a wide range of metaphors about teaching.

Some metaphors were used by a few interviewees, continuously through the interviews. Other metaphors were only used once by a single person. Some of the metaphors were shared among most of the teachers. In particular, most teachers uttered a concept of teaching characterised by linearity, mobility and levels up, down and out. Interestingly, these metaphors were sometimes used in a way that were contradictory. For instance, teachers conceptualised the direction ‘down’ as something good as well as something bad, e.g. it was problematic for students to be on lower levels in their thinking but positive if they had a deep understanding of a topic.

Based on these findings, we conclude that by introducing this method to metaphor analysis it is possible to show how a single statement about teaching expressed in metaphoric language does not reveal the lecturers’ understanding of teaching. Instead, metaphors are a part of everyday language, constructed in the context – sometimes recurring and sometimes not.

The paper contributes to the literature by introducing this rigorous method for analysing metaphors to the field of higher education, and by arguing that conceptualisations are embedded and negotiated rather than individual cognitive structures to be revealed. Consequently, the paper criticises some of the existing literature for drawing too far-reaching conclusions based on the analysis of teaching metaphors. In addition, we suggest that metaphors create a certain space for action, and that educational development activities might benefit from addressing teachers’ metaphors and introducing new ones.
Finally, the paper contributes to the dissertation by opening up the business management data and by supporting the claim inherent in practice theory that language is a part of an ongoing practice. The ontological viewpoint that the individual lecturer’s mind does not exist isolated from his or her body corresponds with the assumptions behind practice theories. As such, the understanding of metaphors as a negotiated and temporarily stable discourse pushed my thinking forward in understanding the ontological as well as epistemological consequences of my theoretical framework.

5.3. PAPER 3
The third paper explores the reasons teachers give for their choice of lectures as method of instruction. The purpose was to examine how teachers motivate their choices of lectures, and how value is attributed to lectures in two similar institutional contexts. The focus of the analysis was the shared social context and the co-construction of values and motivations expressed in reasons for teaching in certain ways. Sometimes the reasons or motivations given are deliberate and known to the teacher. At other times, they are silent and related to values (Lauvås & Handal, 2015). The analyses were guided by the practice triangle constructed by Lauvås and colleagues illustrating that the individual’s actions amount to more than the practices that appear at first glance. Despite the fact that authors of the practice triangle refer to individuals as objects of analysis, the use of it is not incompatible with the theoretical assumptions in this dissertation. The practice triangle illustrates the depth of unconscious knowing that is embedded in actions and values. The practice point of view insists on the social and negotiated aspect of this knowing.

Therefore, the analysis compared the interviewed teachers’ understanding of lecturing in relation to 1) their objective of the lecture, 2) the learning content, 3) the students’ responsibility, and 4) the value of teaching. The analysis shows that the same activity, namely lecturing, was substantiated differently in the two environments - despite a series of identical surface characteristics. Further, the results reveal that the differences were far from random; the teachers’ motivations were rooted in professional values, in their perceptions of their students, and in the nature of the content they taught. For instance, law teachers experienced their content as fixed and mandatory for students to learn, whereas teachers from business administration described their content as an offer to students. This is a central finding when you want to understand why the objective of the lecture as the method of instruction varies from one context to the other.
The paper adds to our knowledge about the importance of disciplines when we seek to understand teaching; discipline matters – not due to its epistemological traits – but due to its creation of a frame of meaning. Business administration teachers argued within a logic of individualism and competition whereas law teachers argued with reference to their societal duties. In addition, the paper contributed to the Danish literature by being a response to a demand for studies exploring the reasons, concepts and values involved in the choice of teaching method. It contributes to the dissertation by addressing the level of action and thereby illustrating how teaching is embedded in the disciplinary context.

5.4. PAPER 4
Paper 4 aimed to unfold the relationship between discipline and local context by examining how reasons promoting or opposing change in teaching were related to disciplinary dispositions and local practices. Reasons for promoting or opposing change was chosen as the focus of the analysis partly because the theme emerged in data and partly because lecturers’ understanding of change is highly relevant in an academic development perspective.

Through a comparative analysis of the two cases - lecturers from law and business management, respectively - the article addressed the question of how understanding of change is embedded in disciplinary contexts. The moderate essentialist position towards the concept of discipline was presented as a theoretical framework for understanding disciplines as negotiated and context dependent. The analysis shows that the two groups of lecturers had different reasons for wanting to change or not change their teaching. Reasons for opposing or supporting change were analysed in relation to criteria for success, assumptions about students and student behaviour as well as the purpose of teaching, and the organisation of teaching. Lecturers from business administration uttered opinions that made sense within the logic of an individualised and market-focused discipline in which students were perceived as consumers. This made changes occur often. Likewise, academic law lecturers expressed their professional values strongly and made an impression of a tightly knitted structure of content, teaching practices, and employer expectations. This made changes rare, and all changes needed to be substantiated in relation to disciplinary values.

Based on these findings, the study demonstrates how micro-processes shape the possible space for action and how change is dependent on context as well as discipline. Further, it
suggests that we start identifying contextual interpretations of discipline values as a starting point for academic development. Thus, the study argues that literature on teaching and learning as well as academic development, which have traditionally taken an either generic or disciplinary point of departure (Healey, 2000; Healey & Jenkins, 2003; Young, 2010) overlook the meaning construction that takes place in local academic communities.

The paper contributes to the dissertation by illustrating how teaching as well as the concept of change is entangled in the teaching and learning regimes. The paper introduces a vital point of interest for an academic developer by pointing at prerequisites for supporting development in discipline contexts.

5.5. PAPER 5

Paper 5 is a short paper introducing the concept of creative research methods as a way to handle difficulties in generating new ideas during the research process. The paper introduces cut-up and collage as an analytical tool. Further, the paper describes why these tools might help create new ways of thinking about well-known material (Vaughan, 2005). The paper presents the law case and reflects on the specific problem of situations where preconceptions are dominating and new analytical insights are difficult to reach. I describe the ways in which drawings, cut-up and collaging were helpful for allowing new ideas to come forward.

The paper exemplifies the outcome of this process with three new insights. The first insight was the conflict between the structured content of law and the messiness of teaching. This insight was a consistent theme in data and was later presented in paper 1. The second insight related to students as well-dressed newcomers into the academic field and showed how students needed to decipher a system represented by a Sudoku in the collage. Finally, the word HOME appeared in the collage reminding me of the very comfortable feeling in the offices at the law department, and the sense of belonging law teachers expressed when they talked about their discipline. This insight was analysed further in paper 4, in which the collective aspect of the organisation of their teaching also bear witness to a strong sense of belonging.

The paper contributes to the literature on research methodology by providing a concrete guide on how to apply creative research methods and by relating the methods to relevant literature. The paper contributes to the dissertation by pushing the analysis process forward and illustrating some of the key findings in the data material.
My dissertation makes three fundamental contributions. First, I demonstrate that a strong epistemological framework is insufficient for conceptualising disciplines. Second, I show that lecturers ascribe meaning to their teaching in non-arbitrary ways conditioned by their disciplinary context. Third, I demonstrate how disciplinary teaching can be conflictual, contain paradoxes, and challenge pedagogic knowledge as well as academic development work. I discuss each of these contributions below. Finally, I discuss some methodological considerations.

6.1. DISCIPLINES ARE MORE THAN KNOWLEDGE
My results suggest that focusing solely on disciplinary knowledge properties is insufficient and in some respects problematic. The first problem with overarching categories such as soft/hard, applied/pure dichotomies is that it assumes that knowledge is static across time and place. My findings show that a discipline consists of diverse understandings of knowledge. Contradictory understandings of defining characteristics existed in the same interview. For instance, a law lecturer emphasised the firmness and rules of law and simultaneously characterised the discipline as hermeneutic and flexible. Despite the fact that it was possible to identify a shared narrative about law in this context, the discipline’s features also changed from one interview person to another or from one course to another. Law has been characterised as a soft discipline due to the multiplicity of paradigms and instability of knowledge (Becher, 1989, 15; Biglan, 1973a). However, the categorisation of law as a soft discipline did not apply in my findings in situations where undergraduate students needed to learn the system of law. In these instances, law sounded like a hard science; the lecturers adhered to the same paradigm, they agreed on which books to read, and they had shared criteria for evaluating students. Thus, the lecturers’ understanding of the discipline was contingent upon the situation in which it was played out.

The same lecturers who emphasised the cumulative nature of the content of law in bachelor education, also associated law with a Socratic dialogue and hermeneutic thinking. In
relation to research, they spoke about internal differences and discussions. When talking about bachelor teaching, there was consensus. These different versions of the disciplinary knowledge existed side by side and were part of separate practices. Different aspects of the discipline were emphasised dependent on whether the topic was research, undergraduate teaching or teaching master students. Thus, the version of law that lecturers presented, was contingent upon the context examined. This supports the notion that disciplines are multifaceted and bound to specific practices (Trowler, 2014a). Consequently, it is possible to understand variation within the discipline because knowledge is not a static, defining character.

The second problem with overarching categories is that we are led to believe that we can predict outcomes and control for relevant disciplinary characteristics in for example statistical surveys by assigning these categories. The two cases I selected for this study, were chosen because, from an epistemological point of view, they shared a number of features. Firstly, they were both to be categorised as soft, non-paradigmatic disciplines in which methods and content are debated, complexity is a condition and several research agendas exist simultaneously (Biglan, 1973a; Donald, 2002). Next, both disciplines were applied disciplines concerned with the application of their subject matter. Based on surface characteristics such as number of students and methods of instruction they looked similar. However, the results clearly show that these two cases were extremely different in the extent to which discipline was expressed in arguments for teaching, in lecturers’ understanding of teaching, and in the organisation of teaching activities. Thus, moving below the surface characteristics revealed a number of fundamental differences. This critique has already been raised by for example Trowler who argues that:

The problem with this kind of categorisation is that while it seems to make sense when disciplines are viewed through the wrong end of a telescope, from a great distance, the distinctions begin to fall apart in the analytical hand when the analyst steps out of the helicopter, as do the similarities between apparently very different sub-disciplinary areas. (Trowler, 2012, 19)

Further, not only does this categorisation fall apart when scrutinised in concrete cases, it also excuses researchers from substantiating their arguments for hypothesised differences between disciplinary categories. As an example, Neumann (2001, 139) concludes: ‘Among the soft pure fields, the social sciences presented the most current knowledge, contrasting
with hard pure which presented the ‘oldest’. This practice is argued to be related to the hierarchical structure of knowledge in hard pure fields (…’). According to Neumann (2001), the described behaviour (choice of material presented) is caused by the discipline’s knowledge structures. In some research, this behaviour becomes a defining property of the discipline itself. For instance, when certain teaching methods turn defining for a disciplinary area: ‘A unique feature of soft applied fields is the tendency to include the contributions of experienced practitioners as a significant component in the teaching process.’ (Neumann et al., 2002, 412). The consequence is that some studies confirm existing disciplinary categories simply by applying them. In paper 3, I showed how lecturers in two soft, applied disciplines chose the lecture as the primary method of instruction of undergraduate students. Without going into the reasons for lecturers’ choice, I would have confirmed the hypothesis that the shared epistemological structure led to the same method of instruction. Thus, applying overarching categories miss the fact that a similar outcome can have different reasons. This has serious validity problems because the results do not mirror the reality.

The third and final problem I will bring up in this part of the discussion, is that the framework of strong epistemological essentialism has difficulties encompassing fragmented disciplines such as business management. My findings suggest that it was possible to identify a shared frame of meaning within a group of lecturers from business management. The discipline properties did not feature strongly in the lecturers’ reasoning explicitly. They did not give examples from their subject matter to the same extent that the law lecturers did. However, the lecturers’ individual reasoning made sense in meaningful ways when a logic of business was given as a frame of understanding. They experienced themselves as competing with their colleagues, they argued for resource-optimisation as an expedient strategy for students and researchers alike, and they were attentive to students’ requests and demands. Clearly, several shared practices and meaningful behaviour existed.

Defining business management as a discipline is challenging within the frame of strong epistemological essentialism because the discipline has several, competing knowledge areas consisting of economics, management, marketing as well as business ethics, innovation and methods (Macfarlane & Ottewill, 2001). It is difficult to draw the borders of the discipline based on epistemology because it does not have a shared body of knowledge and agreed upon methods (Donald, 2002, 7). Donald (2002, 10) argues that applied areas such as business management are better described as *fields* because they
incorporate knowledge and methods from a variety of disciplines. The theory apparatus needs stretching to capture existing disciplines in real life universities. This is a shortcoming of the narrow epistemological focus. Instead, by changing the scope of analysis to practices, and widening constituting elements of disciplines to interactions, feelings, and values, new disciplines start to appear and take form. This is an advantage of the moderate essentialism that it allows disciplines that are observed and experienced to be analysed. Another advantage is the possibility of development and emergence of disciplines. Like in other studies of business management, I found that there were several newcomers to the field among my interviewees (Macfarlane, 1998). To secure their anonymity I was not able to analyse their answers separately. However, what was interesting was that each of them had an internal debate about the extent to which they wanted to adhere to existing practices and to which they wanted to challenge them. Their thoughts, ideas, and ways of doing things contributed to the patchwork and the development of the discipline.

In sum, my results highlight that a discipline is not sufficiently captured by its knowledge properties alone. In the investigation of two concrete disciplinary contexts, I have found that internal variation in perception of knowledge dependents on context. I have demonstrated how analyses based on the Biglan classification scheme are in danger of making false conclusions because disciplines are examined from a distance, and I have argued that a moderate epistemological essentialism is better suited for capturing fragmented and emerging disciplines. Accordingly, analysing disciplines as static have shortcomings; emergence and variation are difficult to capture, the context-sensitivity of values, feelings, and even knowledge is overlooked.

6.2. TEACHING IS ASCRIBED MEANING IN NON-ARBITRARY WAYS

My work also exemplify and demonstrate how disciplinary dispositions are translated into localised repertoires in teaching. I depart from prior literature by moving beyond correlational studies of discipline and teaching, and examining how teaching makes sense in two specific contexts. I find that some reasons relate to contextual factors. For instance, teaching is conducted taking into consideration their other obligations, their future career plans, their colleagues’ ideas and wishes. Other reasons made sense in relation to their disciplines. The law lecturers’ emphasised the importance of keeping high standards in teaching to live up to the profession’s standards, and the business management lecturers’ accepted resource optimizing students who to some extent underperformed because they
had other priorities. These reasons, despite given in different versions, were recurrent in the material, and they made sense in relation to the disciplinary context in which they were uttered. This adds to our understanding of how teaching is conditioned by discipline as well as context – not in a deterministic way but because the discipline’s logic when interpreted in context, makes a specific way of teaching and acting more appropriate and legitimate. This insight fills a research gap. In summarising prior literature, Trowler (2012, p. 23) states that

They [Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2006] also found, however, that teachers who have experienced different contexts or who change teaching context will sometimes adopt different approaches to teaching in those contexts. Disappointingly, this study tells us only that teaching practices correlate with these two variables: how this happens can only be speculated upon.

I respond to this absence by demonstrating that teaching is ascribed meaning in non-deterministic, but also in non-arbitrary ways. The local negotiations are of crucial importance because they define the borders of appropriate and meaningful behaviour within the frame of a disciplinary community. The research presented here has also confirmed earlier results regarding local, disciplinary sense making. In their study, McCune and Hounsell (2005) argued that it was important to understand what high-quality teaching and learning looked like in a specific local disciplinary context. In their examination of three final-year biology courses, they found that teaching-learning strategies as well as assessment strategies adopted by lecturers were congruent with the ways of thinking and practicing in the specific disciplinary setting and thus, emphasised the interrelatedness of teaching and learning with discipline in itself. Indeed, the results in paper 3 show how lecturers’ choice of teaching method are congruent with their perception of their content, their students and the values of their discipline. In line with my findings, Kathleen Quinlan (1999) demonstrated a non-deterministic relationship between the understanding of discipline and teaching in history. Further, she found that competing perceptions of history existed within the same department. She found that students met different versions of the discipline through their courses of study. The result of the lecturers’ different orientations towards their discipline was internal conflicts about the main purpose of history education and different ways of teaching it.
My identification of the ways teaching makes sense in specific contexts adds to the repertoire of explanations for why university lecturers teach as they do. The explanation given here is social and related to the interactions between colleagues in specific disciplinary communities. Other explanation models are psychological as for example teachers’ approaches to teaching (Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2006; Stes, De Maeyer & Van Petegem, 2010; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996a; Trigwell & Prosser, 1996b; Trigwell & Prosser, 2004). Teachers’ approaches to teaching focuses on lecturers’ perceptions of existing teaching-learning environments and, therefore, little sense is given of how the environment come to be what it is, or how it is situated within human interactions (Ashwin, 2012, 36).

However, my research shows that lecturers make decisions on how to teach in consideration of a wide range of socially generated, explicit or tacit rules, norms, and assumptions. Further, from the results it is also evident that teaching does not take place in isolation. The arguments for teaching were rooted in relations to the surrounding society. They were responses to specific student behaviour and perceived expectations from colleagues and management. A certain teaching and learning environment was produced through lecturers’ interactions, their co-teaching activities and their discussions about appropriate content. This explanatory model is complex, context-dependent, and multidirectional. It is not evident in which direction mechanisms work. Everything appears to be related; the understanding of the discipline, the criteria for success, students’ behaviour and assumptions about their motives, the subjects’ content, and the organisation of teaching. The analyses in paper 3 and paper 4 show how the concept of teaching and learning regimes can detangle complexity for a moment and make it possible to see how threads of meaning are spun and interwoven into a teaching practice.

These findings also warn us of the dangers of isolating statements about teaching. The isolation from context gives each statement more weight than is reasonable. As argued in paper 2, single statements are simply statements expressed in a specific moment and cannot be seen as tokens for psychological concept. Not before the statement is examined in context to see if it is a part of a larger pattern, will we know if the statement is of any significance. Wegner and Nückles (2015) analyse metaphors for teaching in different disciplines because ‘metaphors form culturally available lenses through which individuals perceive teaching and learning’ (p. 627). They claim that by using certain metaphors, lecturers reveal their understanding of the university as either a community of practice or a place for acquisition of knowledge. Based on a metaphor such as “Teaching is like having
a flower shop: The teacher presents beautiful flowers to the students. (Law)” (p. 636) Wegner and Nückles (2015) categorise the lecturer as having a transmission orientation. Yet, this metaphor could have other meanings if it was analysed in its context as it is done in paper 2. Plant metaphors have in other context been associated with growth and development (Fox, 1983). The focus on single statements oversimplifies the construction of meaningful teaching in context. Presenting the most interesting material to students does not eliminate the possibility of letting students participate in discussions. The lecturers from business management did in fact argue in that way – they wanted to present the most interesting material to students to keep them inspired. Thus, presenting can be a way to engage students in new material. Isolated statements are in danger of creating what McArthur (2012) has called a ‘wicked clarity’. That is, putting too much emphasis on parsimonious models that work very well theoretically, but have difficulties handling complex and contradictory findings.

To sum up, I show that lecturers’ understanding of appropriate teaching behaviour in a specific context is guided by contextual as well as disciplinary meaning. The interpretation of disciplines makes some actions more legitimate and others inappropriate. A discipline does not generate a specific teaching behaviour. Instead, a discipline frames a meaningful working life for academics. I argue that this research contributes to social explanations for why teachers teach as they do. Compared to psychological explanations the social model focuses on shared arguments. Further, I warn against analysing teaching as an isolated phenomenon – methodological as well as theoretical.

6.3. PARADOXES AND CONFLICTS IN DISCIPLINARY TEACHING
Thirdly, my work demonstrates that disciplinary teaching can be conflictual and contain paradoxes that challenge pedagogic knowledge and intended learning outcomes. For the law lecturers, the tensions in their discipline between a static and structured foundation of knowledge (the content) and the dynamic methods applied were so embedded in their understanding of the discipline that they did not acknowledge its presence. They emphasised the need to put structures in place before discussing them, and this guided their pedagogies. However, they argued that students had difficulties reaching a sufficient level of understanding, which from a pedagogical point of view might not be surprising as pedagogical research shows that lectures are not well-suited to promote thought or train behavioural skills (Bligh, 2000, 10-12). In this way, the logic of the discipline challenged their possibilities of creating more supportive teaching. Many of the lecturers perceived the
lecture as a prerequisite for learning law even though the lecture did not reflect the work of
the lawyer. Shulman (2005) found that the first year of law school was dominated by the
case dialogue method of teaching mirroring the profession’s court cases even though
strictly controlled by a tutor. Shulman argues that signature pedagogies are pervasive
consisting of methods (surface structure), assumptions about how to impart knowledge
(deep structure), and a moral dimension (implicit structure). The signature pedagogy
always gives priority to some aspects of the profession while failing to address others. Thus,
the signature pedagogy might not be the best pedagogy. My results confirm the
pervasiveness of the pedagogy that can be difficult to change because the pedagogy relates
to lecturers’ understanding of the discipline and a shared understanding of the purpose of
the study programme (paper 4). However, I add that signature pedagogies can exist in
different versions in different contexts. The authoritative case dialogue in Shulman’s
example is different from the lecture and seminar model in my case and again different
from the problem-based learning model (Wilhelmsen, 2014). Yet, some features exist
across the contexts. In all settings, students need to learn to think like a lawyer. They need
know the law and discern the facts. This is where the disciplinary family resemblance lies
(Trowler, 2014a).

Further, my study focuses attention on involuntary, pedagogically inexpedient, but
disciplinary congruent teaching practices. For instance, the ‘race-to-the-bottom’-pedagogy
in business management. One of the lecturers discusses with herself whether she should
change her teaching in order to adapt it to student wishes, and whether these wishes are in
conflict with her academic standards (paper 4). She feels that she needs to return to her old
ways of teaching if students are not satisfied. Similarly, another lecturer observed how he
conducted teaching as a thorough exposition of the set literature to make sure students
would ‘get something out of it’ when they did not prepare for class. I initially analysed this
lecturer’s statement as a laissez-faire pedagogy or an indifference towards the academic
standards. However, when analysing the arguments closer, I uncovered another frame of
meaning. The fragmentation of the discipline, the dual purpose of equipping students to a
business career and introducing them to academia, created a conflict in teaching. It has
been argued that there is a mismatch between educating business management graduates
and upholding academic standards because the discipline of business management has a
bad reputation, being suspected of introducing business values into higher education
(Macfarlane, 1998, 2). This contradiction between business competencies and academic
competencies was a recurrent theme in my interview data. A third lecturer expressed it clearly when she said that she could not teach students *how to do* marketing. She could only teach them *theories about* marketing. In situations where lecturers felt they represented academia, they did not know whether to sanction the ‘lazy’ students demonstrating a business attitude towards their studies. Somehow, the attitude was legitimate and turned into an excuse for not preparing. Macfarlane and Ottewill (2001, 23) argue that a vocational mind-set among students is a condition in business management teaching and, further, suggest that lecturers stimulate thinking ‘about’ business instead of only thinking ‘for’ business. Thus, some disciplinary features seem to be recurrent across contexts. Even across the higher education sector as a whole, the diversity in student population and the tensions between research, teaching, and business exist (Altbach et al., 2009; Quintana, Mora, Pérez & Vila, 2016). However, the fact that the logic of resource optimisation and instrumentality resonated with the disciplinary logic seemed to turn the tensions into a pedagogical challenge in this business management setting. Thus, generic challenges are interpreted in specific local contexts.

The conflicts and paradoxes in both of my cases have contributed to a better understanding that may inform future academic development work in these settings. Understanding the embeddedness of teaching in disciplinary values makes us able to see how the disciplinary values are a part of any argumentation in the development of teaching practices. As an example, in a recent development project at the Centre for Teaching and Learning the Department of Law introduced more blended learning activities in their bachelor courses. From the development unit we observed that despite the fact that there was individual freedom for lecturers to redefine their teaching, and despite the fact that they were encouraged to translate general blended learning tools into activities promoting relevant legal knowledge and methodological thinking, lecturers in general adopted only a few and identical activities. They argued that the existing activities within and outside classes already promoted expedient learning for engaged students. Thus, we observed that lecturers chose activities they felt supported agreed upon learning outcomes and added to already established teaching activities (Stenalt, Nielsen & Bager-Elsborg, 2016). Consequently, the collective organisation of teaching and the shared opinions about the academic values in this law context made specific blended activities more meaningful than others. This realisation made us change our development strategy. Instead of trying to talk about blended learning tools, we talked about how it was possible to reach the intended outcomes.
in new ways, and as such we conducted the discussion within a disciplinary frame and its legitimate ends.

The consequences of my findings for academic development work in general are an open question about how close to home an academic developer can work without being blind to the conflicts embedded in practices. Healey and Jenkins (2003) argue that discipline-based development is an important and necessary form of development in order to recognise the territories of disciplines and acknowledge disciplinary differences in teaching and learning. Contrary to this position, Young (2010) argues that few teaching and learning issues are in fact truly discipline-specific. My results suggest that it is not either or. For instance, the teaching activities were similar in the two contexts of my investigations. There were no specialised teaching formats like laboratory work or fieldwork. The pedagogical challenges described by the lecturers resembled pedagogical challenges described in the literature (Altbach et al., 2009; Biggs & Tang, 2011). For instance, the diversity in student population, the lack of preparation among students, and the conflict between teaching and research in relation to acknowledgement and promotion. However, teaching was very disciplinary in relation to the ways it was ascribed meaning (paper 3). Further, the understanding of change was embedded in a disciplinary practice (paper 4) which adds another layer of complexity to development work. Neither the discipline-specific approach nor the generic one would suffice in guiding the work of the academic developer. Generic arguments do not necessarily resonate or translate into the disciplinary context without problems. The discipline-specific approach is equally blind to contextual factors when it is assumed that the discipline has a fixed epistemology which generates a specific pedagogy (Healey & Jenkins, 2003, 50-51). Instead, my findings support the recent call for context-sensitivity in academic development (Baume, 2016; Debowski, 2014). In fact, Young (2010, 116) also argues that ‘contextualising the generic issues, and understanding their particular significance, supports a more targeted and empathic form of staff development which recognises key identities’. Thus, the developer needs to take on the role as an allied or a critical friend (Debowski, 2014; Handal, 1999). The view of the sensitive and curious outsider might display existing practices. However, it is very important that the developer brings in the expertise of the development practice to be able to act as a legitimate intruder (Handal, 1999; Saroyan, 2014). Because teaching is embedded in interactions among groups of lecturers and their negotiated understanding of their discipline, academic development work is unlikely to succeed with a narrow focus on the individual lecturer.
Instead, in order to change existing practices we need to analyse and understand them (Mårtensson, 2014). The consequence is that we need to change focus to the development of organisations to change practices (Trowler & Cooper, 2002; Trowler, 2008).

In this study, I find that disciplinary teaching contains paradoxes and can be conflictual for lecturers. The findings suggest that embedded understandings of the discipline can lead to inexpedient pedagogical practices that are difficult to challenge. Further, I argue that this understanding of the disciplinary practices improve our opportunities to work as legitimate academic developers. However, the results do not provide evidence that either the generic or the discipline-specific starting point is more likely to succeed. Instead, in line with recent research I suggest a context-sensitive academic development in which the developer engages in organisational development representing a pedagogical expertise.

6.4. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS
Turning now to the methodological considerations, I will address three points in relation to my study. First, I discuss the demands derived from taking a practice theoretical starting point and to which extent I have succeeded in meeting those. Second, I discuss the range of conclusions drawn, and third, I comment briefly on the advantages of taking a meso-level perspective.

This dissertation rests on practice theoretical assumptions about the world as consisting of interrelated practices. Practices consist of bodily actions, discourses as well as things and structures (Reckwitz, 2002). When practices are omnipresent, complex and intertwined, selecting parts and elements for analytical purposes is inevitable (Ashwin, 2012, 17). In this case, the choice of the moderate epistemological essentialism and teaching and learning regimes has guided the analyses and provided the lenses through which I have observed the social world (Trowler, 2008; Trowler, 2014a). Further, the choice of methods give priority to a specific part of the practice. Firstly, I have given the discourse priority over bodily action due to the choice of interview. Secondly, my choice of individual interviews (compared to focus group interviews) makes it impossible to observe negotiations and interactions taking place. Thus, my suggestions of a shared understanding of the discipline rests on the interview persons’ utterances of similar descriptions of their discipline and not on an observed negotiation. However, the individual interview had the advantage of allowing understandings to unfold and unpopular or contradictory accounts to come
forward. Thirdly, I only observed little teaching activity and, therefore, the analyses explore only the lecturers’ description of their teaching and not their actual behaviour.

Nevertheless, the interviews and the multiple interactions with the lecturers from the two departments did generate more material than the actual words transcribed. For instance, the difficulties in recruiting participants in business management and the clear organisation of lecturers in law granting easy access to them became a presage for later results; paper 4 shows how the organisation of teaching is individual in the first context and collective in the second. Similarly, the competence profile introduced in all interviews showed the extent to which there was agreed upon assumptions about the end goals of the study programmes. The artefact was the physical evidence of a shared understanding in law and an unknown document for most of the business management lecturers. Even the arrangement of the office spaces nuanced my investigations and deepened my understanding of the two contexts: The porcelain china, the wall high shelves and the comfortably chairs at the law department were in contrast to meeting tables, several screens, books standing and lying on tables, and disposable cups at the business management department. I had difficulties incorporating these elements explicitly in my analyses; yet, they did inform my understanding.

Practice theories foreground the dynamics of practices and the routines in human behaviour (Reckwitz, 2002, 255). One advantage of the practice theoretical understanding is that it captures the emergence and disappearance of practices (Shove, Pantzar & Watson, 2012). This study is a cross sectional case study in two specific contexts – it is a snapshot of ongoing practices taken over eight months in 2014. The short duration of the study is a limitation in relation to understanding whether these structures of meaning are permanent, and how they came into being.

This takes me to the second point – the range of conclusions to be drawn from my dissertation. The study is conducted as a cross sectional study in a dynamic practice. Is it reasonable to assume that these findings are permanent? I will suggest that these findings are not arbitrary and that the identified patterns of meaning would be possible to identify at other times. Simply because practices are inert. They are routinized bodily behaviour and as such incarnated habits. Normally, they change slowly (Reckwitz, 2002; Shove et al., 2012). If I returned to the two contexts and asked the lecturers about their reasoning for choosing the lecture as method of instruction, or asked them to explain if they would change
their teaching. I am convinced that the structures of acknowledgement, assumptions about students, and beliefs about content matter would not have changed significantly. New arguments might have emerged, external pushes such as regulations or financing can change the way lecturers are forced to act, e.g. spending more or less time with their students. Over time, these structures can change arguments and understandings of conditions for teaching. In relation to the analysed metaphors, it is difficult to say whether the exact same metaphors would occur in a second interview or in interviews with other lecturers. Other lecturers from the same departments could emphasise other aspects of their discipline and the teaching conducted. However, arguments in relation to teaching were embedded in a not only disciplinary, but also contextual setting; therefore, my findings indicate that structures of meaning somehow exist in the environment beyond the selected individuals. A second relevant question in relation to the range of conclusions drawn, is whether the results are transferrable. The design and the number of interviews do not allow me to generalise across contexts, but that was not the intention of the project either. A main motivation for this dissertation was to understand teaching in specific contexts, to see how local context and discipline make sense. This is not the same as saying that we cannot learn from this context in other contexts. Describing the components of the practices around teaching, the structures of meaning, and the university context, make analytical generalisation possible in similar contexts (Yin, 2009, 42).

The third and last point in this section is the advantages of taking a meso-level perspective in the investigations of teaching. The ontological viewpoint that the world is social and our meaning is created in interactions with others (Ashwin, 2012; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000), invites us to examine the social world. Further, the research question asked focused on which parts of individual sense making recur across individuals. Often the reasons for our actions and the layers of meaning behind them are tacit or unacknowledged (Gerholm, 1990; Lauvås & Handal, 2015). Kreber (2010) argued that disciplinary reasons for teaching did not feature explicitly in lecturers’ arguments. This was also the case in my interviews with business management lecturers. The discipline did not stand out in the explicit reasoning. However, as I have demonstrated in this dissertation, the discipline pervaded meaning in the community. The choice of meso-level unit of analysis made this deeper understanding possible. Each of the seventeen lecturers had their own reasons and arguments for their actions. Yet, when compared with their close colleagues their reasons for their teaching became structures of the teaching and learning regimes they inhabited. In
line with Mårtensson’s (2014, 58-60) conclusions about the importance of the meso-level, this study illustrates how the social and cultural aspects of an organisation are crucial for examining the behaviour. The constituting elements of the teaching and learning regimes highlight different aspects of a practice that makes it possible to understand why lecturers teach as they do. Broadening the attention from a specific action and its intention in one individual makes it possible to see how many aspects are of importance when teaching is planned and conducted.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES

The first aim of this dissertation was to understand university teaching in its disciplinary context. This study has analysed disciplines by taking a moderate essentialist view, allowing for discourses, habits, feelings, and motives to be a part of a disciplines constituting components (Trowler, 2014a). Thereby, it has been possible to open the black box of disciplinary teaching by illuminating some of the mechanisms through which teaching makes sense in a disciplinary context. My results show that university teaching is meaningfully conducted in non-arbitrary ways, conditioned by lecturers’ understanding of their context as well as of their discipline. These findings suggest that it is insufficient to conceptualise disciplines based on their knowledge properties, and that existing theories about disciplines such as the Biglan classification scheme overlook crucial differences within and between disciplines. My results show that a moderate essentialism makes it possible to identify discipline characteristics across contexts, due to the family resemblance of disciplines, and still allows the contextual interpretation of each discipline to come forward. I find that this conceptualisation of disciplines has a lot to offer future research in terms of acknowledging the importance of disciplines for the academic life in research and teaching without overstating the generative power of knowledge properties of disciplines.

The second aim of this dissertation was to contribute to the development of existing theories about teaching and learning in the disciplines. The analyses operationalised and unfolded aspects of teaching and learning regimes by using selected components of the TLR as analytical lenses on empirical data. I found that lecturers’ choice of teaching methods (recurrent practices), their understanding of students and their learning (implicit assumptions), and their understanding of success (power relations and codes of signification) were deeply embedded in their understanding of their disciplinary context (Trowler & Cooper, 2002; Trowler, 2008). Thus, my research has proven the usefulness of this theoretical framework in relation to detangling the web of meaning in a teaching-learning environment through the operationalisation of a few of the constituting
components of the teaching and learning regime framework. This relatively new theoretical apparatus has the potential to move research about teaching in the disciplines much further because it allows the complexity to exist and to be understood. Future research should continue this elaboration of the teaching and learning regimes framework. As an analytical tool, it still needs strengthening in the definitions of the constituting components to explore their content and limits. This would help clarify whether they are mutually exclusive, and point to relevant markers of each component. This would help future researchers identify and apply the components.

Further, this dissertation contributes to the theoretical development of the academic development literature. Existing studies show the importance of the meso-level for success of academic development (Mårtensson, 2014; Roxå & Mårtensson, 2013; Trowler & Cooper, 2002). I add a disciplinary layer to this strand of research by showing that lecturers’ willingness or reluctance to change their teaching practice is embedded in disciplinary contexts. Their willingness to change their teaching is not simply conditioned by collegial support, but also by disciplinary dispositions. Hence, I recommend that future development initiatives take these disciplinary dispositions into account as well as local micro-cultures and significant networks as conditions for successful development work.

Through this dissertation, I have answered my research question on how teaching is embedded in discipline by firstly, showing that disciplines are more than knowledge, and that disciplinary dispositions condition meaningful teaching behaviour. I have argued that the terms congruence and embeddedness are helpful in making us understand the interrelatedness between context, discipline and teaching without enforcing linearity or causality. Secondly, I have shown how contradictions and paradoxes exist within disciplinary communities, but also within individuals in their own negotiations on how to make sense of what they do. Thus, the findings substantiate the notion that disciplines as well as teaching are tacit, routinized behaviour.

The limitations inherent in my single location, cross-sectional case study also point to several opportunities for future research. I find two of these opportunities to be particularly intriguing. First, this case study examines only one university context. I suggest that future research includes multiple site case studies to identify different interpretations of the same discipline. A comparative case study with other departments of law and business management would be an obvious starting point.
The second opportunity relates to the limitations of the choice of a cross sectional study design. This study design makes it difficult to say whether the examined practices are momentary or permanent. Yet, my results show that teaching practices are not determined by discipline; they are embedded in a complex disciplinary context consisting of many layers of meaning which are only slowly changed by lecturers’ negotiations about what to do next semester. This suggests that teaching practices are not collapsing constantly. Thus, an intrinsically interesting question, and a question of interest for academic developers, is how and why teaching practices are or are not reproduced. In line with Trowler (2014c, 14), I suggest that future research address this question by conducting diachronic studies of organisational and disciplinary development. In prolonged studies, natural change or emergence of new practices would occur and could be examined. If prolonged studies are not an option an alternative solution is to examine externally initiated changes to see how these are interpreted in concrete disciplinary contexts as exemplified by Handal, Lycke, Mårtensson, Roxå, Skodvin, and Dyrdal (2014).

Ultimately, my work signals a strong payoff to be realised from further explorations of teaching in local disciplinary contexts as well as developments of theory and methodology. In the introduction, I pointed to the lack of a clear-cut statement about the relationship between teaching and discipline. This dissertation has shown that it is indeed difficult to provide a general, clear-cut statement about what disciplinary teaching looks like. However, a relationship between discipline and teaching is inevitable; teaching is always embedded in a disciplinary context. Given the complex interplay between context, discipline and teaching the intersection between them remain an important area for research. The conflictual and paradoxical nature of disciplinary teaching makes it pivotal to focus attention on how discipline values are translated into teaching practices, and how these apparently congruent practices may challenge students and lecturers alike. If we understand the discipline practice, its paradoxes, and the context, we are much more likely to understand the troublesome teaching.
ENGLISH SUMMARY

This PhD project investigates the relationship between discipline, context and teaching in a Danish university setting. The relationship between discipline and teaching has previously been thoroughly examined; however, existing studies have failed to address the variation within disciplines and the importance of social and contextual aspects for teaching. Further, existing theories, taking a strong epistemological essentialist position towards disciplines, have suggested a deterministic relationship between discipline and teaching. They argue that differences in for example methods of instruction, learning outcomes, and curriculum structure are caused by differences in the epistemological structures of disciplines.

I depart from this strand of literature and take a moderate essentialist position. Further, a practice focused theoretical framework guides the study. Through an abductive, qualitative case study, this dissertation aims to understand university teaching in its disciplinary context and, further, to contribute to the development of theories about teaching and learning in local contexts. The main research question is how teaching is embedded in disciplines. The study is conducted as individual interviews with seventeen lecturers from two different departments, the Department of Law and the Department of Management, at the School of Business and Social Sciences, Aarhus University.

The dissertation includes five articles besides this report. Jointly, these elements present the following main findings. The analysis shows that it is possible to identify several constituting dimensions in lecturers’ understanding of their discipline. The dimensions reflect content and methods as well as emotions, motives, and values. In addition, conflicts in the interpretation of the discipline are mirrored in teaching, which suggest that lecturers’ understanding of their discipline does not easily translate into teaching practices. The analysis also shows that lectures can be ascribed substantially different meaning in different contexts, even though they seem to be identical activities, and that the ascribed meaning is related to disciplinary values and assumptions. These findings suggest that lecturers’ understanding of teaching is deeply embedded in their disciplinary contexts, but interestingly, the study shows that lecturers’ willingness and reluctance to change their teaching is also embedded in their understanding of their discipline. The local interpretation
of disciplinary values seem to make some actions more appropriate than others. Further, this dissertation draws attention to the methodological danger of analysing isolated statements about teaching.

The project makes three fundamental contributions. Firstly, it shows how a strong epistemological essentialist position is insufficient for capturing the complexity of disciplines. Secondly, the study demonstrates how teaching is conducted in non-arbitrary ways. Lastly, the project focuses attention on how inexpedient teaching practices can be congruent with a disciplinary disposition and further, how teaching is contradictory and contains paradoxes.

In conclusion, a relationship between teaching and discipline is inevitable simply because teaching is embedded in a disciplinary context. This dissertation provides examples of the ways teaching is ascribed specific, disciplinary meaning, and examples of how paradoxes can exist within disciplinary congruent teaching practices. I suggest that further research continue the development of teaching and learning regimes as an analytical framework and, further, that future studies undertake prolonged analysis of teaching practices in order to identify their emergence and development.
DANSK RESUMÉ


Jeg tager afsæt fra denne litteratur og indtager en moderat epistemologisk position. Dertil anlægges en praksistheoretisk analytisk ramme i analyserne. Ved at lave et abduktivt, kvalitativt casestudie sigter afhandlingen mod for det første at forstå universitetsundervisning i dens disciplinære kontekst og dernæst mod at bidrage til udviklingen af teorier om undervisning og læring i lokale kontekster. Afhandlingens forskningsspørgsmål er hvordan undervisning er indlejret i discipliner. Studiet er gennemført ved hjælp af individuelle interview med sytten undervisere fra to forskellige institutter, Juridisk Institut og Institut for Virksomhedsledelse ved School of Business and Social Sciences, Aarhus Universitet.

Projektet består af fem artikler foruden nærværende sammenfatning. Analysen viser, at det er muligt at identificere en række konstituerende elementer i universitetsunderviseres forståelse af deres fagdisciplin. Disse dimensioner indeholder fagdisciplinens indhold og metode såvel som følelser, motiver og værdier. Derudover finder jeg, at konflikter i fortolkningen af fagdisciplinen spejles i konflikter i undervisningen, hvilket indikerer, at underviserens opfattelse af disciplinen ikke oversættes til en undervisningspraksis uden problemer. Analyserne viser også, at forelæsninger fortolkes substantielt forskelligt i to forskellige kontekster på trods af, at aktiviteten er tilsyneladende identisk, og at denne fortolkning er relateder til disciplinære værdier og antagelser. Afhandlingens resultater
indikerer, at underviseres forståelser af undervisning er dybt indlejret i den disciplinære kontekst de er en del af. Endvidere viser resultaterne, at underviseres vilje til eller modstand mod at forandre undervisning også er indlejret i deres disciplinforståelse. Den lokale fortolkning af fagdisciplinære værdier gør nogle handlinger mere passende end andre. I tillæg bidrager afhandlingen en metodisk advarsel om ikke at analysere isolerede udsagn om undervisning.

Dette ph.d.-projekt laver tre grundlæggende bidrag. For det første viser resultaterne, at en stærk epistemologisk essentialisme er en utilstrækkelig teoretisk ramme for at forstå kompleksiteten i akademiske fagdiscipliner. For det andet viser studiet, hvordan undervisningen gennemføres på ikke-arbitrære måder, og for det tredje bidrager studiet ved at vise, hvordan uhensigtsmæssige undervisningspraksisser kan være kongruente med disciplinære dispositioner. Derudover viser afhandlingen, hvordan undervisning kan være selvmordsige og indeholde paradokser.

Afslutningsvis påpeges det, at et forhold mellem undervisning og fagdisciplin er uundgåeligt af den årsag, at undervisning altid er indlejret i en disciplinær kontekst. Denne afhandling giver eksempler på måder hvorpå undervisning er tilskrevet specifik, disciplinær mening og eksempler på, hvordan paradokser eksisterer i disciplinært kongruente undervisningspraksisser. Jeg foreslår, at fremtidig forskning fortsætter udviklingen af teaching and learning regimes som et analytisk værktøj, og dertil at fremtidige studier gennemfører længerevarende undersøgelser af undervisningspraksisser med det formål at identificere deres opståen og udvikling.
# APPENDIX A

## INTERVIEW GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART 1</th>
<th>Briefing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td><strong>1. First, I would like to hear a little about your academic background</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Academic background | a. How long have you been employed here?  
(Have you been employed elsewhere? – in the private sector?) |
|                 | b. What is your area of research?                                        |
|                 | c. Which courses do you teach?                                           |
| Study programme | **2. Will you tell me about the study programme?**                       |
| Description of the purpose of the study programme and values | d. Students who are study here for five years, what do they learn?  
(Examples?) |
|                 | e. What do they take away?  
(Can you describe what it looks like?) |
|                 | f. What is the purpose of this study programme?  
(Do you share opinion on what is most important?)  
(Do you agree about the purpose of the study programme at the department?) |
|                 | g. Do you succeed?  
(Is it visible/examples?) |
| Perception of own role | **3. How do you contribute to the education of students?** |
| Description if practice | h. What do you do when you teach?  
(Why is that a good way to do it?) |
|                 | i. What is the most important thing that needs to happen during class?  
(What will students need to learn about the values of this discipline?)  
(What is the purpose of your teaching?) |
|                 | j. How would you describe yourself as a teacher?  
(What is your role?)  
(What is your role as teacher outside classes?) |
|                 | k. Is teaching something you care about in this department?  
(Is it important for you?)  
(Do you like to teach?) |
<p>| Assessment criteria | <strong>4. What are the most important things to test in the final exams?</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptions of skills and competences students need to acquire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The development of discourses and linguistic requisites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. What is the purpose of assessment in your courses?  
   (What characterises a brilliant exam paper/performance?)  
   (How about a bad one?)  

m. Do students need to learn a specific kind of language?  
   (Examples)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. Can you describe a typical student?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implicit students</th>
<th>Participation in the academic community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Can you give examples of students who might not fit in here?  
  Can you describe the students who do really well here? |

n. Is it the right students who are enrolled here?  

o. When do students become interesting to talk to?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

6. I have brought a competence profile for the study programme because I would like to return to some of the things you have talked about…  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External/ internal criteria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p. Do you know the competence profile?  
   (Do you agree?)  
   (What would be in it if you had to re-write it?)  

q. In this department, do you agree about what are the most important things?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion about AD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline characteristics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. I know there is a lot generic theory about how to teach, but what do I need to understand about teaching in this discipline?  

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| p. Do you know the competence profile?  
  (Do you agree?)  
  (What would be in it if you had to re-write it?) |

q. In this department, do you agree about what are the most important things?  

r. Just to make sure, will you tell me what is most important when you teach your course at this department?
# Declaration of co-authorship

Full name of the PhD student: Anna Bager-Elsborg

This declaration concerns the following article/manuscript:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Establishing a Method for analysing Metaphors in Higher Education Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authors:</td>
<td>Anna Bager-Elsborg &amp; Linda Greve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The article/manuscript is: Published □ Accepted □ Submitted □ In preparation □

If published, state full reference:

If accepted or submitted, state journal: Higher Education Research and Development (HERD)

Has the article/manuscript previously been used in other PhD or doctoral dissertations?  
No □ Yes □ If yes, give details:

The PhD student has contributed to the elements of this article/manuscript as follows:

| A.       | Has essentially done all the work                                      |
| B.       | Major contribution                                                    |
| C.       | Equal contribution                                                    |
| D.       | Minor contribution                                                    |
| E.       | Not relevant                                                          |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Extent (A-E)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Formulation/identification of the scientific problem</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Planning of the experiments/methodology design and development</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Involvement in the experimental work/clinical studies/data collection</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Interpretation of the results</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Writing of the first draft of the manuscript</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Finalization of the manuscript and submission</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Signatures of the co-authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.01.17</td>
<td>Linda Greve</td>
<td>![Signature]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In case of further co-authors please attach appendix

Date: 13.01.2017

Signature of the PhD student

---

1 of 1
Co-author Statement

I hereby declare that I am aware that the work in the paper/manuscript entitled:

**Cut It Up and Put It Back Together: Cut-up and Collage as Tools to Overcome Academic Deadlock**

of which I am a co-author, will form part of the PhD dissertation by PhD student:

Anna Bager-Elsborg

who made a

- X major
- proportional
- minor

contribution to the work in the research phase

and who made a

- X major
- proportional
- minor

contribution to the work in the writing phase.

Signature: ___

Name: ___Dr. Daphne Loads___

Date: ___13.01.16___
REFERENCES


doi:10.1080/030750700116028


(Eds.), *Teacher development in higher education. existing programs, program impact, and future trends.* (pp. 213-233) Routledge.


