

Assessing change of traditions: teachers' insights on a legal education under transformation

Louise C. Druedahl*

Abstract

Legal education is moving away from traditional learning methods towards approaches characterized as student-focused, active, collaborative, and reflective. A variety of factors co-create such a teaching environment, including teachers' understanding of learning and teaching in practice. One example of a legal education undergoing such change is at the Faculty of Law at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark. However, knowledge of this transformation is scarce, therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the faculty's views, ambitions, and experiences with teaching practices. A questionnaire was developed and distributed per e-mail to all (768) teachers. The data collection lasted from 3 May 2022 to 23 May 2022. The main findings were that the surveyed teachers mostly understood learning that favoured student-focused teaching. In addition, case-based teaching is widely applied, but 62.7 per cent of the teachers' in practice talked more than students in the teaching setting despite their ambitions for another distribution of talking between students and teachers. Although the faculty's teaching has changed from solely monologic lectures, there is still a way to go to reach their goal of reforming the legal education.

Keywords: Legal education, understanding of learning, student-focused teaching, case-based teaching, pedagogical training.

Introduction

The approach to teaching law differs across countries; US law schools have primarily relied on the 'Langdell' or 'Socratic' method by using case method, whereas Northern European law schools have typically relied on traditional

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lectures.¹ However on both continents, there is a general trend to rethink legal teaching to introduce a learning process characterized as student-focused, active, collaborative, and reflective.² Such a learning process is essential for training future lawyers because modern legal practice demands more than analysis and the dissection of case law but also requires advanced skills in order to analyse problem-based contexts in interdisciplinary collaborations.³ One part of the change in legal education is the application of additional and new methods for teaching law such as the Jig-Saw teaching activity or the case study analysis that is applied, for example, at Harvard Law School.⁴ However, such methods alone cannot achieve the goals of obtaining engaged and reflective teaching, there are other factors that also influence the teaching setting. These factors include habits, routines, expectations, prior experiences, power relations,⁵ and also teachers' understanding of learning, which all play a key role.⁶ Teachers' understanding of learning is important because it directly affects how they teach and can be characterised based on Saljö's five

¹ Britannica Dictionary, 'Legal Education' <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/legal-education/Study-and-practice>> accessed 21 July 2022; Elizabeth Moroney, 'Legal Education's 9 Big Ideas, Part 3. It All Started with a Case Study' (*Harvard Law School The Case Studies Blog*, 23 July 2013) <<https://blogs.harvard.edu/hlscasestudies/2013/07/23/summer-reading-legal-educations-9-big-ideas-part-3/>> accessed 21 July 2022; Todd D Rakoff and Martha Minow, 'A Case for Another Case Method' (2007) 60 *Vanderbilt Law Review* 597; Steven I Friedland, 'How We Teach: A Survey of Teaching Techniques In American Law Schools' (1996) 20 *Seattle University Law Review* 1.

² Timothy W Floyd, Oren R Griffin and Karen J Sneddon, 'Beyond Chalk and Talk: The Law Classroom of the Future' (2011) 38 *Ohio Northern University Law Review* 257; Claas Friedrich Germelmann, 'Challenges and Approaches to Modern Legal Education in a European Perspective' in Claas Friedrich Germelmann (ed), *Innovative teaching in European legal education* (Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft 2021).

³ Center on the Legal Profession. Harvard Law School, 'Jazzing up the Classroom. The Case Study Method' (2017) 4 *Executive Education for Lawyers* <<https://thepractice.law.harvard.edu/article/jazzing-up-the-classroom/>> accessed 21 July 2022; Germelmann (n 3).

⁴ Harvard Law School, 'The Case Study Teaching Method' <<https://casestudies.law.harvard.edu/the-case-study-teaching-method/>> accessed 21 July 2022; Kire Jovanov, "'Jigsaw Classroom" and Law Teaching – Theoretical and Practical Implications from Modeled Lecture with "Jigsaw Classroom"' in Claas Friedrich Germelmann (ed), *Innovative teaching in European legal education* (Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft 2021).

⁵ Anna Bager-Elsborg, 'Hvordan Begrunder Undervisere Deres Praksis? Et Interviewstudie Med Undervisere Fra to Fagmiljøer' (2017) 12 *Dansk Universitetspædagogisk Tidsskrift* 4; Lars Ulriksen, 'The Implied Student' (2009) 34 *Studies in Higher Education* 517; Paul Ramsden, *Learning to Teach in Higher Education* (RoutledgeFalmer 2003).

⁶ Keith Trigwell and Michael Prosser, 'Changing Approaches to Teaching: A Relational Perspective' (1996) 21 *Studies in Higher Education* 275.

understandings of what learning is.⁷ Trigwell and Prosser, 1996⁸ found that teachers who understand learning as transfer of information conduct teacher-focused teaching, whereas teachers who aim to develop and change students' understanding carry out student-focused teaching. A student-focused approach to teaching can result in students' obtaining a greater retention of knowledge, an increase in academic performance, and a deeper understanding of a topic because *'the one who does the work does the learning'*.⁹ Generally, an essential feature of student activity is that students participate and interact in the classroom, such as asking questions or providing examples that drive them in their learning process.¹⁰

One example of a European law school that decided to rethink its legal education is the Faculty of Law at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark. At this institution, the traditional way of teaching law was dominated by monologic lectures and expectations that the students learn the law by heart.¹¹ However in 2011, the faculty decided to reform the teaching of both their bachelor and master programs of law¹² with a vision to deliver research-based, problem-based, and case-based legal training based on forward-thinking, innovative, and challenging pedagogical and didactical principles.¹³ Similar to the general trend, this reform envisioned a pedagogical shift from teacher-focused teaching to a teaching approach based on dialogue and that focused on

⁷ Ramsden (n 6).

⁸ Trigwell and Prosser (n 7).

⁹ Hoidn Sabine and Reusser Kurt, 'Foundations of Student-Centered Learning and Teaching' in Sabine Hoidn and Manja Klemenčič (eds), *The Routledge International Handbook of Student-Centered Learning and teaching in Higher Education* (Routledge 2021).

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Louise Victoria Johansen, "'Hvad Angår Det Mig Som Jurist?'" - Refleksion over Jurastuderendes Møde Med Nye Fagligheder' (2016) 11 *Dansk Universitetspædagogisk Tidsskrift* 110; Pernille Rattleff, 'Jurastuderendes Læring via Deres Aktive Arbejde Med Stoffet' (2013) 8 *Dansk Universitetspædagogisk Tidsskrift* 51.

¹² Københavns Universitet Det Juridiske Fakultet, 'Konkretisering Af Læringsstrategien' (2010)

<<https://jura.ku.dk/pdf/uddannelsesservice/studiereform2011/laeringsprincipper.pdf>> accessed 22 July 2022; Københavns Universitet Det Juridiske Fakultet, 'Strategi for Læring Ved de Juridiske Heltidsuddannelser Ved KU'

<https://jura.ku.dk/pdf/uddannelsesservice/studiereform2011/laeringsstrategi_vedtaget_210409.pdf> accessed 21 July 2022.

¹³ Det Juridiske Fakultet Københavns Universitet, 'Vision for Læring Og Pædagogisk Arbejde Ved Det Juridisk Fakultet, Københavns Universitet' (17 March 2016)

<https://jura.ku.dk/pdf/kvalitetssikring/Vision_for_l_ring_og_p_dagogisk_arbejde_17.03.2016.pdf> accessed 21 July 2022.

the students' active learning both before, during, and after the classroom teaching.¹⁴ In this vision, students become active by working in groups with cases.¹⁵

The current knowledge of the transformation of the legal education at the University of Copenhagen is sparse, but it is known that surveyed law students were sceptical about being active in the teaching.¹⁶ Therefore, the research question was "What are the faculty's teachers' current views, ambitions, and experiences with teaching practices at the Faculty of Law at University of Copenhagen?". The outcome is to evaluate the transition towards the faculty's goal of rethinking its legal education.

The structure of this paper is as follows: section 2 outlines the applied method using a questionnaire to explore the research question, section 3 describes the results of the questionnaire on the faculty's teachers' current views, ambitions, and experiences with teaching practices, section 4 discusses these results in a wider perspective, and section 5 contains the conclusions of the research.

Materials and methods

Sampling and settings for pedagogic training

The participants were teachers teaching the bachelor and/or master programs of law at the Faculty of Law at the University of Copenhagen. At the start of the study the administration reported a total number of 768 teachers, which included: 157 academic personnel; 64 PhD students and 547 part-time teachers (teaching assistants and external lecturers).

Depending on their affiliation the teachers have different possibilities for pedagogical training. Externally lecturers must have a mandatory 1-day pedagogical training course offered by the faculty, PhD students must attend three mandatory workshops (in total 2 ECTS) as pedagogical training¹⁷, and the internally affiliated academic personnel can have the 200-hours course 'teaching and learning in higher education programme' offered by the

¹⁴ Rattleff (n 12); Det Juridiske Fakultet, 'Strategi for Læring Ved de Juridiske Heltidsuddannelser Ved KU' (n 13).

¹⁵ Det Juridiske Fakultet, 'Konkretisering Af Læringsstrategien' (n 13).

¹⁶ Johansen (n 12).

¹⁷ Faculty of Law at University of Copenhagen, 'Pedagogical Courses' (2022) <<https://jura.ku.dk/phd/english/courses/pedagogical-courses/>> accessed 5 September 2022.

University of Copenhagen. The 200-hour course consists of a series of seminars, individual supervision of teaching practice by both a pedagogic supervisor and an academic supervisor, peer feedback, the preparation of a teaching portfolio, and an individual development project.

Survey instrument

A questionnaire was developed (see appendix 1) to assess various aspects related to the current teaching practices. The content of the questionnaire was inspired by:

- The Faculty of Law's vision for case-based teaching using the following five case types: decision/verdict case; process case; response case; research case/reflection case; and conception case.¹⁸
- That law students' preference for teachers with legal training.¹⁹
- That teachers' pedagogical training is associated with student-focused teaching,²⁰ and by
- Saljö's five understandings of learning;²¹
 1. Learning as a quantitative increase in knowledge. Learning is acquiring information or 'knowing a lot'.
 2. Learning as memorising. Learning is storing information that can be reproduced.
 3. Learning as acquiring facts, skills and methods that can be retained and used as necessary.
 4. Learning as making sense or abstracting meaning. Learning involves relating parts of the subject matter to each other and to the real world.
 5. Learning as interpreting and understanding reality in a different way. Learning involves comprehending the world by reinterpreting knowledge.²²

The understanding of learning 1–3 and 4–5 is associated with teacher-focused teaching and student-focused teaching, respectively.²³

¹⁸ Det Juridiske Fakultet, 'Konkretisering Af Læringsstrategien' (n 13).

¹⁹ Johansen (n 12).

²⁰ Liisa Postareff, Sari Lindblom-Ylänne and Anne Nevgi, 'The Effect of Pedagogical Training on Teaching in Higher Education' (2007) 23 *Teaching and Teacher Education* 557.

²¹ Ramsden (n 6).

²² *ibid.*

²³ *ibid.*; Trigwell and Prosser (n 7).

The questionnaire consisted of 17 questions: seven basic questions about the teachers' internal/external affiliation, their teaching experience, pedagogical training, and feelings of influence on teaching form and curricula; three questions about the teachers' understanding of learning; and six questions related to the use of case-based teaching and the distribution of talking between teacher and students in the classroom. The questions regarding the teachers' understanding of learning included: to indicate which of the five types of learning they evaluated as important; what they believed the students found to be important; and they were asked to rank their view on the importance of each of the five learning types (from 1–5, with 1 being most important).

The questionnaire was developed in both Danish and English. The questionnaire was pilot tested three times. The first two tests were made with law teachers at an early and late career stage, respectively. These tests led to changes in the questions' wording and to the addition of a few new questions. The third pilot test was made with a law teacher involved in the planning of the legal program, and did not lead to further changes in the questionnaire.

Recruitment, data collection, and data analysis

All 768 teachers (both externally and internally affiliated) were invited to participate in the questionnaire survey. The invitation was distributed per e-mail and included information about the study, but also contained endorsement by the Dean of the Faculty of Law who supported the survey. Subsequently, two e-mail reminders were sent. Participation was further encouraged by information of and links to the questionnaire in the faculty's e-mail newsletter. Data were collected using SurveyXact in the period 3 May 2022 – 23 May 2022. The data were exported from SurveyXact to Microsoft Excel, where the entire analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics.

Ethics

The questionnaire survey was carried out anonymously. No personal information was collected, therefore Danish law does not require approval. However, ethics, for example anonymity, was taken into consideration in the survey design. The respondents were given a choice to enter their email address at the end of the survey if they wished to receive the survey results, but the email addresses were not linked to the responses and only used for this purpose. All materials are stored and processed confidentially.

Results

The sample consisted of 153 complete responses. In total, 183 responded but 30 were excluded due to incomplete responses (n=28) and when the respondent responded that they do not teach at the surveyed faculty (n=2). Ninety respondents were external teachers, and 63 were internally affiliated teachers or PhD students. This corresponds to a response rate of 16.5 per cent for externally affiliated teachers and 28.5 per cent for internally affiliated teachers or PhD students (the total response rate was 19.9 per cent). The majority of teachers held a degree in law (n=140). Their pedagogical training also differed, where 92 (60.1 per cent) of the respondents had the faculty’s ‘mandatory course for external teachers’, 37 (24.2 per cent) had the teaching courses mandatory for PhD students, 37 (24.2 per cent) had the course ‘teaching and learning in higher education programme’, 38 (24.8 per cent) had ‘another’ pedagogy course. Nine (5.9 per cent) teachers had not taken any pedagogy course.

Table 1: Teachers’ indication of importance, ranking of importance, and what teachers thought students find important regarding five understandings of learning. The surveyed understandings of learning is based on Saljö’s five understandings of learnings.²⁴

Surveyed understandings of learning	Teachers’ indication of importance (per cent)	Teachers’ ranking of importance (1 is most important, 5 is least important) (average)	Teachers’ indication of what they thought students find important (per cent)
#1: The students should have an increase in knowledge	81.0	2.7	77.8
#2: The students should be able to remember and recall information by heart	21.6	4.5	62.1
#3: The students should be able to use facts and methods	86.3	2.5	71.9
#4: The students should be able to connect legal issues to the real world both concretely and abstractly	95.4	2.3	62.1
#5: The students should be able to interpret and create understanding of the real world	83.0	2.6	40.5

²⁴ Ramsden (n 6).

through the knowledge they have acquired			
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Whereas 95.4 per cent of the teachers found it important that 'the students should be able to connect legal issues to the real world both concretely and abstractly', only 21.6 percent found it important that 'the students should be able to remember and recall information by heart', see Table 1. This coincides with the teachers' ranking of how important they found each understanding of learning to be, where least important was the ability to remember and recall information by heart (average: 4.5) compared to the four other understandings (range of averages: 2.3-2.7). The teachers' views on the importance of understandings of learning were in large contrast to what teachers thought students find important, where the most prominent difference was the understandings of learning 'to remember and recall information by heart' and 'to interpret and create understanding of the real world through the knowledge they have acquired'. For these two, the number of teachers who found them important were 21.6 per cent and 83.0 per cent, respectively, and the corresponding views of teachers on what students find important were 62.1 per cent and 40.5 per cent, respectively.

Comparison of how teachers scored importance of different understandings of learning with which type of pedagogy course they had taken showed no apparent differences except for one. The difference was that teachers who had not taken a pedagogy course viewed learning as the students should 'interpret and create understanding of the real world through the knowledge they have acquired' (3.3) and 'connect legal issues to the real world both concretely and abstractly' (3.0) as less important than teachers who had taken at least one pedagogy course (corresponding averages: 2.5 and 2.3). Moreover, teachers who had not taken a pedagogy course also evaluated learning as the ability to remember and recall information by heart as more important (3.9) than teachers who had taken at least one pedagogy course (average: 4.5). Comparison of the scoring of different understandings of learning on whether the teacher is internally or externally affiliated showed that the two largest differences were that internal teachers value that students learn 'to interpret and create understanding of the real world through the knowledge they have acquired' (2.3) more so than external teachers (2.8), whereas external teachers valued that students learn 'to use facts and methods' (2.4) more than internal teachers (2.7). There were not major differences (≤ 0.3 difference) between teachers' scoring of understanding of learning and whether teachers mainly taught on bachelor or master level.

In the teaching settings, there was a difference between the teachers' ambitions for and their actual teaching practices regarding the distribution of talking between teacher and students. The teachers' ambition was that the students and themselves should talk about the same amount of time (66.7 per cent), whereas 20.9 per cent had the ambition that the teacher themselves should talk most of the time, and 12.4 per cent that the students should talk most of the time. However, in practice (Figure 1), 62.7 per cent of teachers talked most of the time. Also, 78.1 per cent of those who intended to talk most of the time themselves also ended up doing so. There were no dominating patterns for distribution of talking related to whether they were mostly teaching at the bachelor or master level.

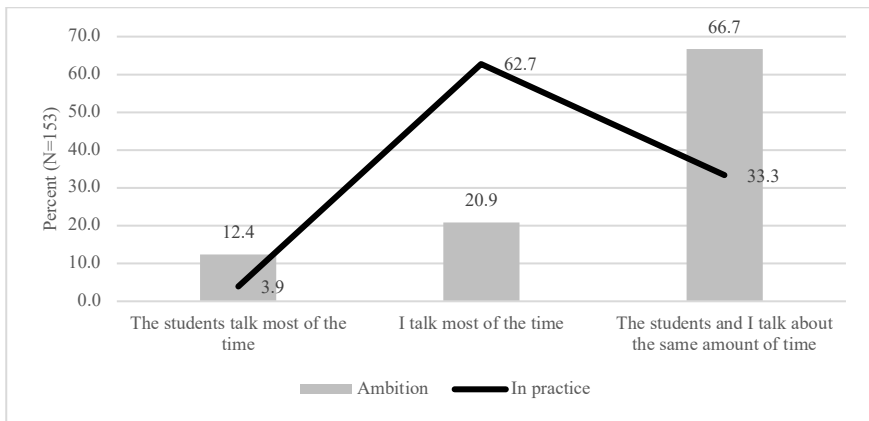


Figure 1: Teachers' ambition and practice regarding the distribution of talking in teaching settings.

Comparison of how teachers scored the importance of different understandings of learning with their ambition for the distribution of talking between students and teachers showed that teachers who thought students should talk most of the time, also evaluated the understandings #3, #4, and #5 as more important than the understandings #1 and #2 (for terminology, see Table 1). Moreover, these teachers evaluated the understandings #3, #4, and #5 as more important than teachers with another ambition for the distribution of talking. Moreover, exploring the teachers' ambition for the distribution of talking in relation to the teachers' pedagogical training showed that teachers whose ambition is for the students to do most of the talking more often had taken the course 'teaching and learning in higher education programme' (29.7%), Figure 2. Also, teachers

with all other types of pedagogical training or no training had a somewhat similar ambition for students to do most of the talking (varied 7.9%–11.1%).

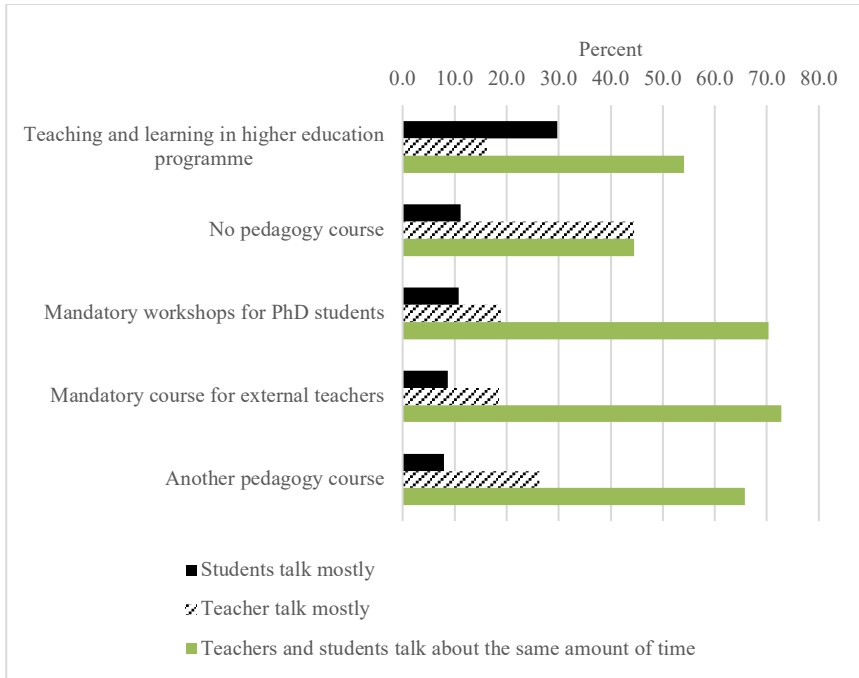


Figure 2: Teachers' ambition for distribution of talking related to their pedagogical training. Categories ranked according to the ambition for students to talk of the time.

Case-based teaching was used by almost all teachers ($n=150$, 97.4 per cent) and carried out primarily in groups ($n=130$), but some teachers conducted teaching where students mostly interacted with cases in pairs ($n=3$), individually ($n=8$), or in plenum only ($n=9$). Teachers reported that they employ a variety of case types as specified in the faculty's learning principles, but 85 respondents (55.6 per cent) also indicated that they used cases which either were not captured by the case types in the learning principles, or that they were unsure about how to categorize, (see Table 2). However, of those teachers that applied the case types, as described in the learning principles, it varied if the same teachers indicated having a good understanding of the case-type that they used. This ranged from 75.0 per cent of teachers who used conception cases who also indicated that they had a good understanding of that case type to 96.5 per cent for decision/verdict cases, Table 2.

Table 2: Teachers' use of cases in their teaching and their understanding of the case types in the faculty's learning principles.

Use of cases and case types in teaching	Teachers (n, n _{total} =153)	Teachers teaching mostly at the bachelor program (n, n _{total} =100)	Teachers teaching mostly at the master program (n, n _{total} =53)	Teachers with good understanding of case types (n/ per cent of all respondents)	Teachers who applied a case type of which they also indicated a good understanding (n/ per cent of those who apply the case type)
Decision/Verdict case	86	59	27	111 / 72.5 per cent	83 / 96.5 per cent
Process case	58	41	17	74 / 48.4 per cent	55 / 94.8 per cent
Response case	33	27	6	50 / 32.7 per cent	29 / 87.9 per cent
Research case/Reflection case	48	32	16	67 / 43.8 per cent	43 / 89.6 per cent
Conception case	20	14	6	43 / 28.1 per cent	15 / 75.0 per cent
None of the above	N/A	N/A	N/A	25 / 16.3 per cent	N/A
Teachers that used cases, but were not sure how to categorize them	52	34	18	N/A	N/A
Teachers who used another case type than those above	33	22	11	N/A	N/A
Teacher who did not use cases in their teaching	3	0	3	N/A	N/A

Teachers generally responded a lower influence on the choice and prioritization of curricula as well as choice and type of teaching form if they taught on bachelor level compared to master level, see Figure 3. However, the overall picture was that all teachers generally reported a larger feeling of influence regarding the teaching form compared to the curricula. There was no apparent

link between the teachers' feelings of influence on the choice and type of teaching form and 1) the teachers' pedagogical training, 2) teachers' ambition for distribution of talking, or 3) the distribution of talking in practice according to teachers.

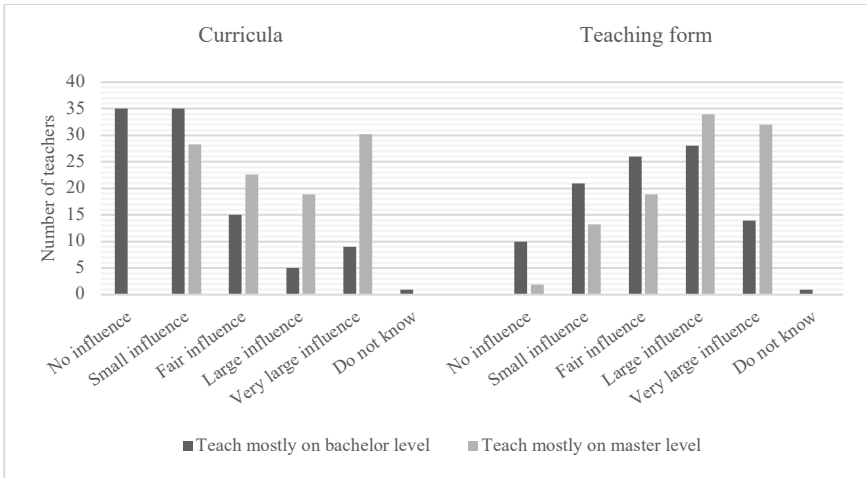


Figure 3: Teachers' feeling of influence on curricular and teaching form. Left: Influence on choice and prioritization of curricula. Right: Influence on choice and type of teaching form.²⁵

Discussion

The Faculty of Law at the University of Copenhagen showed their ambition for learning by introducing a teaching reform for its legal education. The results however showed that the reform has not yet fully been carried out in practice due to discrepancies between the vision of the reform and the teaching practice. On the one hand, teachers' ranking of importance of five understandings of learning indicated an overall student-focused approach to teaching,²⁶ and teachers also reported that students mostly work in groups in their case-based teaching. On the other hand, 62.7 per cent of the teachers talked most of the time in practice despite their ambitions for the distribution of talking. Moreover, there was a mismatch between the understandings of learning that

²⁵ To allow equal comparison, the depicted data were correlated to equal sample sizes for teachers who teach mostly at bachelor (n=100) vs master level (n=53).

²⁶ Trigwell and Prosser (n 7); Ramsden (n 6).

teachers indicated as important and those they thought the students find important.

On basis of the results, some teachers have an ambition to let students be active by letting them talk most of the time in the teaching, but partly this more often does not happen in practice and partly it is far from all teachers who have that ambition to start with. The students learning process should be driven by their active participation in the teaching process, so as not to have a situation where ‘[s]tudents are there, but too often education is being done unto them’ such as described by Sabine and Kurt.²⁷ Student-focused teaching is more likely encouraged and carried out by teachers who have a pedagogical training because.²⁸ Thus, all teachers should have pedagogical training, which was not the case in the current study. Furthermore, the results showed that teachers without a pedagogy course ascribed lower importance to the understandings of learning associated with student-focused teaching which aligns previous research.²⁹ However, this may limit the possible learning approaches that students experience from their teachers in the teaching settings because ‘[s]trong relations are found between conceptions of teaching and approaches to teaching’.³⁰

At the same time, it should be considered that the effects of pedagogical training do not occur until after a year and teachers that only have short pedagogical courses tend to have less self-efficacy beliefs about their teaching than if they had no pedagogical training.³¹ A person’s self-efficacy beliefs refers to the person’s evaluation of her/his ability to perform a specific action or obtain a certain goal via their own actions in a particular situation.³² Moreover, teachers’ pedagogical training is linked to higher self-efficacy regarding teaching,³³ which can lead to a choice of teaching activities that result in higher learning outcomes.³⁴ Thus, teachers’ pedagogical training should be of an appropriate extent and duration. At the moment, the pedagogical training

²⁷ Sabine and Kurt (n 10).

²⁸ Postareff, Lindblom-Ylänne and Nevgi (n 21).

²⁹ Ramsden (n 6); Trigwell and Prosser (n 7).

³⁰ Trigwell and Prosser (n 7).

³¹ Postareff, Lindblom-Ylänne and Nevgi (n 21).

³² Albert Bandura, ‘Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change’ (1977) 84 *Psychological review* 191; Albert Bandura, ‘Self-Efficacy Mechanism in Human Agency’ (1982) 37 *American Psychologist* 122.

³³ Postareff, Lindblom-Ylänne and Nevgi (n 21).

³⁴ Sari Lindblom-Ylänne and others, ‘How Approaches to Teaching Are Affected by Discipline and Teaching Context’ (2007) 31 *Studies in Higher Education* 285.

that the faculty offers is the extensive course ‘teaching and learning in higher education programme’ (200 hours over 1 year) and the mandatory course for external teachers (1 day course before the external teacher starts teaching). The extensive pedagogical course is primarily offered to internally affiliated teachers and is a prerequisite for employment as associate professor and professor. However, the results also show that teachers who have taken this course were most likely to have an ambition to let the students talk most of the time. It is not a feasible goal that all teachers should have extensive pedagogical training, but there is a substantial difference in the extent and duration of pedagogical training offered to the faculty’s teachers. This is particularly apparent when considering that external teachers comprise 71.2 per cent (n=547/768) of all the teachers at the faculty.

The results showed that teachers with the mandatory course for external teachers and teachers with the course ‘teaching and learning in higher education programme’ had not largely different understandings of learning, however, there was a profound difference in their ambition to let students speak most of the time in the teaching setting. The pedagogical skills of external teachers comprise a large part of the faculty’s teaching, therefore it is their skills and the environment they create that dominate the students teaching experience. Thus, the pedagogical competences of external teachers have a large potential to let the students be more active in the classroom. Such an increase in student activity will also make the teaching more student-focused, student engagement in their learning processes supports higher learning outcomes and recall of information than if the students are passive.³⁵ However, changing such epistemological beliefs about knowledge is difficult, so it may be easier to train teachers to create better dialogues and discussions in their teaching³⁶. There is still a question of how realistic it is to change approaches to teaching and learning in the course of one day.

Another aspect of the results is the use of case-based teaching at the faculty and how this is carried out. The current picture is that most teachers do most of the talking and do not have a good understanding of the case types included in the faculty’s vision for learning. In fact, 16.3 per cent of the teachers reported that

³⁵ Michael Prince, ‘Does Active Learning Work? A Review of the Research’ (2004) 93 *Journal of Engineering Education* 223.

³⁶ Ian AG Wilkinson and others, ‘Toward a More Dialogic Pedagogy: Changing Teachers’ Beliefs and Practices through Professional Development in Language Arts Classrooms’ (2016) 31 *Language and Education* 65.

they did not have a good understanding of any of the case types. One way forward could be to initiate discussions among teachers on the use of cases, which case types students should work with, when, and why, as well as how to carry these out in practice in the teaching environment so that students do the work and hence the learning.³⁷ Teachers should communicate clearly the intended learning outcomes of the cases to the students so they know what they are expected to learn. In turn, this can aid students to dissect how teachers view, what Ulriksen terms, ‘the implied student’,³⁸ to fulfil teachers’ expectations, and to characterize their legal experiences and hence competencies regarding case types.

This study is relevant with its applied method using a questionnaire informed particularly by Saljö’s five understandings of learning³⁹ to other universities who might wish to undertake a teaching reform for a legal education. The study can serve as inspiration as to what to be aware of when implementing such reforms. Moreover, for the individual teacher, a study such as this provides knowledge on what the students are used to and with what types of teaching, they have experienced. At a faculty level, it provides insights to the learning environment that can be used to assess the current level of implementation of reformed learning principles from the teachers’ perspectives.

Strengths and limitations

It is a strength that the questionnaire was distributed to all the faculty’s teachers and that the sample size allowed analysis. Further, that the study was conducted by a person not trained at the Faculty of Law at the University of Copenhagen, which enabled ‘new eyes’ on the teaching environment as well as that it was a person with existing experience with quantitative methods. Having a non-lawyer background could also be a limitation, but this was minimized by extensive discussions of the study prior to survey start with lawyer-trained colleagues as well as during the pilot testing of the questionnaire with lawyer-trained colleagues at different stages of their career. Limitations of the study include the low response rate⁴⁰ and that two teachers were invited to participate, but responded that they did not teach at the surveyed faculty. The latter were

³⁷ Sabine and Kurt (n 10).

³⁸ Ulriksen (n 6).

³⁹ Ramsden (n 6).

⁴⁰ Felicity Smith, ‘Survey Research: (1) Design, Samples and Response’ (1997) 5 *International Journal of Pharmacy Practice* 152.

likely previous teachers who did not currently teach at the faculty. A third limitation is that it is not possible to know how or if non-responders were different from the responders. Thus, one must be careful about interpretations because it is impossible to generalize or draw statistical conclusions to all teachers at the Faculty of Law at the University of Copenhagen. However, it is plausible that the teachers that chose to and took the time to respond to the questionnaire also are those who are most interested in teaching. So even though it is not possible to generalize from the results, it is possible that the results present the best-case scenario regarding teachers' interest for teaching and thus the ensuring teaching environment.

Conclusion

This study of teachers' views, ambitions, and experiences with teaching practices at the Faculty of Law at the University of Copenhagen showed that the faculty's teaching has changed from solely monologic lectures, but that there is still a way to go for the faculty to reach its goal of reforming its legal education. Teachers' ranking of importance of the five understandings of learning indicated, on the one hand, an overall student-focused approach to teaching and teachers also reported that students primarily work in groups in their case-based teaching. However, on the other hand, 62.7 per cent of teachers ended up, in practice, doing most of the talking despite their ambitions to distribute the talking between students and teacher.

To move the faculty closer to reaching its goal for learning and teaching, there needs to be reflections on what pedagogical training its' teachers should have, what extent and over which duration of time. There is a large discrepancy between pedagogical training of internally and externally affiliated teachers, and the pedagogical competencies of both groups are important, particularly since the external teachers comprise 71.2 per cent of the faculty's teachers. Thus, the pedagogical skills of external teachers comprise a large part of the faculty's teaching environment and approaches to teaching that the students meet. However, another aspect is the use of case-based teaching, where one way forward could be to initiate discussions among teachers on the use of cases, which case types that students should work with, when, and why, as well as how to carry these out in practice in the teaching environment so that students do the work and hence the learning. For this faculty and other law schools, a continuous focus on enhancing a more student-focused, engaged teaching should aid learning outcomes of the future lawyers as well as to move law

schools closer to reaching their goals when reforming their teaching and learning principles also in practice.