The following pages holds a brief description of my experiences with different aspects of teaching and the organisation of courses and study programmes as well as some reflections regarding my practice as a university teacher. Also, the portfolio fleshes out some overall considerations about university teaching in general and an account of my formal education in teaching methods and pedagogical practice.

Overall, my experience with university teaching and the organisation of courses and study programmes can be divided into three broad categories associated with three different phases in my career. 1) From 2003-2010, I developed and taught several courses – mainly at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU), but I was only superficially involved in the organisation of study programs. Also, I supervised several bachelor and master theses during those years; 2) From 2010-14, I taught a number of courses while concurrently acting as Head of Study Program, Master of International Security and Law (SDU). In this period, I started supervising PhD-students; 3) From 2014 (when I became Head of Department at the Department of Political Science and Public Management, University of Southern Denmark (SDU)) until medio 2019, I was mainly involved in designing overall organisational frameworks and facilitating the development of new approaches to teaching at SDU and at the Royal Danish Defence College where I served as Head of Department and vice-dean from 2016 to June 2019. I have only been teaching occasionally since 2014, but I have supervised several PhD-students during those years.

Formal education in teaching methods and pedagogical practice

In 2008-9, I successfully completed SDU’s “Teacher-Training Programme for Assistant Lecturers”. The course included (amongst many other things) a thorough introduction to learning theory, the relationships between research and teaching as well as theories on activating teaching methods. Moreover, all course participants were taught approaches to planning, management, and evaluations of teaching. Throughout the course, the teaching activities of the course participants were observed and evaluated by both an internal and an external supervisor. After having completed the course, I received a very positive written evaluation from my supervisors.

Besides the “Teacher-Training Programme for Assistant Lecturers”, I successfully completed an extensive course on case-teaching methods conducted by Professor Poul Erik Mouritzen and Professor Steven Smith held at the University of Southern Denmark in August 2012. The main aim of the course was to promote activating teaching methods via cases – something that I have made use of on several occasions since. Also, since 2012 I have kept myself up to date with regard to methods related to case-teaching and I have refined and developed different cases. As part of the course, all participants developed their own teaching cases.

Project collaborations

Since I started teaching at university level in 2003, I have always perceived of teaching and
study programmes as collective endeavours that have to be coordinated, developed and improved in collaboration with colleagues. This philosophy also guided my efforts when I was Head of Study Programme (Master of International Security and Law - MOISL) from 2010-14. I organised and participated in several meetings per semester set up to coordinate our teaching activities and to continuously improve our courses and pedagogical skills. Besides dealing with the more practical aspects of managing a study programme, the forum (bringing together teachers from both the Department of Law and the Department of Political Science and Public Management) also functioned as a study group. The main focus in most of our discussions and debates were on connecting and integrating different courses, while at the same time motivating students to work with course materials in an active way – both during and in-between classes. The collaboration among the teachers associated with the MOISL-programme was even more intense and enriching when we initially designed, developed and prepared the study programme for (successful) accreditation in 2009-10. It was a unique opportunity to integrate theoretical approaches to teaching and the organisation of study programmes with practical experiences of teaching.

Teaching experience
I have a broad experience with teaching and supervising in two senses. First, over the years I have been teaching multiple courses ranging from International Political History to Public Management and Introduction to Political Science. Most recently, I have primarily been teaching courses on international politics, strategic studies and modern forms of conflict. Since 2012, I have more often taught in English than in Danish, as I have primarily been teaching the English-taught Master of International Security and Law at the University of Southern Denmark. I have been supervising bachelor-theses, master-theses and PhD-dissertations. Second, I have taught and given lectures at several universities and teaching institutions over the last 15 years. Most of my teaching has taken place at the University of Southern Denmark, but I have prepared and given numerous lectures at – among other places – the Royal Danish Defence College, the University of Copenhagen, Bar Ilan University (Tel Aviv), the University of Birmingham, Aarhus University, the Baltic Defence College (Tartu, Estonia), the Norwegian Air Force Academy (Trondheim – where I am also a “Professor II”) and the NATO Defence College, Rome. The encounter with such a variety of students and study programmes has provided me with an abundance of experience and fuelled many reflections (and discussions) regarding teaching methods and pedagogical practices. Most importantly, my experiences have taught me that teaching methods should always be “customized” and adapted to the students taking part in the course.

Test and exams
In order to ensure alignment between teaching methods, the substance of a course, and exam forms, I have made use of several types of exams and tests over the years. Ranging from the classical oral or written exam to the preparation of an op-ed analysing current affairs in international politics or advanced forms of multiple-choice questionnaires, I have always strived to make certain that the exam/test was supporting the learning outcomes of a given course. In my view, there is no right or wrong types of exams. The fit between teaching methods, course substance, and exam forms are the crucial aspects.

Teaching methods
Good teaching takes many shapes and forms. Since 2003, I have employed a wide variety of different methods and techniques varying from the classical lecture for large audiences
Over the last 7-8 years, I have been experimenting with new teaching approaches and non-classical methods. It is the basic premise of all my teaching that genuine learning only begins when students start to reflect by themselves. Accordingly, many of the initiatives I have taken have had the explicit aim of activating students and encourage involvement, participation and the development of an independent perspective on the substance of a given course.

Amongst other things, I make use of small two-on-two meetings, student presentations, excursions, films and taped speeches. In 2013, I developed a major, two-day simulation game for use in the course New Wars (approximately 80 students), with the aim of making the students experience the normative dilemmas included in different theories on “first-hand”. As of 2019, the simulation game (in a revised version) is still part of the MOISL-program at SDU.

Evaluations
I have repeatedly received “very positive” student evaluations for my teaching and supervision. In 2010, I was nominated “teacher of the year” by the students at the journalist study program for my teaching in the course International Politik og Organisation. Although student evaluations provide a good indication of the teacher’s ability to convey ideas and knowledge in a pedagogical and stimulating way, they should also be treated with a pinch of salt – particular when they are done electronically and in a highly quantified way. To improve my teaching skills, I have therefore always supplemented the mandatory teaching evaluations with small focus group interviews and strong encouragements to contact me with feedback after classes and courses. I have benefitted greatly from these more informal forms of evaluations and feedback.

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