Allyson Macdonald og Auður Pálsdóttir

Creating Educational Settings
Designing a University Course

The International Studies in Education Programme taught in English in the School of Education at the University of Iceland, enrolled its first group of students in fall 2008. One of three required courses in the autumn term is Educational Settings. The purpose of this research was to explore the development of the pedagogic discourse of this course from conception to enactment for three student cohorts (2008, 2009, 2010), using concepts from Basil Bernstein's sociology of education. We wanted to assess the influence the design of the course had on the pedagogical practice. The aims of the course were that students became aware of development and diversity in educational settings and of the issues involved in establishing and maintaining such settings. The challenge was to design the course in such a way that it was itself an 'educational' setting. In the article we discuss the case-study approach to the design of the course. Data are drawn from the experience of the authors in teaching the course, course assignments and discussions saved on the electronic learning management system Blackboard, examination scripts and notes and interviews with seven students in summer 2011. Students themselves became a part of the different settings and became aware of their own role in shaping their learning and development.

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Að móta umgjörð, aðstæður og inntak náms:
Um mótun menntunar í háskóla
Alþjóðlegt nám í menntunarfræði sem kennt er á ensku við Menntavísindasvið Háskóla Íslands hófst haustið 2008. Eitt af þremur skyldunámskeiðunum að hausti heitir „námsaðstæður" (e. *educational settings*). Tilgangur rannsóknarinnar var að skoða með hliðsjón af kenningum Basils Bernsteins þróun orðræðu frá þeim tíma að stungið var upp á námskeiðinu fram til dagsins í dag er námskeiðið hefur verið kennt þrisvar sinnum (2008, 2009, 2010). Við vildum meta áhrif hönnunarinnar á framkvæmdina. Markmið námskeiðsins er að gera nemendur meðvitaða um þróun og fjölbreytni í námsumhverfi og velta fyrir sér ýmsum þáttum í mótun námsumhverfis og hvernig megi halda utan um það og viðhalda því. Áskorunin fólst í að hanna námið þannig að það yrði sjálft að sérstökum „námsaðstæðum". Í greininni er rætt um tilviksnálgun í hönnun námskeiðsins. Gögn koma úr reynsla höfunda sem kennara í námskeiðinu, úr verkefnum nemenda og umræðum geymdum á Blakki, úr prófum nemenda og glósum teknum á meðan munnleg próf stóðu og loks úr sjö viðtölum við fyrrverandi nemendur

sem tekin voru sumarið 2011. Niðurstaða okkar er að nemendur urðu sjálfir hluti af ólíkum „námsaðstæðum". Þeir urðu meðvitaðir um eigin þátt í mótun og þróun námsins.

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The problem

The problem under investigation in this article is the creation and implementation of a first-year university course Educational Settings (EdSet). The challenge was to design the course in such a way that it was itself an 'educational' setting in which students could reflect about their own role in creating the setting, at the same time that students became aware of development and diversity in other educational settings and the issues involved in establishing and maintaining schools.

The EdSet course forms part of the International Studies in Education Programme (ISEP) established in 2008 at the University of Iceland. The course is one of three required in the first term of a three-year line of study which leads to a BA degree. An MA degree is also on offer. Three cohorts of students have entered the BA programme, in the autumn of 2008, 2009 and 2010. In the first and second year most of the students were foreign-born Icelandic residents and in the third year about half were exchange students from Northern Europe. A few students each year were Icelandic, often with an international link through family or experience. Each group comprised about 12 to15 students. In autumn 2011 the first year undergraduate courses were not offered but the plan is to admit students again in 2012.

In his theory of the construction of pedagogic discourse, Bernstein (2000, p. 113) provides a means of linking curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, areas which are often the subject of research in higher education as separate issues but not as one whole. Bernstein identified a field of *production* where new knowledge is created and a field of *reproduction* where pedagogic practice occurs and rules define the standards to be reached (*Figure 1*). Between these two fields there is a *recontextualising* field where discourse is first delocated from the field of production and might be dominated by official discourse, and then relocated in practice where it could be dominated by pedagogic specialists. Bernstein has suggested that there can be growth if the delocation and relocation are independent of each other allowing for ideological struggle and control within the field. This means that if different parties are responsible for curriculum development (delocation) and course preparation (relocation) then there is room for new understandings and perspectives.

In understanding and analysing the EdSet course, we will draw on Bernstein's "construction of the pedagogic discourse" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 115). Bernstein suggests that it is in the recontextualisation of the discourse that specialists decide on the 'what' and 'how' (p. 115). "The basic idea [is] to view this discourse as arising out of the action of a group of specialised agents operating in a specialised setting in terms of the interests, often competing interests of this setting" (p. 113). The detailed design of this course was not laid out in the Course Catalogue of the University of Iceland. Instead it is developed according to the interests of the specialists who 'teach' the course.

Bernstein's theories provide researchers with two key concepts: *classification*, a framework for identifying categories, and *framing,* a way of analysing the interactions between categories. These concepts build on notions of power and control respectively. Classifi-
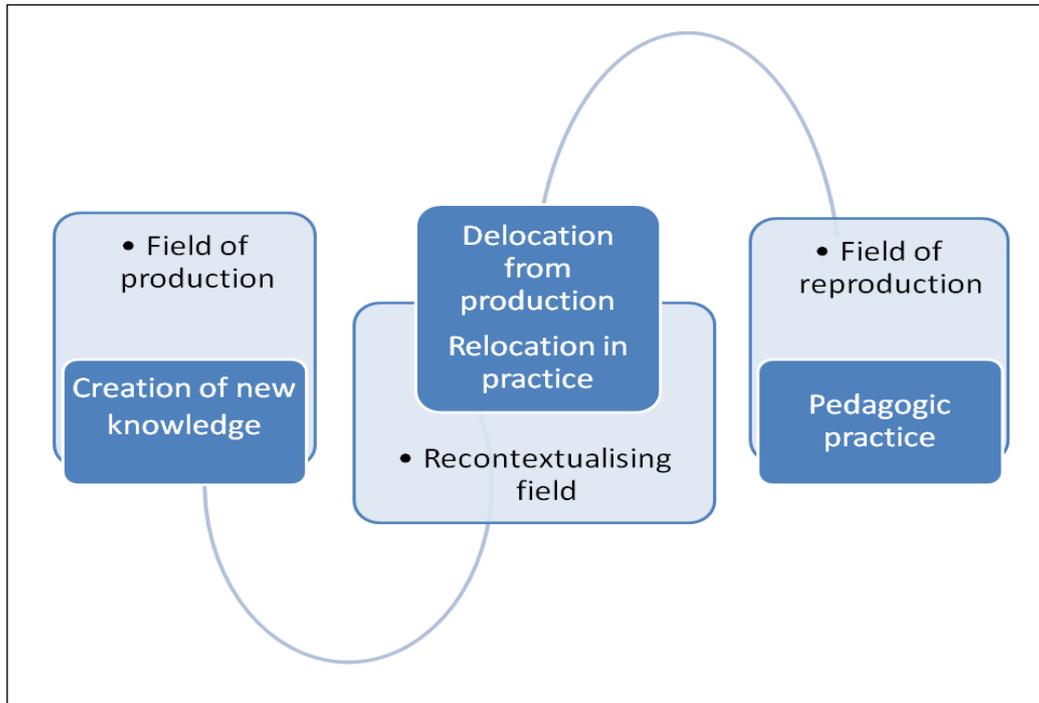
**Figure 1 – Construction of the pedagogic discourse.**

cation is about the strength of boundaries of a category, key aspects of that category or context and what is deemed 'legitimate' in that context. Framing is concerning with control of interactions between categories and the selection, sequencing and pacing of the in-structtional discourse, and what type of knowledge is deemed important by the teacher. The instructional discourse thus aims to give the student the necessary skills to communi-cate within the particular area of study (Chien & Wallace, 2004).

Bernstein (2000) introduced *recognition* and *realisation rules*. In order to operate effec-tively within a particular cultural group, for example in a classroom, an individual needs to meet both sets of rules of that group. In an educational setting participants share common *recognition rules* which determines what the context demands and enables the 'reading' of the context (p. 17–18). Recognition rules refer to classification and power relations, and without the recognition rule, an individual cannot acquire contextually legitimate com-munication. Even when individuals meet the recognition rule they may still be unable to produce the 'text' themselves, to bring their learning to realisation, to meet the *realisation rules.*

In this article, our aim is to analyse the pedagogic discourse of the course EdSet (*Figure 2*) and the extent to which students meet the *recognition* and *realisation* rules of the set-tings we created.

The early development of the ISEP has been described by Books, Ragnarsdóttir, Jóns-son, & Macdonald (2011) thus the field of production of the discourse (Figure 1) leading to the establishment of the ISEP is considered only briefly. This is followed by a fairly detailed discussion of the recontextualisation of the discourse, first, the delocation of the field of 'international studies of education' into a programme syllabus and then the reloca-tion of one of the courses 'educational settings' into a course plan.

Finally we consider the field of reproduction, the enacted course, the pedagogic practice, drawing particularly on data from students. In designing the course on educational set-tings, we hoped that students would meet the *recognition rule*, recognising the power re-
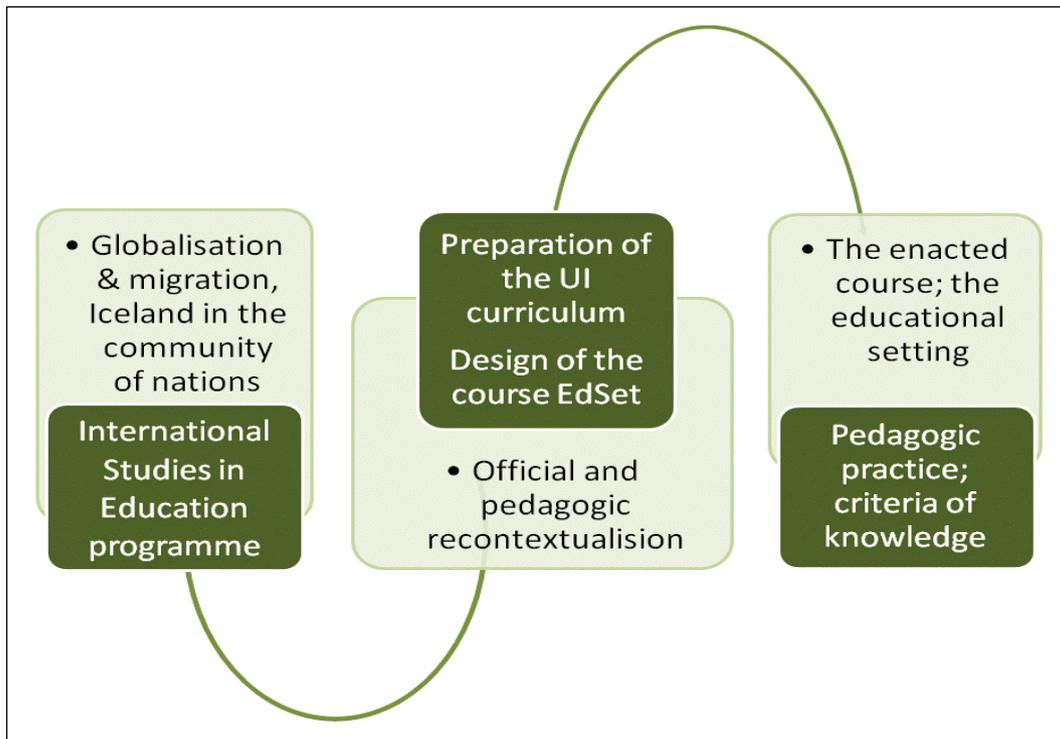
Figure 2 – Construction of the discourse on 'Educational settings'.

lations in which they are involved with their peers and instructors, and their position in them, and they would also possess the *realisation rule*, being able to produce legitimate text, i.e. they would understand the demands made of them and be able to put meanings together in their assignments and discussion, thus making their understandings public. *Distributive rules* are also important. They make possible two types of knowledge, the knowledge of the possible or 'thinkable' and knowledge of the impossible or 'unthinkable'. These two classes vary with time and culture, but Bernstein suggests that the control of the 'unthinkable' is to be found higher up in educational systems. The zone between the two is the space of the "yet to be thought" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 28-30) and we wanted to work with students in this space.

We also wish to explore the extent to which the educational setting of the EdSet course itself formed a part of the pedagogic discourse and to investigate whether students themselves become a part of the different settings explored in the EdSet course and become aware of their role in shaping their own learning and development.

The field of production

The establishment of the ISEP can be traced to the persistence of one individual, Hanna Ragnarsdóttir, who was a senior administrator and researcher in the Iceland University of Education (IUE) during the first decade of the 21st century. She worked in early childhood education, was head of the department of multicultural studies and was chairperson of the committee on equality issues. Later she became the vice rector of teaching at the IUE from 2007–2008. Hanna is also an anthropologist who had been interested in issues of culture in Iceland and who had specialised in the multicultural issues which became prominent in education and society after the turn of the century. Hanna had an overview of the difficulties facing immigrants in teacher education with Icelandic as a foreign language or working as teachers in schools. Slowly but steadily she garnered support and facilitated discussion in the IUE on the possibility of establishing a degree programme on education to be taught in English. A small but informal group worked on constructing the ISEP

with Hanna and finally a proposal was submitted in 2008 to the IUE Council for permission to establish the ISEP. Permission was granted by the soon-to-be-extinct Council, and the group began to develop the structure and substance of the ISEP, aiming at admitting the first BA cohort in autumn 2008. In July 2008 the IUE merged with the University of Iceland (UI).

There are several points of interest with regard to the field of production. One is that the European Bologna agreement was being implemented across Europe and in Iceland, a process which was to facilitate student mobility (Rizvi, 2011) through designing programmes according to the so-called 3-2-3 model of years of study, standardised credits and adoption of the 'competence' approach (*Higher Education in Europe,* 2009). This can also be seen in a special section about the Bologna process in the educational research journal *Uppeldi og menntun* (2010). The agreement expects courses to become more standardised, and to be easier for students to move between universities and transfer credits. Learning outcomes (competence objectives) were written across Europe for undergraduate programmes as well as masters and doctoral programmes according to the so-called Dublin descriptors (2004). Examples on the National Qualification Framework in Iceland for higher education were issued in 2007 and a recent revision is available in both English and Icelandic (Auglýsing, 2011).

Another point of interest is that some political barriers to employment across Europe were being removed, due to Iceland's participation in the European Economic Area, and this was being felt in Iceland with foreign workers on the labour market and children with no Icelandic language skills entering schools.

A final point of interest with regard to educational discourse relates to changes in teacher education where more emphasis is being placed on learners as creators. In a new publication the *Council of Europe* promotes the Pestalozzi Programme for teacher education (Huber & Mompoint-Gaillard, 2011) where one of the contributors suggests (Lenz, 2011, p. 22):

> Sustainable democratic societies need citizens who are aware of the relation between knowledge and power .... education has to address learners not only as receivers but also as producers of knowledge. In order to achieve this, education has to be a space in which learners are given instruments for investigating and negotiating knowledge.

Thus the field of production for the development of the ISEP was rich, ranging from academic research on different cultures to changes in teacher education and views of learners to an economic sector that needed to meet practical demands arising from a changing society.

In an analysis of curriculum restructuring in higher education in South Africa, Ensor (2004) says that deliberation was centred on two dominant discourses (Figure 3). On the one hand there was the *disciplinary* discourse*,* an elite discourse, with its emphasis on sequential learning and mastery of conceptual framework that assumed that new students were not yet familiar with the knowledge forms in the different disciplines. Courses had to be offered in a particular sequence, building knowledge in a systematic way. On the other hand, the *credit exchange* discourse drew on globalisation and the demands of knowledge society, offering more flexibility through a modular approach, with students having a say in their choice of modules, and the development of generic skills. Knowledge is not seen as hierarchical as it is in the disciplinary discourse. In South Africa, it was the credit exchange discourse which was seen to be egalitarian offering social justice
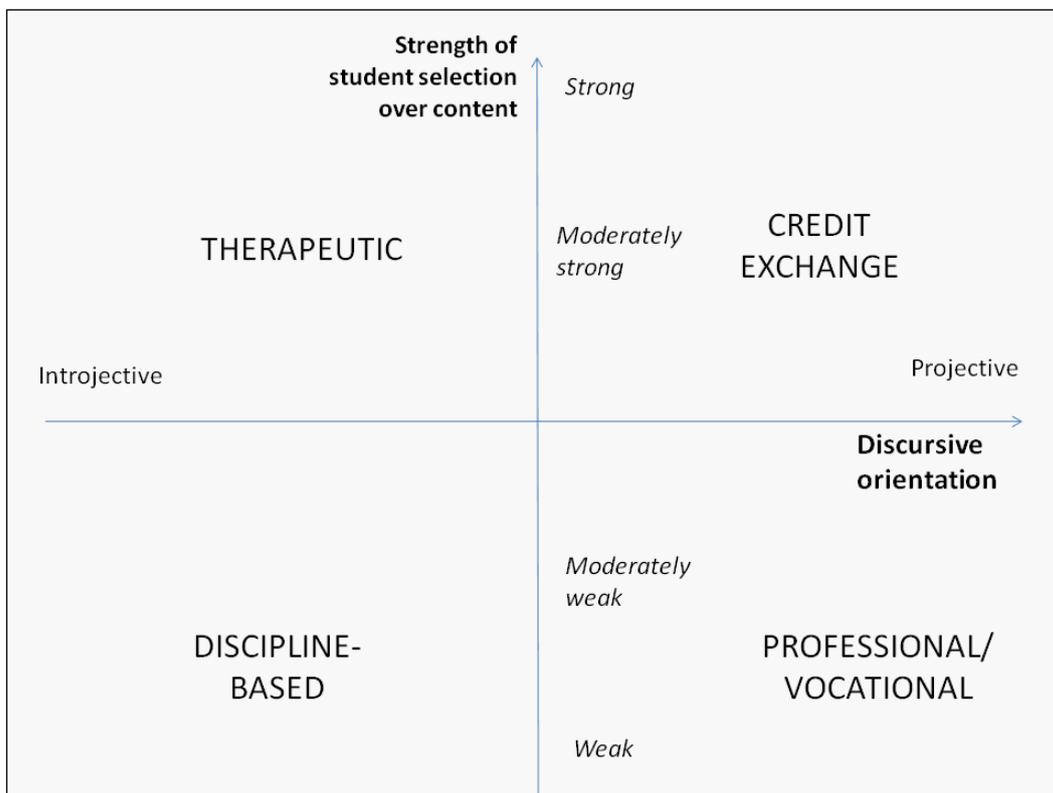
Figure 3 – Discourses on the higher education curriculum, adapted from Ensor (2004).

in the new democracy as well as being responsive to globalisation and the massification of higher education (Ensor, 2004).

In a study of the curriculum of 20 South African universities (out of 21) several years after the main aspects of higher education restructuring had taken place, Ensor (2004) reached the conclusion that despite the appeal of the 'credit exchange' discourse for meeting demands for democratic education the dominant university discourse remained 'discipline-based'. University education was to promote disciplinary thinking and progress through an established body of knowledge in which students had little choice over their subject matter.

Two further discourses were identified by Ensor as the *professional* discourse and the *therapeutic* discourse, the former sharing specific knowledge domains with the disciplines and the latter being introjective, like the disciplines, but the orientation is towards self, not knowledge (*Figure 3*). Bernstein (2000, p. 68) said that therapeutic education is costly to produce and difficult to measure, so that the social group which sponsors it has little power.

In his discussion of knowledge and identities, Bernstein introduced the notion of the 'prospective' identity, a narrative of "becoming, but a new becoming not of an individual but of a social category, e.g. race, gender or region" (p. 76). He went on to speak of "a becoming which is so to speak a recovery of something not yet spoken, of a new fusion". He warned though of difficulties in promoting an education directed at a prospective identity.

Delocating the discourse – the design of the ISEP

A small group worked with Hanna Ragnarsdóttir and Ólafur Páll Jónsson, who had been appointed as coordinator, during the winter of 2007–2008 to develop the ISEP. Slowly the text emerged. In an official description used on open days it says that the programme:

... is a comprehensive international education studies programme focusing on education in the context of globalisation and the development of multicultural societies, sustainable development and on development studies and education in developing countries.

... responds to the interests of students who want to work in international schools in Iceland or in schools or other educational settings in other countries.

... aims at training teachers to meet the needs of a growing group of immigrant children and bilingual children in Iceland (University of Iceland, School of Education, 2010–2011).

Some students felt misled by this description as the ISEP does not lead directly to a set of teaching qualifications, and it took some time to sort out what needed to be done for students to meet these requirements. There was much discussion in the planning group on how to be a 'comprehensive' programme when some of the decisions depended on the availability of teachers as no new faculty were hired to staff the programme.

The ISEP group decided that two of the first three courses to be taken would be generic in nature, Academic skills and Educational research, reflecting some of the discussions that had taken place in the then recent revision of the teacher education syllabus at the IUE in which more emphasis was to be put on generic skills in the first year of study. The group preparing the ISEP syllabus spoke of preparing the students for the disciplinary tasks to be faced in the second term and the demands of university study. The third course in the first term, Educational settings, was promoted by the first author (AM) of this article. Apart from a general interest in the programme, AM felt that a 'shared experience' demanding high levels of engagement from students was important as a starting point for "significant learning" (Fink, 2003). In this she was influenced in part by the nature of the liberal arts education curriculum and pedagogy at Macalester College in Minnesota.

In the second term there were to be three courses: sociology and history of education, development and self and globalisation in education. Language courses (60 ECTS) follow in the second year and in the third year there were to be three courses: comparative education, pedagogy and professionalism in education, followed by a thesis. Students need to find optional courses to make up the final 20 ECTS needed for a BA degree of 180 ECTS. The language requirements are that Icelandic students are competent in a foreign language or that foreigners are competent in Icelandic as a second language or in a language that is not their mother tongue.

Relocating the discourse – the development of EdSet

The stated purpose of the EdSet course as introduced to students was "to give students an opportunity to experience the diversity and development of educational settings" (from course plan). The first author developed the course framework in 2008 with the following ideas and principles in mind:

- The course should recognise where students were coming from – and where they were going – and give them a shared place (or space) to be while on their way.

- The use of case studies would be a viable approach to course material developed in order to meet the course objectives (Yin, 2003).

- Cases could provide 'shared places' with no apparent division between theory and practice and no "privileged"' or esoteric knowledge (Bernstein, 2000, p. 29).

- Students would be placed immediately in actual shared situations where they had to observe, question, describe, discuss, reflect, create, evaluate and write about education.

- A range of factors that influence educational settings, including legal, social, economic, political, technological and environmental factors, would be observable in the settings.

- Knowledge would be constructed collaboratively.

These principles are by no means unique to the first author and had emerged over years of working with others in the IUE and elsewhere, both formally and informally (Roxå & Mårtensson, 2009).

When planning a course it is necessary not only to identify and decide what teachers do, but also to identify and create appropriate learning activities to meet the aims of the course. A model to guide planning of teaching and learning (*Figure 4*) shows that teachers organise and have control over aspects such as the choice of topic or the form of assessment but only learners experience that which is within the grey frames (Macdonald, 2002). The model was developed without knowledge of Bernstein's theories, and indeed issues of framing (the control of interactions) would render the model more complex. The point to be made here is that in order to understand and develop an educational setting the initial state of the student and the learning tasks must be considered. For example, to what extent would the course use the initial state of the students as a resource for learning? What would the students 'do' in the different settings? Would there be a measure of co-creation of a setting?
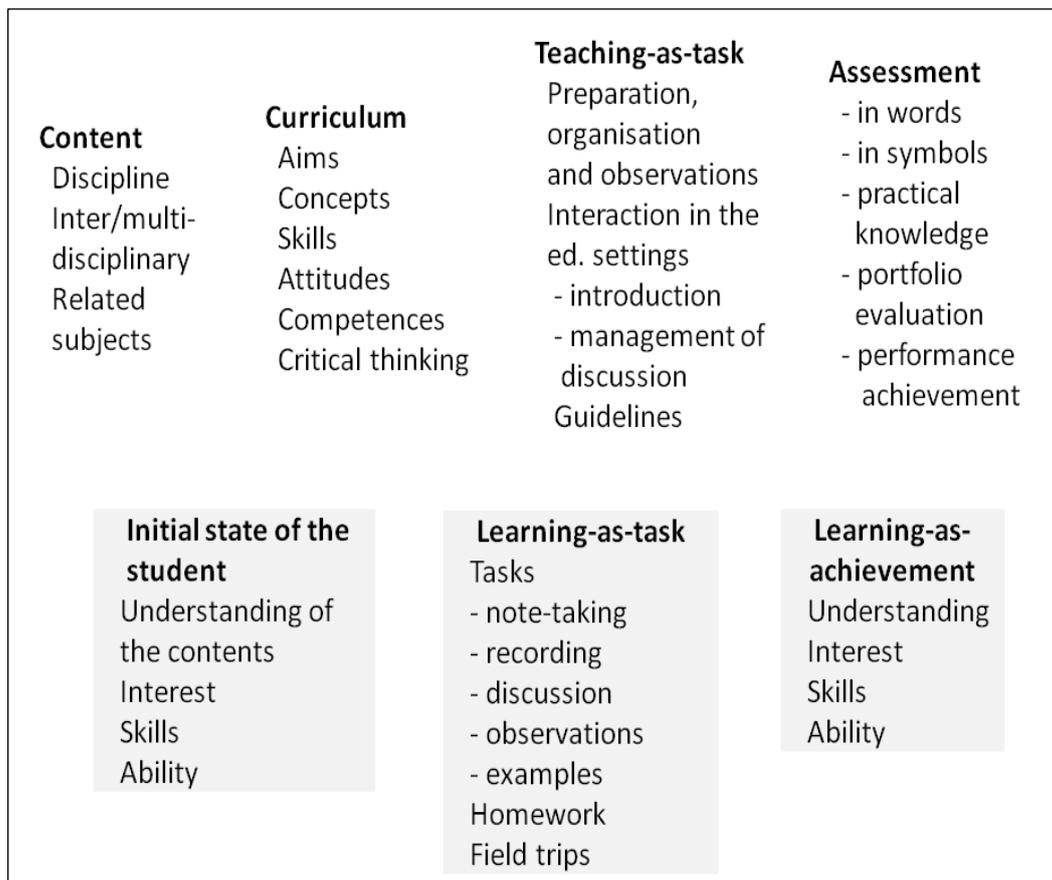

Figure 4 – Seven frame model developed by Macdonald (2002).

Table 1 – Overview of student activity in the places to be studied. Different educational settings selected. Roughly two weeks of work per setting/case. Most cases involve on-site visits.	
Three common cases (cases 1, 3 and 5)	**Project case (case 4)**
Group visits during on-site days (two or three visits)	Individual visits to settings of own choice
All students share information on the same case in class/on Blackboard	Students submit ideas on their project to teachers
Submission of reports (structure and feedback provided on Case 1)	Students make oral/visual presentations
	Students submit individual reports
One thematic case (case 2)	**Examination case (case 6)**
Visits in pairs to sites on off-campus days	Students are provided with case study material ahead of time
Students share information on their visits in class/on Blackboard	Students write an essay (report) on the examination date related to the materials
Students work singly or in pairs in analysing the case (some structure provided)	Students have a short oral examination with the instructors

The basic framework for the EdSet course was established in the summer of 2008 and the three teachers who co-taught the first course then developed the cases, which are listed in more detail in *Table 2*.

An overview of the cases and opportunities for student engagement was prepared by the first author (*Table 1*) in accordance with the teaching model (*Figure 4*).

As previously mentioned, the purpose of the course was to provide an introduction to the development and diversity of educational settings. One stated goal of the course was that students would be able to identify and discuss some of the issues involved in establishing and maintaining educational settings, both formal and informal. The other goal was that learning experiences were to be structured so that students would have the opportunity to consider different cultural values behind different versions of good practice and would be able to form judgements about what might constitute good practice in a variety of settings. Through these experiences we hoped that students would recognise the speciality of the case contexts (Yin, 2003).

The cases were planned to be moderately classified, i.e. their boundaries were clear, but were open also to inspection and reflection (Bernstein, 2000). Too strong a boundary would not create opportunities for students to reflect and interpret with respect to their own life experience, and too weak could have created ambiguity in recognising what was legitimate for that context thus limiting the 'shared' experience. Yin (2003, p. 13) gives a technical definition of a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenolmenon and context are not clearly evident." He continues that the case study method is used because the context is pertinent to your object of study so that decisions and how they are made become visible. Through such cases students can develop the competence to modify "them in the light of new knowledge and/or changing circumstances" (Ivatts, 2011).

Integration or cross-curriculum work is a slippery concept used in education in many different ways. Kysilka (1998) developed a scheme by which it is possible to differentiate among levels of integration and the scheme has been adapted by Jónsdóttir and Macdonald (2011) and is reproduced here in *Figure 5*. Two dimensions are mapped – the vertical refers to curriculum content and the extent to which it is determined by the needs

Cases/topics	Task and product	Settings 2008 (class meeting 1x month)	Settings 2009 (class meeting 1x month)	Settings 2010 (class meeting 2x month)
Table 2 – Cases, tasks and educational settings in 2008, 2009 and 2010.				
Introduction	Open the course	Potato planting – three gene-rations - photo sequence	Potato planting – three gene-rations - photo se-quence	*Wavin' flags* – World Cup (music) – whose world is it?
Case 1 Early childhood; the Icelandic way	*Visit Short report; f/b; resubmit*	Klambrar play-school (age 2–6)	Ísaksskóli (age 5–8)	Klambrar play-school (age 2-6)
Case 2 Cultural; thematic; not formal ed system	*Visit Short report*	Swimming classes (own choice of venue)	Swimming class-es or knitting classes (own choice of venue)	Swimming class-es or knitting classes (own choice of venue)
Case 3 Facilities/-resources, curriculum, compulsory school settings	*Visit Short report*	Sjálandsskóli – compulsory school International school (Grades 1–7)	Sjálandsskóli compulsory school International school (Grades 1–7)	International school (Grades 1–8+)
Emerging voices in rural South Africa	*In-class session* Group-work Jigsaw method	-	Poverty, resour-ces and educa-tion in the US and South Africa Discussion and movie	Virtual trip to South Africa; different viewpoints; specialist groups
Case 4 Independent project; freedom of choice but check topics with the instructor	*Visit Longer report Oral present-ation Work with feedback*	Own idea, visit, collection of data Mini-conference (template provided) Review of report	Own idea, visit, collection of data Mini-conference (template provided) Review of report	Own idea, visit, collection of data Mini-conference (template provided) Review of report
Where does your education come from?	In-class session; discussion	-	-	Stimulation video, music education in a prisoner-of-war camp
Case 5 Vocational education; international program for learning Icelandic	*Visit Report*	Technical College International Programme Choice of trade	Technical College International Programme Choice of trade	Technical College International Programme Choice of trade
Case 6 Exam case: materials one week ahead of time	*Written essay – 2 hours Oral exam – 20 minutes*	Rural education in South Africa; short video clip; excerpts from report	UNU Fisheries Training Pro-gramme, 10 year report; inter-views with UNU fellows; web-site	Summer camps – examples from Iceland and the USA; web-sites
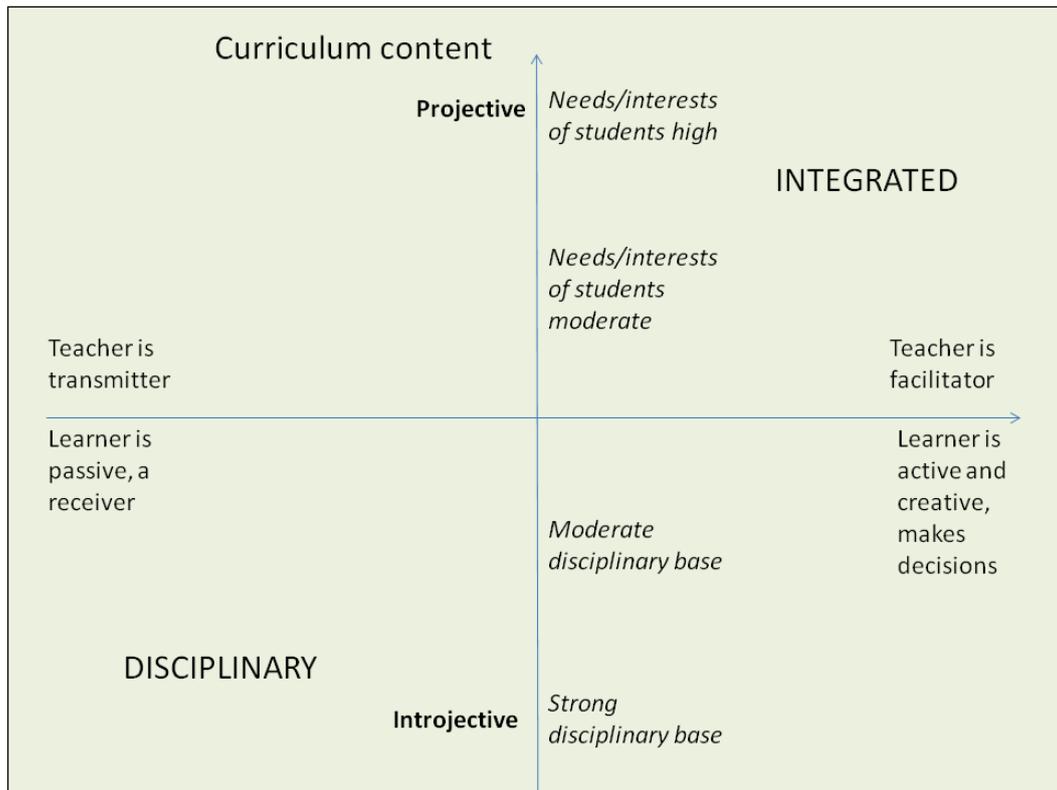
Figure 5 – Different modes of integration (Jónsdóttir & Macdonald, 2011, adapted from Kysilka, 1998).

and interests of students or by a disciplinary approach, the horizontal to the respective roles of learners and teachers and the extent to which students have an active, creative decision-making role to play. We suggest that in relocating the discourse of the ISEP many of the course experiences were to be found in the upper right-hand quadrant of *Figure 5.* Students have some choice and must exercise their own discretion in analysing the case situations and choosing issues to discuss (as seen in *Table 1* and *2*).

In his guidelines on designing significant learning experiences Fink (2003) points out that there are several ways to offer an integrated course in tertiary education. Significant learning can be achieved through foundational knowledge, application, integration, a human dimension, caring and learning how to learn. In particular integration is about "connecting ideas, people and realms of life". Course planners need to ask how the teachers and the students will know if the goals are being reached and the design of feedback and assessment is important. Designers should know what students need to do: "Each individual activity should build synergistically on students' past learning activities and prepare them for future activities" (p. 260). Pedagogy in higher education is developing as an active research field (Conference in Higher Education Pedagogy, 2011).

Pedagogic practice

Finally the course begins and teachers and students meet for the first time.

Pedagogy in practice

The practical problem of the course tasks and interactions was tackled in the spirit of critical and social pedagogy. The former, which is preoccupied by social (in)justice, is interested in collective actions, understands curriculum as political text, and is an educational response to oppression and inequalities in education (Keesing-Styles, 2003, p. 2–3). Teachers were to be interested in the production of knowledge and the nature of

the relationships between students and within the educational setting. According to McLaren (2000, in Keesing-Styles, p. 3):

> ... critical pedagogy involves a way of thinking about, negotiating, and trans-forming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of know-ledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society and nation-state.

In an analysis of social pedagogy, McFadden and Munns (2004) explore the "production of the pedagogical relationship" (p. 360) and what this means for the lives of students. They consider the cultural production of classroom practice, relationships between teachers and learners in the social pedagogy paradigm, and the effect on identity and emotion. "Student response" is considered to be the key to understanding engagement. The authors go on to say "…individuals creatively and culturally understand, respond and position themselves within their own structurally related experiences" (p. 360). The argument is that students "actively engage" in shaping pedagogy and so when change is introduced, it must be recognised that it is not only teachers who control the classroom, but that they have a crucial role to play (Mann, 2001). This view of the teacher's role is in line with weak framing of interactions as proposed by Bernstein, the horizontal dimension in Figure 5 and what we wished to achieve.

As mentioned earlier, instructional discourse refers to the selection, sequencing and pace of course material, and the criteria of knowledge to be applied (Bernstein, 2000, p. 12–13). In this course, the framework for the course and selection of five out of six cases was in the hands of the instructors, but within each case, control of sequencing and pace was shared but quite often steered by students according to their values and interests. In the second cohort, there was a significant and awkward moment when attention was drawn by an instructor to a value-based judgement of one student of what constituted 'good' teaching. This introduced a rupture in the discourse which generally did not question what was 'good' or 'bad', rather investigating what 'is' happening.

The enacted course and pedagogic practice

To explore the extent to which the course aims had been achieved, we have collected data from three sources. The most comprehensive data on the enacted course and the learning experiences of the students are from 50-60 minute personal interviews with seven students taken in July to September 2011. The students were drawn from the twelve who responded to an invitation in May 2011 to participate in the research. The invitation only reached those who still had an active university e-mail address (i.e. were still students in spring 2011); thus our sample was both purposive and convenient. Four students were from the first cohort, two the second and one from the third. Both authors were present in all interviews which were recorded and transcribed and then coded both according to the main questions asked as well as by recurring themes. Each interview was a significant learning experience for the researchers as new insights emerged from our discussions with the students. The four main interview questions were:

1. What did you learn about yourself? About others?

2. What did you learn about education?

3. Do you have anything to say about the teachers?

4. Can you tell us whether the EdSet course helped you in any ways with your later studies?

These questions were preceded by questions on the immediate background of the student before entering the course and the interview ended with questions with regard to their later studies and whether they would recommend courses in the ISEP to others.

Other data come from notes made by teachers from all three years in responses from all students to two questions in the oral examination at the end of each course and records of on-line course discussions by all cohorts (over 40 students in all).

When asked about what they remembered about the course several issues emerged. Some points referred to the structure of the course and relations with the teachers and other students, and others about the content and ways of working.

Structure and relations with the teachers and other students

The case visits, both actual and virtual, gave students *'hands-on experience'* which they thought of as *'profound'*, and which opened up their minds to what might constitute an educational setting and a consideration of the source of their own education.

The students felt that the course was interactive, both in terms of their role in the school visits and in using the virtual environment for communication. They liked the structure of working at their own pace, coming to classes once or twice a month, and using the virtual learning system (Blackboard) in between. This was a new experience for most of them, especially the first cohort:

> *We had the opportunity to see a variety that was rich in the way that each one was very different from the other.*

> *[The course] was so interactive. We learned by observing and by interviewing and discussing things – and I like that.*

> *It was good to have Blackboard discussions so you are not just sitting home and doing nothing, it was always something active going on even though you are not in class. It gave time to work (to pay bills) not always being in school.*

The third cohort did not make as much use of the virtual learning space but met more often on campus in the school and studied together:

> *In the course we were meeting to study together, to share our knowledge … to open our mind and to share intellectual and different knowledge with foreigners.*

> *If you want to learn something it is important to dialogue and to listen to the other perspectives. This happened in this course. The course was organised as to meet and talk about our experiences, and do visits … to perceive.*

In the interviews the role of the instructors was put forward in two ways. Students mentioned the closeness and friendliness of the teachers without formality or distance like some of the students are used to in their home country. They thought that the teachers were very approachable, which can be considered as an example of weaker framing of interaction. The other was that the students felt that the teachers were there also to learn, to receive, not just to give. The students valued the flexibility and understanding they met, all in aid of helping them to learn and fulfil the requirements of the course. This meant that they could move from recognition of the types of demands being made to realisation of them:

> *There was quite positive interaction … not just you versus the professor or the teacher. [In the course] the use of ICT created virtual learning environment …*

> *so it is not just a one way view … there is some degree of flexibility in terms of timing for assignment, … and it's interesting because it's not like you are gonna get free credit … it's not cheap … you can do your work, yet it's not easy.*

> *I am used to have distance between students and teachers – very formal relations. In the course it was almost like friendship between teachers and students – I liked that. And the teachers wanted to learn from us as well. They were listening to us.*

> *The teachers were flexible … you treat your students as humans … it is about maximising the learning outcome as much as possible and its profound … your way of teaching. You generated positive experiences and even though you know it can be quite intimidating.*

This recognition that teachers were learners too was wonderfully expressed at the end of one interview when a student from the first cohort, on hearing that the second author had 'taught' the third cohort, turned to her and said: '*And how did you like [the course]?*'

But even though they experienced the course as being flexible, one very competent student in the third cohort pointed out that the structure gave little chance to go deeper and explore some issues further. Time was always a factor. In the oral exam five students from the third cohort mentioned that they would have liked to have more time to talk in classes and to have more classes.

All students interviewed mentioned that they made friends who in many cases worked like a support system for them:

> *It was really interesting … we were from different countries … I have friends from all over. I think it kind of opens your mind up to other cultures and how we can work together across cultures … we look different upon things … have to find … compromises … it's good to learn that.*

Content and tasks

All the interviewed students talked about how valuable it was to see the different levels of education and that learning about the Icelandic educational system by visiting different schools helped a great deal. It helped them understand references other teachers made to schools and the diversity of education in Iceland.

When talking about the selection of schools they visited, one student said her stereotypes had been completely broken down and the visits had opened her mind to seeing other people in different educational settings. All of the students emphasised that learning through experience was valuable as well as *'realizing that wherever you are we can create an educational setting'*. Conceptions were changing as the course developed.

The structure of the assignments seemed to give the students opportunities to learn some things about themselves and their ways of working. In the first assignment students handed in a draft and received individual feedback giving guidance on what and how to improve the report. This helped learners meet the recognition rules. Through the assignments and discussions they could experience and appreciate the demands made of learners within that context, building up recognition, and realisation, becoming able to make their learning public in an appropriate way.

Some talked about enhancing practical skills like writing and constructing academic papers, others emphasised how they learned to *'think on their own and think critically'*, to

compare critically and reflect on their own background. That enhanced their therapeutic knowledge:

> *We learned who we are and that where we are coming from does matter, and we can use our experience and all our ideas in how we perceive things.*

> *I learned to open my mind … in the course … to connect knowledge and what is an educational setting and where the education comes from.*

Two of the interviewed students talked about how the visits, the assignments and interaction with others were useful to reflect on what kind of setting they would like to teach in themselves, and whether one really belongs in a formal educational setting like school and the possibility to change one's setting after having taught in one setting for some time. Several students are working towards a dream of establishing their own school, in a setting of their choice.

When discussing the settings and assignments that were related to each case, three cases were especially important. First, they commented on how useful it was in Case 1 to hand in the first assignment as a draft, get constructive feedback and then hand the final version:

> *The first assignment helped a lot … handed in a draft and … now I am really focusing on receiving ciritques … without critique you can't make anything worthy.*

The second was Case 6, the 'final exam'. This choice of terminology had been used deliberately in the course description in order to open up new views of what an examination might involve. They received the case materials a week ahead of time and all three included both a written part and an oral part. They could bring notes to the exam. Looking back, the students valued their experiences. One said it was a new learning experience not having to learn everything by heart beforehand. One said:

> *The exam was very nice … [you asked us] to use our intelligence, use what we had learned. Create something.*

Each cohort had a different case in their 'exam'. The first cohort was provided with information on rural education in South Africa with excerpts from the report *Emerging voices* (HSRC & EPC, 2006) and a short video on a school built with funds from Oprah's Angel Network (n.d.). They were asked to identify factors affecting rural education and consider the viewpoints of parents, teachers, learners and local authorities.

The third cohort received written and web-based materials about summer camps in Iceland and the USA and in the exam they had to design their own camp around a theme of their own choice. One student pointed out in the interviews that if we had been true to the spirit of the course then we would have given the students feedback on the camp they had designed, a point well taken. He added with a quirky smile that he would continue waiting for the feedback.

For the second cohort the preparation for the examination was more challenging though the exam was more straightforward. The case focussed on the United Nations University Fisheries Training Programme (UNU FTP) in Iceland. Case material was both documentary and from interviews. The interviews took place during a pre-arranged 90 minute 'pizza parlour' during which pairs of students interviewed pairs of UNU FTP fellows, with each student talking to at least four fellows. Some students thought the interviews were difficult in terms of understanding different English accents and one thought it was '*intimi-*

dating' to ask strangers kind of '*personal'* things. For a few students the case opened up a world of life-long education, international development cooperation and issues in capacity development.

All of the students liked Case 5, the visit to the Technical College, and for many this was their favourite case. Two had chatted about their visit and had agreed that it was *'multi-dimensional' – going from one class to another was like being 'in the shoes of Alice in Wonderland'*:

> *… you crossed a door and there appeared another world, and you crossed another door and another world, and this was so impressive, so nice to see the different settings that were in the same building.*

Some of the students said that in their country vocational learning was considered to be second best. They were impressed with the wide choice of curricula in The Technical College and that students wanted to be there. They were not young, so it was clear that they had chosen to be there. Each cohort was given a presentation on the two-year multicultural language programme but it was the range of trades and the '*buzz'* they experienced among the college students on the day of the visit which really excited them.

Identity and emotion

The first cohort of students took the risk of entering a programme in its infancy. The task for teachers and students was complex and notions of ability, difference, rights and diversity were not unproblematic. An unplanned discussion on the place of religion in education in the first cohort quickly revealed that intense emotion was simmering just under the surface of goodwill and democratic discussion. We wanted to create a 'shared place' for students on their journey into the ISEP and we found villages, rivers, islands and mountains in this shared place, colonial power and limited resources. With the second cohort we were transported in time and place to memories of starting school, and the relevance of family and relationships (Blackboard, second cohort). One student remembered being scared as a child going to school, another remembered the pride she felt when her uniformed father accompanied her to school.

The students learned to consider their own experience and goals in life. Those interviewed mentioned how their competences increased as they visited and reflected on the different settings, giving some a vision and others the knowledge that they were capable of learning:

> *… it gave me a reason for comparison, what I can do when I move back [home] … gave me an idea what I can do to help in certain areas … to build them up.*

> *… you pushed me to really [learn] so I could do as the other students.*

They increased their competence by learning about others' experiences and comparing them to their own:

> *That opens up your mind … because we are a full book … it is very positive to be able to have glimpses of different experiences from different [people].*

One of the most memorable experiences was a mini-conference one dark November day when students in the first cohort introduced their own cases, Case 4 (*Table 3*). Only a few had previously made slide presentations so the first author had provided a common template and slide headings coupled with the injunction that the content of the talk was what was important. Such strong framing went unheeded, visual images abounded and in one

Table 3 – Choice of topics for own project (Case 4) in first cohort 2008.		
Sunday mornings (story-time) at the City Library The child moving from playschool to preschool Comparing schools in Ghana and Iceland.	After-school care for disabled children Participation of children and teenagers in out-of-school sports The Reykjavík Music School and expert teaching.	Two examples of Icelandic courses for Polish people The UNU Geothermal Training Programme Learning Spanish in school and in adult education.

day we travelled together to many other places, to share the scenes, thoughts and insights of this group of young educators.

The relationship between teacher and student is vital to the development of identity. The process used was to minimize the distinction between teacher and student roles, giving students more control over the content than is apparent from Table 1 and 2, as within each assignment choices had to be made. Students engaged in lively discussions, sharing and arguing their positions. The rules of selection and pace of learning were to some extent in the hands of the students, though the teachers retained control of the procedures for evaluating reports and presentations. That is, the course allowed for moderately strong classification of the case settings where students introduced their own issues or 'content' into the cases. This led to a mixture of strong and weak framing in assessment, where students controlled their choice of issues to be discussed. Our pedagogy, as stated earlier, was in the spirit of critical pedagogy – where injustices could be revealed, other opinions respected but challenged, and one's own learning put to the test.

Discussion and conclusions

The aim of this study was twofold. Our aim has been to analyse the pedagogic discourse of the course EdSet (Figure 2) and explore the extent to which the educational setting itself formed a part of the pedagogic discourse. We also wanted to consider whether and how students became a part of the different case settings and become aware of shaping their own learning and development.

We have analysed and described the production, relocation and reproduction of the pedagogic discourse of this course designed to introduce students to the field of education, using concepts and theories put forward by Bernstein (2000). The field of production was rich, expanding and diverse, including the growing academic field of (multi-)cultural studies, new trends in teacher education, migration patterns and changes in the labour market. A practical response could be provided from the university and the international programme was proposed. What seemed to be a problem became a driver for learning, for the institution, its teachers and the students.

During the recontextualisation, especially in delocating the discourse, it would be honest to admit that sometimes the view of the learners-to-be was coloured by a 'deficit' approach (Lawrence, n.d.) though at no point were the demands of the new programme to be made easy for learners. While it might be too strong to say that there was an ideological 'struggle' as the discourse was delocated and relocated, differences in background and experience within the members of the ISEP group and among those who have taught EdSet allowed development in all parts of the pedagogical discourse. We saw "the dance and the dancer" (Trowler, 2009, p. 193-194). The process of engaging in the discourse has allowed us to conceptualise the settings "in which our practices are realised". The

course is not devoid of personality, but is malleable and contrary and could become something entirely different in the care of others instructors.

Second, we wanted to explore whether students themselves became a part of the different settings explored in the EdSet course (Tables 1 and 2) and became aware of their own role in shaping their learning and development.

The views of the students on time and whether there was 'enough' are interesting as the students who made more use of the learning management system Blackboard and met less often did not mention time as being a constraint. If the third cohort had been more willing to use Blackboard, perhaps on-campus time would have been viewed differently. Some of the difference in approach can be attributed to the expectations of foreign-born residents with families (first cohort) and exchange students used to on-campus work in their home countries (third cohort). The latter did not recognize the affordances of an on-line system as an option for learning.

From the interviews it was clear that, for some students, their sense of involvement in the course, its cases and its practices led to a realisation that they have a place in producing and using knowledge, despite all the factors which come into play in establishing and maintaining an educational setting. They realised that they were learning, and learning in ways they had not necessarily experienced before. In an ironic twist one young exchange student from Central Europe asked whether there was a textbook about the way the course was run as she had never experienced anything like it. Students were becoming engaged in their own learning, in forming their own opinions, and reflecting on their own as well as in and on the case experiences. They appreciated the assignments. Students had to insert their own experience into each setting and weigh and measure the nature of the setting, its values and shortcomings.

The course goals were to identify and discuss issues regarding educational settings and consider the role of cultural values. We wanted an understanding that settings depend on decisions. We noticed that by the time we visited the Technical College (Case 5) most of the students possessed the realisation rules. They moved into this setting with far more ease than their first day, when they were catapulted into an 'early childhood' setting. Perhaps the boundaries of educating young adults were more permeable to university students than a playschool but they had fully taken on the roles of being active and creative, making decisions, and recognising that the case, the setting in which they were situated, interacting with other learners, had come about because of choices, both political and personal.

The ambience of goodwill surrounding the EdSet course should not preclude a more critical analysis. Some students in the second cohort said that they still found it unbelievable to find themselves in a university setting, that five years previously they would never have believed that they would go to university (meeting between mentor and students, October 2009). It was also in this cohort that several students battled with English which was neither their mother tongue nor their second language. By contrast some students in the first cohort had considerable prior experience of university level education and several students in the third cohort were exchange students from European countries and had already completed one or two years of university studies. So although the case approach was viable for the first cohort and proved to be viable for the third cohort it was difficult for several in the second cohort. We wonder whether in addition to the language difficulties there were also problems with the recognition and realisation rules, particularly the latter, compounded by a level of cognitive demand in using the case approach which is not immediately apparent. Each student faced constant and personal challenges. Each collected information from settings, documents and discussions, processed and evaluated

the information, and then presented their 'new' view of knowledge, in different forms. They had to make decisions, and their findings and their learning had to be made visible to others. They needed to realise the text, put meanings together and make them public.

Also important in the response of students was the role of emotion in education and understanding pedagogy as a relationship. While McFadden and Munns (2004) were talking about emotion and young people who resist education, in our teaching and research we were working with young people who wished to actively engage with 'education' and we suggest that this kind of committed emotion is equally powerful.

Mann (2001) has written about student experience in higher education and offers perspectives built on alienation or engagement, and the extent to which these phenomena are changeable. She suggests five responses to strengthen engagement. The first three are showing solidarity with students in talking about the conditions in which we all (in higher education) find ourselves, extending hospitality to students as newcomers to academia and ensuring safety in the spaces we provide for learning. Our interviews and experiences suggest that we have provided these responses. Our settings provide hospitality, safety and solidarity – as instructors, we are privileged in being able to do so, but we did not do it alone – students also provide these for each other as together the settings are created.

Mann's fourth response to the choice of alienation or engagement is the redistribution of power. Bernstein (2000) relates power to the classification of categories where strong classification, for example, of subject matter or roles brings with it power. This might be the focus of another article, but in this course the subject-matter is weakly classified, with a weak disciplinary base and a weakening of the traditional roles of expert-novice in university education towards roles of being co-learners. We make an attempt to redistribute power from teaching to learning, but as instructors we never lose the power of being the responsible party in providing learning opportunities.

The fifth and final response identified by Mann (2001) concerns criticality. We must be aware of our conditions and respond to them; we need "the capacity and opportunity to question, examine, uncover, reframe, make visible and interpret" (p. 17-18). Students in the EdSet course responded deeply, cognitively and emotionally, to the issues examined in the cases, their own interpretations and the reframing of their own experience.

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