



DEVELOPING VIABLE STUDY PRACTICES AND STUDENT IDENTITIES

*AN INVESTIGATION OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS' WORK
WITH DECODING, NAVIGATING AND NEGOTIATING
THE CULTURAL NORMS OF THEIR STUDY PROGRAMME*



PhD Thesis

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This thesis is dedicated to the students whom I followed in the project.

I am grateful that you engaged in the project and gave me some of your time to share your experiences and reflections with me. Without your generosity and honesty this project would not have been possible.

SUMMARY

This thesis reports on the results of a PhD project investigating first-year students' encounters with their study programmes. When new students enter a university programme, they enter a new cultural context with certain norms for how to be a student and certain disciplinary practices and expectations that the students must learn to decode and navigate. The transition to higher education entails that the students develop new ways to study with respect to what they encounter in the programme: a disciplinary culture, new academic content, structures, teaching and learning formats, and types of exams. Furthermore, becoming a student is also a matter of developing a student identity. The students must work on navigating and negotiating their identities in relation to the norms and expectations of the study culture regarding what is recognised as an 'appropriate' or ideal way to be student within that specific study context. The PhD project has followed first-year students in three study programmes at the university of Copenhagen: Film and media studies, philosophy, and biotechnology. The thesis builds on a qualitative research design that draws on a range of methods: group interviews, video diaries, workshops and individual interviews.

The thesis consists of four papers, which together contribute to answering the overarching research question about how students develop study practices and develop and negotiate a student identity in their encounters with their study programmes.

Paper 1 investigates induction and shows how students encounter the programmes and expectations about how to be a student. Through an analysis of three induction rituals, the paper shows how norms and implied expectations are communicated from the very beginning through the more informal parts of the induction. The paper shows how the rituals mirror the culture and expectations the students encounter during their first year. It also shows that there are differences between the study cultures in the three study programmes, and that the expectations to the students differ depending on which programme they have entered.

Paper 2 investigates students' work on developing study practices and what affects the study practices they develop. The paper shows that the process of developing study practices involves an interplay between on the one hand the students trying things out through 'learning by doing' and on the other hand the different types of guidance and feedback they receive from the programmes from, for example, teachers, exams and grades. The students work on decoding what is expected of them and which study practices that are viable. However, since the feedback they receive is sometimes unclear or lacking, they are often left alone with the work of decoding academic expectations and figuring out which practices that are viable. Furthermore, the paper proves that the students' motivations, interests and how they relate to the content of the programme also play a role in how they come to prioritise.

Paper 3 studies one programme in depth and investigates what biotechnology students expect to be challenging when they enter the programme and what they experience as challenging when they progress further into the first year. While most students expect the academic content and its high level to be challenging, it turns out that what is challenging instead is especially the lack of structure and lack of clarifying expectations concerning, for example, exams. The social aspects of the programme prove to be of great importance for how the students navigate and overcome the challenges. Fellow students and senior students become important, since they help in decoding expectations, providing academic support and enhancing motivation.

Paper 4 investigates the norms with respect to how the student should perform in order to be recognised as an 'ideal philosophy student'. The paper demonstrates the importance of engaging in academic discussions, showing confidence and knowing content, as well as positioning oneself in relation to the two main traditions within philosophy and being able to argue for that position. Furthermore, the paper shows that there are subtle gendered exclusion mechanisms at play. As a consequence, some students are challenged in meeting the norms. However, some students manage to negotiate their positions and their identities.

RESUMÉ

Denne afhandling formidler resultatet af et ph.d.-projekt, som har undersøgt førsteårsstuderendes møde med deres universitetsuddannelse. Når nye studerende starter på en uddannelse, træder de samtidig ind i en ny kulturel kontekst, med bestemte normer for hvordan man er studerende, fagspecifikke praksisser og forventninger, som de studerende skal lære at afkode og navigere i. Overgangen til universitetet indebærer at de førsteårsstuderende udvikler nye måder at studere på i relation til det de møder på uddannelsen: en fagkultur, nyt fagindhold, strukturer, undervisnings-, lærings- og eksamensformer. Derudover handler det at blive studerende også om at udvikle en identitet som studerende. De studerende må arbejde på at finde deres vej og forhandle deres identitet i forhold til de normer og forventninger, der ligger i studiekulturen til hvad der anerkendes som 'rigtige' og ideelle måder at være studerende på, i netop den studiekontekst. Ph.d.-projektet har fulgt førsteårsstuderende på tre uddannelser på Københavns Universitet: Film og Medievidenskab, Filosofi og Bioteknologi. Afhandlingen bygger på et kvalitativt metodedesign, som trækker på en bred vifte af metoder herunder: gruppeinterviews, videodagbøger, workshops og individuelle interviews.

Afhandlingen består af fire artikler, som alle bidrager til at svare på det overordnede forskningsspørgsmål, om hvordan studerende i mødet med deres uddannelse udvikler studiepraksisser og udvikler og forhandler en identitet som studerende.

Artikel 1 undersøger studiestarten og hvordan de studerende mødes af uddannelserne, hvilke forventninger der er til hvordan man skal være studerende. Gennem en analyse af tre studiestartsritualer viser artiklen og hvordan normer og implicitte forventninger formidles allerede fra starten gennem de mere uformelle dele af introduktionen. Artiklen viser, hvordan ritualerne spejler den kultur og de forventninger, som de studerende møder i deres første år. Samtidig, så viser artiklen at der er forskel på de tre uddannelsers studiekultur og på de forventninger, der er til hvordan man er en studerende, alt efter hvilken uddannelse man starter på.

Artikel 2 undersøger de studerendes arbejde med at udvikle studiepraksisser og hvad der får betydning for hvilken praksis de udvikler. Artiklen viser, at udviklingen af studiepraksisser er et samspil mellem på den ene side, at de studerende prøver sig frem gennem 'learning by doing' og på den anden side, at de modtager forskellige former for vejledning og feedback fra uddannelserne gennem fx undervisere, eksaminer og karakterer. De studerende forsøger at afkode, hvad der forventes af dem og hvilke studiepraksisser, der er meningsfulde, men da den feedback de studerende får nogle gange er utydelig eller udebliver, så er de studerende ofte overladt til selv at afkode de faglige forventninger og finde ud af hvilke praksisser, der giver mening. Artiklen peger desuden på, at de studerendes motivationer, interesser og hvordan de relaterer sig til uddannelsens indhold, spiller ind på hvordan de for eksempel vælger at prioritere.

Artikel 3 går i dybden med én uddannelse og undersøge hvad Bioteknologi-studerende forventer bliver udfordrende, når de starter og hvad de oplever, som udfordrende, når de kommer længere ind i første år. Hvor en del studerende forventer, at det faglige indhold og høje niveau bliver udfordrende viser det sig, at det i højere grad er manglende struktur og tydeliggørelse af hvad der forventes, fx til eksamen, som bliver udfordrende. Det sociale aspekt af uddannelsen viser sig at få stor betydning for hvordan de studerende manøvrerer og overkommer udfordringerne. Her er både medstuderende og ældre studerende vigtige, da de både kan hjælpe med at afkode forventninger, give faglig sparring, øge motivationen.

Artikel 4 undersøger hvilke normer, der er til hvordan man skal performe for at blive anerkendt, som en 'ideel filosofi studerende'. Artiklen viser, at det er vigtigt at deltage i de faglige diskussioner, vise selvtillid og kunne sit stof, samtidig med at man skal positionere sig selv i forhold til de to hovedtraditioner indenfor filosofi, og man skal kunne argumentere for sit standpunkt. Desuden viser artiklen, at der er nogle subtile kønnede eksklusionsmekanismer på spil. Dette får konsekvenser for nogle studerende, som får svært ved at leve op til normerne. Nogle af de studerende formår at forhandle deres position og identitet.

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PROLOGUE

In my class in lower secondary school, there was one student who could never sit still and who did not perform well. I remember viewing him as somewhat annoying and disturbing. However, long after finishing secondary school I heard that this particular boy had successfully graduated from an engineering programme. This made me reflect back on our time at school. I always liked school and was generally recognised as 'a good student'. I worked hard on my homework and performed just above the average. If I had to stay home because I was ill, I was sad to be missing out on school. I have always been socially engaged and talked with all my classmates. Hence, it was easy for me to fit into the norms of being a good student. The boy in my class, on the other hand, did not fit into these norms. Back then, I perceived him as someone who just did not fit into school and was not particularly good at schooling. However, looking back I realise that there was more to it than him just being a bad student. As his subsequent educational path showed, he did have the ability to be successful educationally. This made me realise that it was probably more a question of the school context not being suited to him. The institutional context had not provided an appropriate form for him to flourish in, and it might have had too narrow a view of what it means to be 'a good student'. Hence, the problem was not the particular boy, it was the inability of the school context to include boys like him.

My interest in education was sparked several years ago and has only increased since then. After high school I initially decided not to apply to go to university, but when I realised that there was a programme dedicated to education, I immediately became interested and applied. During my Bachelors' in Education, I did a semester project on the norms of being a 'good student' and, together with a fellow student, conducted observations of primary school classes. We found that one of the important things the students had to learn was how to position their bodies correctly in ways the school considered right, for example, how to sit still on a chair. I became increasingly interested in institutional contexts and the norms of practice and how students navigate

them. During my BA and MA in Education, I became still more interested in the institutional context of the university. In my Bachelors' project I investigated a newly built university campus and looked at the types of practices the building promoted, the ideas about who students are and what they should do, and how the students practiced in the building, sometimes in opposition to the intentions that underpinned it. I continued my interest in student practices and cultural norms in my Masters' project, for which I did a comparative study of first-year students' processes of becoming students and their encounter with the study context of a sociology programme in respectively Bordeaux (France) and Copenhagen (Denmark). All of this has led me to the present PhD project, in which I have pursued further my interest in and knowledge of students and the norms, practices, cultures and identities.

INTRODUCTION

When students in Denmark are offered a place in a university programme, they receive a letter of acceptance, are formally enrolled, and thus acquire the status of being students. However, being enrolled as a student and being formally accepted as having the right prerequisites and levels of knowledge and competence is one thing; being and becoming a student and embarking on a journey through higher education is something else entirely, a much more complex process.

This thesis presents the outcome of a PhD project investigating the complex processes of ‘becoming a student’, students’ encounters with their programme’s culture, and how they develop study practices and student identities.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

First, I will provide some context for the project and how it was initiated. The project was created as a collaboration between two departments at the University of Copenhagen: the Department of Media, Cognition and Communication (MCC)¹ in Humanities, and the Department of Science Education in the Faculty of Science. One of the initial questions raised by the then head of department at MCC took the form of a puzzle and a paradox concerning the students on one of the department’s study programmes: the students in the film and media programme entered with high grade point averages from high school, indicating ‘on paper’ that they knew how to study and who had all the ideal requirements for being ‘good students’. However, the head of the department had noted, already within the very first months in the programme, that the students developed study practices where they did not attend classes or did not prepare sufficiently for them. Why was that? Another question that troubled the MCC department concerned the high drop-out rates for some of the programmes in the department, for example, in philosophy.

In addition to the questions raised by the head of department, the PhD project was initiated as a continuation of a local development project that the department

¹ The department is now a part of the Department of Communication.

had already conducted. This had investigated the dropout at the five study programmes in MCC, with the purpose of gaining knowledge that could enhance retention (Frederiksen & Billesø, 2018). The project had a quantitative and a qualitative part. In the quantitative part, the aim was to determine if there were any specific characteristics leading some students to leave the programme compared to those who stayed and to judge whether there were any specific moments or places at which there was a higher degree of dropping out than others. This was done by looking at the university's own data on admissions, students' demographic data, and records of educational progress, such as the number of ECTS gained and exam results. The qualitative part of the project consisted of retrospective interviews with students who had chosen to leave the programme. It investigated their initial expectations of the programme, their narratives about leaving, their experiences of the study environment, the teaching, their peers etc.

The quantitative part of the development project showed that there was no basis for identifying specific characteristics that would place some students in the department more at risk of dropping out than others. The qualitative study had some common themes that cut across the five programmes. First, the students variously experienced the university as new, challenging, overwhelming or disappointing, and they found its expectations difficult to decode and live up to. Second, they were challenged by the process of finding their own academic identities, expressing that it was unclear to them where the programme would take them. They also had difficulties in explaining to others what the programme was about, what competencies they gained from it, and where it was leading them. Third, and related to the two first themes, the students also expressed an experience of a lack of clear role models or of any image of who they were or were about to become.

Another main point from the project was that these experiences and narratives were closely connected to the specific disciplinary contexts. The project concluded that this made it difficult to find a single solution or to use the same strategies to bring down drop-out rates for all of the five programmes. The development project concluded that, in order to investigate why students drop out, this must be understood as related to the process of becoming a student and the experience of

having made ‘the right choice’. Hence, it suggested that, to understand dropout, research must look at the students who have *not* left the programme and try to understand their encounter with it and the process of developing a student identity (Frederiksen & Billesø, 2018, pp. 3-9).

This thesis is a continuation of the development project, but it focuses on the students’ experiences more broadly and does not have a specific focus on dropout. The thesis takes its point of departure in the questions raised by practice and the conclusion of the development project that there is a need to understand both the programmes and the students better. In my PhD, I have thus asked the question: Why do the students develop the study practices they do, and what happens in their encounter with the study programme? My aim has been to gain knowledge about how the study cultures and study practices of first-year students develop.

Collaboration between and co-financing by the MCC and the Department of Science Education opened up an opportunity to include a third programme from science in my PhD research, thereby enabling comparisons between the academic areas of humanities and science. Hence, the programmes selected for the project became: film and media studies and philosophy, both in the MCC in Humanities, and biotechnology in the Faculty of Science. More information on the specific programmes will be given in the methodology chapter.

In addition to the qualitative study conducted in this PhD project, a quantitative project was also initiated to run in parallel with it, following the same student cohorts and programmes. The quantitative project aimed to generate data on the students’ social and economic backgrounds, their geographical origins, their admissions data etc., using data from both the national database Statistics Denmark, and the university’s own student data on exams, study activity, drop-out rates, etc. This was combined with surveys during the students’ first years in the programmes. The quantitative project will not be reported in this thesis.

As the above account shows, the idea for this PhD project arose before I entered project, and the outset was a question raised by practice. Although there was an open call for applications for the PhD position, I almost felt that the project was made for me.

As the prologue shows, the project was very much in line with my interests and with my previous academic endeavours. Still curious about these issues, I could not see a better match. Fortunately, I got the position and started the project that this thesis is the result of.

NAVIGATING THE THESIS

This thesis presents the outcome of my PhD research. While the introduction above presented the background for the project, chapter two places the project within the research literature and ends with my research question. Chapter three introduces the theoretical approach that this project draws on, and chapter four describes the methodology including the research design, the methodological reflections and considerations as well as the approach to data. Chapter five gives an overview of the four papers and the findings that constitute the main part of the thesis. In chapter six I look across the four papers and conclude the overall findings, furthermore I discuss the findings and suggest ideas for further research. The four papers are placed at the end of this thesis.

PLACING THE PROJECT WITHIN THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

In order to address the questions this project is investigating as that I have just outlined; I will first situate it in relation to previous literature in this field of research. Other researchers have worked on similar questions and investigated students' transitions into their first year at university. While the literature on the first year and the transition is extensive, I will not give a complete account of it here but give an overview of some of its main areas. I will then go into more detail regarding the parts of the literature that are more relevant for this specific study and show how this project fills in some of the gaps that still exist in the literature and knowledge on this area of research.

INCREASED FOCUS ON THE FIRST YEAR IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The transition to the first year of university is a topic of research that has been in focus in the recent decades (Harvey, Drew, & Smith, 2006; Tight, 2020). It can be seen as a response to changes in the higher education landscape, especially the move from elite to mass university, with consequently higher intakes of students, and more heterogeneous student cohorts (Coertjens, Brahm, Trautwein, & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2016; Guri-Rosenblit, Šebková, & Teichler, 2007).

Although more and more students gain access to higher education now than previously, there are still issues with inequality and exclusion both in accessing higher education institutions in the first place and within such institutions when the student gets there. Some groups still face challenges both in accessing higher education and in the process of transition, for example, students from non-academic homes and/or working-class backgrounds (Archer, Hutchings, & Ross, 2005; Brooks, 2008).

As in other Scandinavian countries, Danish education is often described as allowing more equal access to education than other countries. In Denmark there are no fees for higher education, and all students, regardless of social or economic background, receive state-funded monthly grants (Esping-Andersen, 2006; Thomsen, 2015; Troelsen & Laursen, 2014). Nevertheless, inequalities still exist, and social

background does play a role. Reimer and Thomsen (2019) shows that social stratification is at work not only vertically but also horizontally in the Danish higher education sector. This means that social inequality is not just a matter of accessing higher education institutions or whether or not students attend university: it is also a question about which specific institutions and disciplinary fields students choose and their ability to navigate academic cultures (Reimer & Thomsen, 2019).

The issues with more heterogeneous groups of students in higher education and the students' challenges in the transition process have led to an increased interest in retention and in efforts to prevent dropout, as well as a general interest in the first-year experience (Harvey et al., 2006). There has therefore been an increased focus on the first year and on investigating the transition, the reasons for dropout, how to predict success and performance, and how to facilitate and ease the transition which is shown in the existing research literature (Coertjens et al., 2016).

PREDICTING PERFORMANCE AND SUCCESS, AND PREVENTING DROPOUT

Several previous studies of the first year in higher education have focused on trying to predict the success of students in their first year and have attempted to identify the factors that determine student performances in order to try and forestall student dropout (Harvey et al., 2006). These studies concentrate especially on identifying student characteristics and variables that place them at greater risk of academic failure or dropout. This, for example, has been done by looking at factors such as students' prior knowledge (De Clercq, Pearson, & Rolfe, 2001), their school performance and/or university entrance scores (Birch & Miller, 2006; Cox, 2000; Duff, 2004; Ting & Man, 2001) or characteristics like the gender or social backgrounds of students (Harvey et al., 2006; Kyndt, Donche, Trigwell, & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2017; Rienks & Taylor, 2009). Some studies that focus on retention have tried to identify factors that affect the propensity to withdraw and/or predict the risk of students withdrawing (Aulck, Velagapudi, Blumenstock, & West, 2016; Copeland & Levesque-Bristol, 2011; Giaquinto, 2009; Lourens & Smit, 2003; Murtaugh, Burns, & Schuster, 1999; Ortiz-Lozano, Rua-Vieites, Bilbao-Calabuig, & Casadesús-Fa, 2020; Von Hippel & Hofflinger,

2021; Wintre & Bowers, 2007). The reasons for dropout in these studies are first and foremost placed at the student, their previous knowledge and skills and their background, rather than the institutional environment of the universities themselves.

SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDY SKILLS

Another focus in the research literature on the first year at university shows the many efforts institutions of higher education have made to support the transition of first-year students through different initiatives and interventions like induction programmes, guidance and counselling (Harvey et al., 2006; Thomas, 2013). In a report focusing on 'what works' when institutions want to enhance retention, some of the main points were that it is important to facilitate students' engagement, that initiatives should begin early and continue throughout the first year, that they should focus on the academic aspects and improving teaching, and that it is important that students develop an experience of being capable learners (Thomas, 2013).

One way of supporting students' transition is through induction programmes (Davig & Spain, 2003; Murtagh, Ridley, Frings, & Kerr-Pertic, 2017; Schofield & Sackville, 2010; Thomas, 2013; Turner et al., 2017; Yang, Webster, & Prosser, 2011) and first-year seminars (Barefoot, 2004; Hyers & Joslin, 1998; Jairam, 2020; Malik, 2011; Padgett, Keup, & Pascarella, 2013; Porter & Swing, 2006; Reid, 2009; Reid, Reynolds, & Perkins-Auman, 2014; Swanson, Vaughan, & Wilkinson, 2015). Another type of support is guidance and mentoring, for example, through peer mentoring programmes (Chester, Burton, Xenos, & Elgar, 2013; Glaser, Hall, & Halperin, 2006; Heirdsfield, Walker, & Walsh, 2008; Husband & Jacobs, 2009) or guidance and counselling by professional counsellors (Biasi, Patrizi, Mosca, & De Vincenzo, 2017; Rickinson, 1998; Rickinson & Rutherford, 1995).

Another way of easing the transition is by helping and supporting individual students' skills development and thus preparing them to be better students and enhance their academic performance (Kift, 2009). Richardson et al. have looked at definitions of study skills. By drawing on the available literature, they make a distinction between 'study skills' and 'study strategies'. Study skills are the mental abilities

and the tools and techniques used when acquiring knowledge, for example, different types of notetaking or modes of reading, like skim-reading a text. Study strategies are the choices of these skills and their employment with a specific purpose or goal in mind (Richardson, Robnolt, & Rhodes, 2010). Further, Richardson et al. argues, study skills are important in developing academic competence because they contribute to the students' abilities to learn in effective ways and make choices about how, for example, to acquire, organise, remember and use the information (Richardson et al., 2010).

The literature shows that a range of different study skills courses have been devised addressed to first-year students with different foci and forms (Entwisle, 1960). Some course are conceived as pre-entry courses (Fergy, Heatley, Morgan, & Hodgson, 2008), some are available online (Prymachuk, Gill, Wood, Ollevent, & Keeley, 2012), some focus on generic competences like note-taking, text-reading or time management (Sera & McPherson, 2019; Villarreal & Martinez, 2018), and others are directed at more specific skills, like mathematics support for engineering students (Hillock, Jennings, Roberts, & Scharaschkin, 2013). Researchers have also found that study skills courses can benefit students in other ways than just improving the specific study skill, like one study of such a course that improved the self-efficacy of disadvantaged groups (Wernersbach, Crowley, Bates, & Rosenthal, 2014).

THE NEED FOR STUDY SKILLS TO RELATE TO THE DISCIPLINARY CONTEXT

In the literature on how students develop study skills, competences and practices, researchers argue for a greater focus on the study context in which the students are engaged. One example is Jairam (2020), who criticises study skills courses in general and argues that, even after attending first-year seminars focused on study skills and having been taught them effectively (including note-taking, active reading time management etc.), students continue to use ineffective study strategies and employ bad study habits taken over from high school. Thus, students use ineffective but less time-consuming strategies like repeating and focusing on simple facts more than more effective and often more time-consuming practices for example, relating ideas to one

another or coming up with questions relating to practice (Jairam, 2020). Jairam argues that the separate study skills courses do not adequately enhance learning or make study skills effective, and that the development of study skills should instead be incorporated in the courses and in close relation to the subject content (Jairam, 2020). Likewise, Wingate (2006) argues that teaching students study skills does not make any sense if it is not done in close relationship to the subject area and the process of learning. Jones likewise argues that the disciplinary context should be taken into account when students develop generic skills and attributes (Jones, 2009). This is similar to Dressen-Hammouda's (2008) emphasis on the importance of disciplinary norms and genres, that is, that students should learn the specific disciplinary practices of their programme, like how to write field notes in geology (Dressen-Hammouda, 2008). This illustrates the need for a better understanding of the complexity of students' development of study practices than a focus on specific skills detached from the context in which they are used. Malm (2021) shows that field practices in geoscience include acquiring embodied knowledge of what a certain type of rock should feel like when one hammers it and that this is closely tied to what is recognised as being a good geoscience student (Malm, 2021). This suggests that study practices are closely connected to disciplinary understandings, values and norms and to specific student identities. Hence, we need to take the context into account if we want to investigate what influences how students study. This includes paying attention to what the teachers tell the students to do, how the courses are structured, what is valued within the study programme, the specific exam formats etc.

TRANSITION AS A COMPLEX PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION AND BELONGING

Some of the above studies on first-year student transitions focus on measurements specific factors and targeted initiatives and actions. Their emphasis is accordingly on the individual student and the supposed need to make up for or fix the failing student's shortcomings and difficulties. However, another, equally growing body of literature has emerged to investigate the student transition and the development of study practices from perspectives that focus more on student engagement, the

processes of becoming student, student identity work and study cultures, emphasising the importance of the disciplinary context, practices and norms. Gale and Parker (2014) argue that, despite the many studies that have investigated the transition from school to university, there is still a lack of clarity regarding exactly what that transition means. Based on the literature on student transitions, they identify three conceptualisations of transition:

- 1) Transition as induction
- 2) Transition as development
- 3) Transition as becoming

Transition as induction is described as a fixed point in time and space, for example, consisting of a week of introductory activities with a specific endpoint. This understanding of the term “transition” is widely used in the literature. Transition defined as development, conversely, focuses on the development of identity and the “shift from one identity to another” (Ecclestone, Biesta, and Hughes, 2010 in: Gale & Parker, 2014). While these two definitions of transition view it as a series of stages and periods in time, the third definition expands the notion away from the customary linear understanding. Gale and Parker, citing Quinn, argue that ‘there is no such thing as *an* identity, or *a* discrete moment of transition’ (Quinn, 2010 in: Gale & Parker, 2014). Hence, in understanding transition as becoming, there is a shift in focus to the student’s *processes* of becoming and to viewing his or her transition as a continuous and ongoing process throughout the course of higher education, instead of something that is fixed to a specific designated time with a specific end point. This move also entails a shift in focus from the individual student to the individual student *in context*. This means that there is a focus not only on the academic aspects, but also on identity development. In this view, student identities are understood as something that is unstable, negotiable and always in process. Identities are not something one has, but something one does and performs. This will be elaborated further in subsequent sections.

RETENTION: THE SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC ASPECTS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF A SENSE OF BELONGING

In the literature on retention, researchers likewise argue that the reasons for dropout and retention cannot be reduced to single factors, and that a shift is needed from focusing on students' failings or specific characteristics to focusing on the interactions and interplay between the students on the one hand and the institutions and study programmes on the other (Ulriksen, Madsen, & Holmegaard, 2010).

Vincent Tinto's model of social and academic integration (1993) has had a great influence on the literature on first-year transitions and retention (Harvey et al., 2006). Tinto argues that the academic and social aspects of university life are both important for students' decisions to stay or leave their programmes. Furthermore, Tinto argues that, in order to understand why students withdraw, the focus needs to shift from placing the responsibility on the students and explaining withdrawal in terms of "the individual's actions and the student's ability or willingness to complete college" (Tinto, 1993, pp. 84-85) to a focus on the institution itself and the context the student enters. Furthermore, this means moving away from the idea that it is the student who has failed if he or she decides to leave (Tinto, 1993). This also suggests that there is no simple explanation to be found in any one specific student characteristic or factor: instead, "withdrawal is the result of a complex combination of student characteristics, external pressures and institution-related factors. Students' decisions to leave are often the result of a build-up of factors" (Harvey et al., 2006, p. II). Tinto's more recent work and the further development of his theories have adopted the perspectives of the students. In his paper he emphasises the importance of students' sense of belonging to the programme and the institution (Tinto, 2017). When the students see themselves as members of an academic community, their commitment serves to "bind the individual to the group or community even when challenges arise" (Tinto, 2017, p. 258). Furthermore, students who have a sense of belonging are more likely to engage and to stay. Hence, the students' sense of belonging is important for retention (Thomas, 2012; Tinto, 2017). Moreover, the sense of belonging is closely linked to how students identify with the programme and develop a student identity (Holmegaard, Madsen, & Ulriksen, 2014; MacFarlane, 2018). This literature is

situated within Gale and Parker' category of literature that views the transition as a process of becoming.

STUDENT EXPERIENCES, CULTURE AND IDENTITY

According to Kyndt et al., one of the less investigated areas within the literature on the transition to university that has more recently started to develop is focusing on “understanding the *processes and growth* students are undergoing in the transition to higher education” (Kyndt et al., 2017). A growing body of literature is concerned with student experiences, the culture the students enter, the development and negotiation of student identities, and the expectations of and ideals about students that underly the context of studying. This research often employs qualitative approaches in order to gain more nuanced and holistic understandings of student life (Kahu & Picton, 2020). Furthermore, there is often more focus on the processes and longer time spans than on a single point of measurement or on changes measured by pre- and post-tests (Kyndt et al., 2017). This is evident in longitudinal studies in which the students are followed over longer time spans and sometimes both before, during and after the first year (Holmegaard, Ulriksen, & Madsen, 2014; Kyndt et al., 2015; Peters, 2018; Tett, Cree, & Christie, 2017). Some of these studies use ethnographic approaches in which, for a period of time, the researcher becomes a part the culture and of the students' everyday lives as university students (Hasse, 2002; Madsen, 2018). A growing field of research focuses on science identities and how students work on finding viable ways to engage with the discipline they have entered, or on how some students have to negotiate their identities in order to fit in and create a sense of belonging within the programme. These studies focus on specific disciplines like physics (Johansson, 2018), geology (Malm, Madsen, & Lundmark, 2020), computer science (Peters, 2018) or engineering (Madsen, 2018). Another concern has been with the inclusion or exclusion of certain student identities. For example, how does being a woman or a Muslim create challenges in certain academic cultures in which these identities are not recognised as appropriate or as being in accordance with the science identities available within the discipline? Hence some students experience more difficulties in gaining recognition and a sense of belonging because of the norms of the disciplinary

culture (Avraamidou, 2020; Gonsalves, 2014). These studies investigate which student performances are recognised as appropriate, which are not (Avraamidou, 2020; Gonsalves, 2014) and which characteristics are recognised as ideal by the teachers and students (Wong & Chiu, 2019).

This PhD project is situated within the literature that emphasises the importance of interactions between the students and the study programmes and cultures they encounter. Hence, in aiming to investigate study practices, I draw on a theoretical approach that takes the disciplinary context into account and that views the development of study practices as involving interaction between the students and the institutional and cultural setting, its norms, expectations, and structures. Furthermore, this project is also in line with those previous works that stress the importance of viewing the transition as becoming, including attention to how the students develop an identity as such within that particular programme. Therefore, I am interested in the programmes' various cultures, the specific norms and practices the students encounter and how they perform and negotiate their identities, as well as which student identities or ways of performing are excluded or viewed as illegitimate by the programme's culture.

While most studies within the literature I have just described focus on one specific disciplinary context alone, this project compares the cultures and expectations of students in three different disciplines and disciplinary cultures in order to gain insights into the norms and practices at play and the differences in the respective study cultures. Furthermore, my research contributes to the literature that views the transition as a process of becoming by combining a range of different qualitative methods, thereby gaining access to the students' own perspectives and experiences, as well as to how cultural practices play out in the daily interactions between the students and the various programme cultures. This will be further elaborated in the methodology chapter. The theoretical approach(es) on which this project draws will be described further in the following chapter.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How are study practices and student identities developed and negotiated among first-year students in their encounter with their study programmes and the specific study cultures of the Bachelors' programmes: film and media studies, philosophy, and biotechnology, at the University of Copenhagen?

THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND CONCEPTS

In this project, I am interested in the interplay between first-year university students and the study programmes they enter. The thesis is based on a theoretical approach that understands institutions and cultures as dynamic interplays in which the people both produce and are produced by the culture or institution through their daily actions. This approach and interest are informed by theories about institutions, culture and identities.

An institution is not a static or fixed place, it is something that is produced and negotiated over time in individuals' daily practices. Richard Jenkins defines an institution as "a pattern of behaviour in any particular setting that has become established over time 'as the way things are done'". Furthermore, an institution has "intersubjective relevance and meaning in the situation concerned: people know about it and recognize it, if only in the normative specification of 'how things are done'" (Jenkins, 2014, p. 160). This definition draws attention to the norms that are produced through these patterns of behaviour.

For my project, this approach involves an understanding of 'study culture' and 'university student' as being continuously produced, negotiated and practiced by the people doing the (study) culture in a specific context. The project aims to investigate study practices on the one hand and the study culture and student identities on the other. These are interconnected, since culture consists of people's practices and is something that is done (Hasse, 2002; Hastrup, 2004). Drawing on anthropological theories, I view the study programmes that students enter as study cultures, where students must learn the cultural codes and the specific understandings and ways of viewing things. Anthropologist Cathrine Hasse, who studied first-year physics students, described how, after spending time in the physics department, she learned to look at the sky and the stars in new ways, such that "the word 'star' will never have the same meaning"² (Hasse, 2002, p. 138). Kirsten Hastrup elaborates on Hasse's

² Own translation. In the thesis and its component papers, the empirical and theoretical quotes that were originally in Danish have been translated by myself and my co-authors.

descriptions and explains that, “when a large group of people look at the sky in the same way, and they all move through a part of the world with the naturalness that comes from an incorporated knowledge, we have the contours of a cultural community” (Hastrup, 2004, p. 111). Hence, becoming a member of a cultural community such as a study culture in a study programme is about learning the content, practices and perspectives that the community shares. For the members of such a community who have been in a culture or an institutional setting for some time, the practices and ways of viewing things become naturalised, incorporated and taken for granted (Hasse, 2002; Jenkins, 2014). This also means that “‘the way things are done’ may quickly become ‘the way things should be done’” (Jenkins, 2014, p. 162). Within the cultural context, ‘the right way of doing things’ is developed over time as generalised ideas concerning, for example, the right ways of talking, dressing and using body language (Hastrup, 2004, p. 111). This means that there are certain expectations regarding how one should behave and practice, depending on the specific context.

This leads to two theoretical concepts that also inform this project: ‘the implied student’ (Ulriksen, 2009), and ‘the ideal student’ (Wong & Chiu, 2019, 2020). Both concepts address the ideas and norms of what it takes to be ‘a good student’. Wong and Chiu describe how the concept of ‘the ideal student’:

“reflects the ideas, or mental images, that we form through imaginations of the desirable traits and characteristics. As such, the ideal student is not meant to be a direct reflection of specific individuals with particular attributes. Rather, the ideal student constitutes a collective recognition of the range of features that we might find across the spectrum of students.” (Wong & Chiu, 2020, p. 55)

Thus, in the study context there are certain ideas concerning which characteristics and attributes are seen as desirable for the student and are therefore recognised. Along the same lines, the concept of ‘the implied student’ draws attention to the range of elements that constitute the study context and that there are some implied expectations to the student underlying in the organisation, the structure of the teaching and learning activities, the way the teachers speak to and about students, etc. Between the lines there is a presumed student, an expectation regarding what a student

should do and be, which is not always explicitly communicated but is implied. These two concepts are useful in investigating the interaction between the students and the programmes they enter. Every programme has its specific ideas and norms for how a student should perform, look, talk (and so on) in order to be recognised as ‘a good student’.

What is recognised in the cultural context of the study programme is also important for how students can identify with the programme and develop a student identity and a sense of belonging. The project draws on identity theories that view identity as something that is negotiated and performed by the individual and in relation to the context. This means that identity is not something one has, but something that is continuously negotiated and performed (Avraamidou, 2020; Butler, 1999; Carlone & Johnson, 2007; Gonsalves, 2014; Holmegaard, Madsen, et al., 2014). Holmegaard, Madsen and Ulriksen argue that a first-year student:

“needs to work on becoming a recognised student to feel s/he belongs to and is recognised in the cultural context of her/his new study programme. In this process s/he will have to negotiate her/his expectations of what studying will be like, and work on her/his identities to gain a sense of belonging. On the other hand, s/he needs to be recognised as her/himself, and therefore s/he cannot construct new narratives without somehow being related to the person s/he perceives her/himself as being and how her/his surrounding social peers perceive her/him.” (Holmegaard, Madsen, et al., 2014)

Recognition by both oneself and meaningful others in the study context is important for students’ identity work, and whether or not they can identify and see themselves as, this case, a philosophy, film and media, or biotechnology student (Carlone & Johnson, 2007). The development of a student identity involves an interplay between the students’ performances and the specific norms and cultural expectations of the study culture. Students need to decode the norms of the particular study culture they enter, but they also influence and affect the culture with their way of practicing and negotiating their identity.

In addition to the above, and along the same lines, the thesis also builds on theories emphasising that disciplines and academic cultures have their own specific

norms and 'ways of thinking and practicing' (Becher & Trowler, 2001; McCune & Hounsell, 2005, p. 257). This means that a becoming a university student is also a process of decoding and learning the specific norms and practices of that specific disciplinary culture and that 'university student' entails different things and requires different types of practices and performances depending on the specific academic culture it takes place in.

Although drawing on an overall approach or way of viewing things, as just described, this thesis does not draw on any one specific, fixed and delimited theoretical framework, but rather on a combination of theoretical concepts. This means that, in the four papers, we also draw on additional concepts and theories when necessary. An example is when we investigate the development of study practices and draw on theories of feedback and motivation.

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I present the research design of the project. First, I give a brief overview of the project methodology. Second, I describe the main principles of the research design. Third, I describe the context of the study. Fourth, I offer some methodological reflections and considerations about the project, such as my position and roles in the research. Fifth, I elaborate on the range of different methods and data types and show how they contribute to answering the overall research question, and also make arguments and reflections concerning each part of the data production. Sixth, I address some of the ethical considerations involved in the research. Lastly, I describe the process of coding and analysing the data material.

OVERVIEW OF THE DATA PRODUCTION

Here I provide a brief overview of data production before elaborating further on the specific details of each method and how it contributed to the project. As the illustration below shows (*FIGURE 1*), the project draws on a range of different methods: group interviews, workshops, video diaries, participant observation and individual interviews. The main period of data production ran from August to April. In August, just before the semester started and the new students were enrolled in their programmes, I conducted three group interviews, one with each group of senior students on the three programmes who planned and organised the induction for the new first-year students. The week after the interviews the induction week started and I began my participant observation. When the semester started and the teaching began, I conducted participant observation of lectures, seminars etc. In the second week of the semester, I held a workshop in each programme, focusing on the students' expectations and first impressions. In these workshops, the students were also asked if they wanted to participate in the project by making video diaries. The first video diaries were recorded in October and the last in February. After the last video diary, those students who had contributed with video diaries were invited to an in-depth interview. In February, I did a "mapping" workshop with groups of students from each of the programmes.

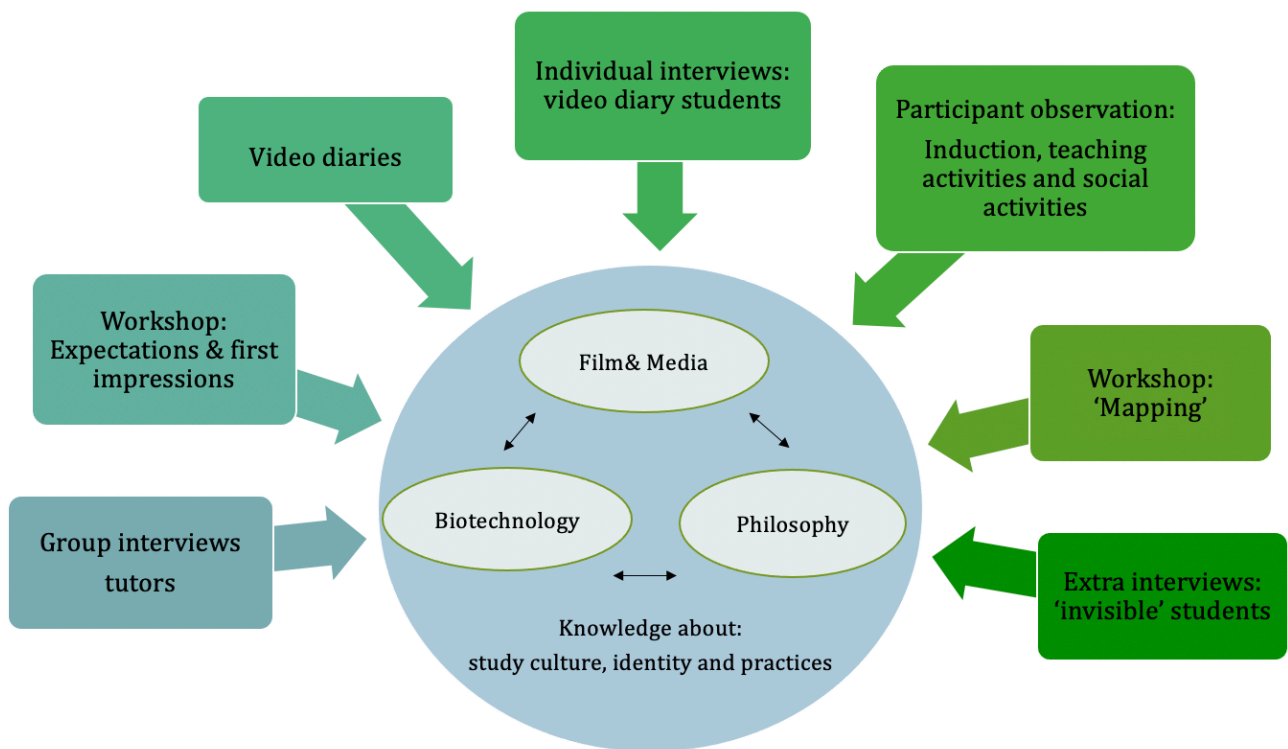


FIGURE 1

The project's research design has two overarching principles:

- 1) comparing and contrasting the three study programmes and cultures
- 2) combining a range of different qualitative methods

The research design therefore consists of a mixture of methods deployed at different times and in different programmes. This is evident from the overview of my data production in the figure below (*FIGURE 2*). In the following, I elaborate on these two overarching principles.

Month	Week	Philosophy		Film & media studies		Biotechnology		
AUG	32							
	33	Interview tutors		Interview tutors		Interview tutors		
	34							
	35	Induction week - Participant observation		Induction week - Participant observation		Induction week - Participant observation		
SEP	36	Participant observation		Participant observation		Participant observation		
	37	Participant observation	Workshop Ex-pectations	Participant observation	Workshop Expec-tations	Participant observation	Workshop Expec-tations	
	38			Participant observation				
	39					Participant observation		
OCT	40	Participant observation						
	41	Video diary		Participant observation	Video diary	Video diary		
	42							
	43							
NOV	44							
	45	Participant observation						
	46	Video diary	Extra interviews	Video diary	Extra interviews	Video diary	Participant observation	Extra in-terviews
	47			Participant observation				
	48							
DEC	49					Participant observation		
	50	Participant observation						
	51							
	52							
JAN	1	Video diary		Video diary		Video diary		
	2							
	3							
	4							
	5							
FEB	6	Video diary		Video diary		Video diary		
	7	Mapping workshop		Mapping Workshop				
	8					Mapping workshop		
	9							
MAR	10							
	11							
	12							
	13							
APR	14	Interviews video diary students		Interviews video diary students		Interviews video diary students		
	15	Interviews video diary students		Interviews video diary students		Interviews video diary students		

FIGURE 2

STUDYING CULTURES: COMPARING AND CONTRASTING

As elaborated in the chapter describing the theoretical approach, the project is interested in the specific contexts, disciplinary cultures and specific expectations the students encounter in their respective programmes. In order to gain access to these themes, the project was designed in a way, which enabled comparisons between the three different programmes. The idea underlying the comparative design is that, by comparing and contrasting the different cases, we gain a better understanding of the social phenomena being studied, so that the specific characteristics of one programme compared to the others can become a springboard for broader theorising (Bryman, 2012). The specifics of one context become clearer when they are compared with another context that appears different (Hastrup, 2004). Looking at different cultures or educational contexts and comparing them is a common methodological approach within the traditions of both anthropology and comparative education. The idea is to 'make the strange familiar and the familiar strange' (Osborn, Broadfoot, & McNess, 2003), meaning that by looking at a new and unfamiliar setting or context one learns about this context and simultaneously about one's own context, because the differences and similarities will provide a new set of glasses to look at the known. In this way, the comparative design provides a tool with which to challenge what has become taken for granted and left unquestioned. This is useful when the aim is to gain a better understanding of the norms at work and the specific practices that characterise a cultural context.

COMBINING DIFFERENT APPROACHES, GAINING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

The project draws on a range of different qualitative methods. As already noted, its aim is to gain insights into and create knowledge of first-year students' experiences, the processes and practices of becoming a student within the three disciplinary contexts, and the norms and expectations of these contexts. Therefore, I have used methods focusing on gaining access to the practices of and everyday life in the educational context (participant observation), on the experiences of different individual students (video diaries, interviews, open-ended survey questions) and methods that

enable access to the negotiations and norms as they happen (workshops with groups of students and participant observation). I elaborate further on the specific methods below. Different methods can provide access to different perspectives and kinds of knowledge. By combining them, I obtain different types of data that help me understand the different aspects of my overall research question, as well as making it possible for me to see “things” from different perspectives and therefore arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the complex processes of transition, that is, of becoming a student within specific cultural and educational contexts. The notion of ‘triangulation’ is often used to describe how a combination of different data sources can contribute to validating the findings and seeing the research object from different angles, for example, by combining qualitative and quantitative data (Bryman, 2012). However, I prefer the metaphor of a crystal, described by Seale (2002) as “refracting beams of light in many directions”, meaning that using different methods and data sources provides “multiple perspectives on a problem, with discrepancies between data sources being themselves ‘findings’” (Seale, 2002, p. 102). The metaphor of the crystal emphasises how different methods can shed light on different aspects of the complexity being examined, taking the position that, when there is inconsistency between different items of data, it can contribute positively rather than be a flaw. Hence, we can gain valuable insights by exploiting the ‘crystal’s’ potential to shed light on different aspects of what is being studied. Nevertheless, when combining different methods, it is important to be reflective and conscious about what kinds of knowledge the different methods give one access to (Kincheloe, 2011).

An example in my project of the benefit of using different methods and producing different types of data material concerns one of the students in the film and media programme. I noticed this student from the very beginning of my participant observation because he was active in class posing questions and contributing to the academic discussions. Furthermore, he appeared to be socially engaged with his peers in class and breaks and at social events. However, as he started making his video diaries and I watched them, a completely different impression started to appear. Regarding social life and his relations with his peers, he said in the first video diary: “I do not feel like I know my peers really, because when we meet, it is always

in situations that involve alcohol". He further explained that he felt that the impressions the other students have of him were "based on false ideas on who you are". He was also not completely satisfied with the academic aspects of the programme, already stating in the first video: "So, I'm gonna be hanging in for a bit more, until, until I find something better. At least, I'm not gonna drop out just to drop out". The second video diary ended with the concluding remark: "I'm still in doubt". The discrepancy between my impressions from doing participant observation and the student's reflections in his video diaries shows how combining different methods can produce different insights and perspectives. If the participant observation had stood alone, without the video diaries, I might not have realised that the student was experiencing the social and academic life of the programme as challenging, not satisfying, as I had initially presumed. Furthermore, this example underlines the point that student life is complex and that, even though someone acts as if they are in 'the right place' and seem to be well integrated into the programme and its culture both socially and academically, there might still be doubts and ambiguities at work that are just not visible for others than the student.

Another benefit of combining different methods is the potential in using one data source to inform and gain knowledge in preparing for another type of data production or method (Ritchie, 2003). One example in my project is how the initial open-ended questions in the workshop on the students' first impressions and expectations contributed with data in itself, as well as functioned as a way of inviting students to participate with video diaries and provided information that could ensure variation in selecting students to keep the video diaries. The videos provided insights and knowledge that then informed the more personal parts of the interview guides for the in-depth interviews later on (Danielsson & Berge, 2020).

THE CONTEXT OF STUDY

The university

The study was conducted at the University of Copenhagen, a research-intensive university which is both the oldest and largest in Denmark. The university employs about 5000 researchers and has around 37,400 students. It has six faculties: Science,

Humanities, Health and Medical Science, Law, Social Science and Theology. It has four campuses: North Campus, Frederiksberg Campus, South Campus and City Campus. Biotechnology is situated on the Frederiksberg Campus, philosophy and film and media studies both on South Campus (University of Copenhagen, 2019). The distance between the two campuses is 4.6 kilometres.

The programmes

When students apply to enter a Danish university, they can select up to eight study programmes, which they have to list in order of priority. A national coordination system checks to determine whether the student fulfils the basic requirements and to decide who can be admitted to which programme and university. As well as having a high-school certificate, there are some specific requirements, depending on the programme. For example, students applying for biotechnology have to have passed A-level mathematics as a condition of entry.

There are two ways of applying for admission. Ninety percent of students are admitted through “quota one”, for which the main criterion is the grade point average (GPA) the student has obtained from high school. Ten percent of students are admitted through “quota two”, where other types of criteria are taken into account. Each programme has a pre-set number of available spots. When students apply through quota one, the places are filled up with the students with the highest GPAs.³ This means that admission depends on how popular the programme is, as the entry requirement is dependent on the GPAs of the students applying in that year. For several years, the film and media programme has been among the University’s programmes with the highest GPAs, making it a difficult programme to get into. Biotechnology and philosophy are not as selective (see overview of student data in the table below, *FIGURE 3*)

The students apply to and are admitted to a specific programme with a package of courses. All three programmes last three years and consist of 180 ETCS points.

³ Recently, there was a new requirement of a minimum GPA of 6 for applying through quota one. This did not exist for the cohort in my project.

In the two humanities programmes the year is divided into two semesters, the first running from September to December, with exams in December or January. The second semester starts in February and ends in May, with exams in June. The biotechnology programme runs in shorter periods, having a structure of four blocks a year. The first block also begins in September, but since one block only runs for eight weeks, the first exam is already sat in November, and block two starts the following week. The biotechnology students have exams more often and have more different courses in one year than the two humanities programmes.

In the first semester all courses are mandatory. During the three years of the Bachelors' programme, there are few possibilities to choose selective courses. However, in the second semester in philosophy students can choose between two courses, a third being mandatory.

The students

All three Bachelor's programmes are offered in Danish, hence the student population is Danish. There were very few ethnic minority students, and they were all Danish. The majority of students are 20-21 years old, but the age span runs from 18 to 25 (few students are older). In philosophy the average is slightly older. In philosophy one third of students are female and two thirds male, but in biotechnology there is an almost equal gender balance, with only a few more female students, and in film and media two thirds of students are female and one third male (see *FIGURE 3*).

	Number of students admitted	Grade point average entrance coefficient	Male		Female	
			No.	%	No.	%
Biotechnology	66	7.9	29	44	37	56
Film and media	80	10.3	27	33.3	53	66.6
Philosophy	62	8.6	41	66.6	21	33.3

FIGURE 3

All figures in the table come from data from the Ministry of Higher Education and Science (Ministry of Higher Education and Science, 2020).⁴

MY POSITION AS A RESEARCHER

Social researchers are a part of the social world they study, and therefore they will inevitably affect the object of their study. Hence it is important to reflect on the researcher's position and roles in relation to the field of study and the people being studied (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2010; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Social research cannot be conducted independently of the researcher doing it and the biography and personal characteristics of the researcher inevitably affects the research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Therefore, in this section I elaborate and reflect on my own position and roles as a researcher in relation to my field of study. This is even more important when doing research within an educational setting, where the researcher is very familiar with the context, and it is important to be aware of 'fighting the familiarity' and reflecting on one's position (Thomsen, 2008). This is very relevant for the present study, since I too was both a Bachelors' and a Masters' student at the same university where I conducted my PhD research. Indeed, I was a student in the same department in which philosophy and film and media studies are located, and during my time as a student there, I was a member of the study board in the department. This meant that I had some prior knowledge of the department and its organisation, as well as about the specific programmes in film and media studies and philosophy. The meetings of the study board gave me knowledge about some of the discussions and issues the programmes struggled with and efforts to try and address them, for example, dropout, the reduction of elective courses because of cutbacks, discussions about the curriculum, and decisions regarding types of evaluation for specific courses. Furthermore, by sharing the same Friday bar and student café with these programmes, I also had some prior knowledge about some of the prejudices of the students in the department, such as jokes about film and media studies

⁴ The data from the Ministry of Higher Education and Science differ slightly from the university's own figures because of the different times at which they are taken.

being called “film and pizza”, insinuating that the students just watch movies and ate pizza all the time and did not do any serious work. To some extent this made me an insider to the two humanities programmes, and I had to be aware of this special position and how it might influence my study. In contrast, I knew very little about the biotechnology programme and science more broadly. This made for an uneven relationship. The issues of being an insider or outsider have been addressed in the literature on research methodology by and Hammersley and Atkinson, who argue that, when the researcher is investigating a familiar context, the researcher is

“required to treat this as ‘anthropologically strange’, in an effort to make explicit the presuppositions he or she takes for granted as a culture member. In this way, the culture can be turned into an object available for study.” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 9)

Along the same lines, O'Reilly argue that

“All ethnographers are to some extent outsiders and to some extent insiders: all must strive to make the strange familiar, and the familiar strange; must constantly question, immerse and distance, in the ongoing process of producing ethnographic insights.” (O'Reilly, 2012, p. 98)

My roles as both insider and outsider in relation to the programmes and these unequal starting points were something, I was very aware of from the outset. Before starting data production, I drew up a list of some of my prejudices and my prior knowledge of the two humanities programmes. This made me more aware of what I expected prior to data production and thus more aware of challenging it and not just finding or presuming what I thought I knew. Adriansen and Madsen argue that, in order to challenge one's position as an insider, the researcher must make sure to ask questions about what the interviewer knows or can be presumed to know. If too much is left unspoken or implied between the interviewer and the interviewee the material becomes less useful because the knowledge and assumptions are not made explicit during the interview (Adriansen & Madsen, 2009).

My outsider role in relation to science, however, is evident from my field notes from biotechnology. One example is a field note from a day at the end of September,

the whole of which I had spent making observations at biotechnology. The students were all doing group presentations, and we had moved from the usual lecture hall into another building on the campus where I had not been before. During the day I wrote this field note:

In the break I go down to the basement to find the restroom. It strikes me that it is a kind of special building. It gives me the impression that it is a place with laboratories and inquiry work. In the basement, there are white coats hanging on a rack. In general, it seems very sterile and without any unnecessary things. Floors of white tiles and white walls. I get the sense that I have really arrived at Science.

This field note shows my unfamiliarity with science and how exotic it was for me to be in this sterile and white environment with white coats. Although the activity I observed was very familiar to my own previous university experiences, in which group presentations were very common, the basement and the building, which also houses the campus's dissection hall, highlighted the fact that science was an unfamiliar area for me. In fact, it seemed so strange and exotic to me that I even took a photo of it (FIGURE 4).



FIGURE 4

One of the things I did to gain more knowledge about the biotechnology programme, the study culture and the context was to attend the Open House event for potential students in March, about six months prior to starting data production. In addition to gaining more knowledge about the programme (content, structure, narratives about the culture etc.), this event also served as an opportunity to begin forming relations with the teachers and senior students in the programme and to start working on my access to the field.

Another way in which I sought to ensure reflectivity on and distance from the two programmes in humanities and gain more knowledge about biotechnology and science more generally was my continuous discussions with my two supervisors. They had both conducted several research projects and other collaborations with science programmes and students. Hence, they could provide me with background knowledge and context, but also challenge me if my assumptions and prior knowledge of the two humanities programmes were reducing my analytical distance or making me reproduce what I thought I knew.

To sum up, being an insider can give one valuable contextual knowledge, but it can also have the disadvantage that you become too embedded in or familiar with the context and therefore cannot question it. On the other hand, if one is too much of an outsider, there might be important things one does not understand about the context, and one might not gain a deep enough understanding of the context's cultural norms and practices. However, the outsider benefits from having sufficient distance from the field to make it easier to maintain the perspective of a researcher looking at a research object (Adriansen & Madsen, 2009; O'Reilly, 2012).

THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE: DO I LOOK LIKE A STUDENT?

Another important point of consideration was my role and how my biography and personal characteristics affected how the people in the field viewed me and what consequences this had (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). As an ethnic Danish woman in my early thirties, I resembled some of the students I was studying. Although the average age of the students is early to mid-twenties, there were some older students in all three programmes, and I could therefore easily pass for being a student. This

happened to me several times, especially in the beginning, when the students were new to each other and did not necessarily remember that I had presented myself as a researcher. The advantage of this was that I did not draw too much attention to myself, thereby fitting more easily into the context.

While producing data, I reflected on the age aspect, how it influenced who approached me, and how easy it was to gain the trust of the students and enter into relations with them. I wrote the following note after a lecture in philosophy, when I then went to the cantina and met one of the philosophy students. He was much older than the average student. He sat down to have lunch with me, even though some of his peers were sitting at another table not far away.

I thought about John coming over to me. He could have sat down with the others from his class, or completely refrained from seeking me out. But it seems like he also wants to talk to me. I'm wondering if it's a bit like that with those who are a little older. That those who are a little older than the average student are more likely to talk to me? Maybe because I'm a little older, maybe because they are already a little different and have a different approach to social life. Or another sur plus. Or? Because they are not afraid to miss out on the social interactions with the others? Because they are less "scared" of me and the fact that I am following it all? I have at least recorded it with Jane from FM, who is older than the average as well.

Another of my reflections about my role and how the students perceived me concerned my feeling of being an intruder who, however, did not want to prevent the students from socialising with one another. This was especially because I knew how important the socialising process was from the outset. At the end of September, I wrote a note of reflection on this:

I hold back. I do not go along after the lecture. Example: yesterday, when I came a bit early for the seminar at FM. A group of students were standing outside. I recognised several of them. I considered going there, but was afraid that it would be awkward and they would feel like, "Now the observer is coming and has to hear what we are talking about, when we are just talking casually". I have the feeling of always seeing and listening to them, but I want them to have a free space, a study life without me running after them. I want them to be just

them and make their social relations without me. In the induction I tried to make sure to talk with different students, so I wouldn't just stick with the same ones and be preventing some of them from making relationships with their peers.

As these reflections show, I was very aware of the role I had and what it was doing to the students. They also show how I viewed the socialising process as important for the students, and that I did not want my research to hinder it. Thus, my role was often that of an observer than a participant.

Although I had presented myself to the teachers, they too sometimes mistook me for being a student. One example was when in induction week I was in the philosophy department and waiting outside a classroom in the hallway with some of the tutors before a teacher's presentation:

The teacher is approaching the classroom and passing by some of the students. Me and some of the tutors say hello when he passes and enters the room. He is preparing his stuff by the blackboard, and I approach him and introduce myself. He says that he thought I was a tutor or something like that. I explain my project and refer to the presentation I did about it to the departmental seminar, and hope that he remembers. He does remember.

This shows how I was sometimes mistaken for being a student and how I sometimes had to introduce myself again in order for the people in the field to understand my role. I tried to make sure to do this because it was important for me to emphasise my overt role as a participant observer. This also shows how I fitted into the field of study and did not stand out as odd in this context. This was also beneficial because I then became a legitimate participant, and it showed that they had accepted my presence. On another occasion I introduced myself to a teacher I had previously emailed, but not yet met face to face. When I explained who I was, he responded: *"Oh, that is you. Please tell me if you have something regarding the teaching, like inputs."* In this situation I was positioned as an educational expert able to give him feedback on his teaching. This might be related to the fact that, when I introduced myself, I mentioned that I was doing a PhD in the Department of Science Education, which some of the teachers knew as a place with expertise in didactics. In situations like these, I tried to

emphasise that my role there was to do research, not consultancy, and that the aim of my observations was to get a sense of what the programme was about and experience it from the students' perspectives. Therefore, I avoided commenting on others' teaching or going into those kinds of discussions in any way.

I was also presented as a researcher by some of the teachers. This is recorded in this field note describing a teacher in the biotechnology programme introducing me to the students: *"This is Andrea, she is doing a PhD project about biotech... and about identity development. You are her objects. She will do a workshop with you."*

Although the teacher was right about the students being my objects of study, I did not like the way he emphasised it in introducing me. I felt it might sound too scary to the students and that they would feel they were being over-observed and objectified. When I got the opportunity, I sought to tone down the idea of me as an observer and thus make it seem less 'dangerous', using phrases like "I am just here to see what the programme is like, how it works and what you experience".

Summing up, I was positioned and perceived differently in different situations. Sometimes the researcher chooses her role herself, and sometimes she is given a role by the field (O'Reilly, 2012). I sometimes tried to negotiate my role strategically, for example, by asking more naïve questions (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002) and making the students elaborate on something I might already have some knowledge of, but wanted them to elaborate on. I also sometimes used my previous role as a humanities student and my ignorance of science to make biotechnology students explain things to me.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL ACCESS: CONTINUOUS NEGOTIATIONS

Although by the beginning of the project I had gained formal access from departmental management to carry it out with them, I had to continually negotiate informal access through several steps, since formal access to the field does not necessarily mean you have access "to the people" as well (Bryman, 2012, p. 439). Gaining access is an ongoing activity, and access to institutional contexts or organisations can be difficult because people might "have suspicions about you" and they might suspect that the researcher has been sent by the management to "check up on them" (Bryman,

2012, p. 439). Even though I had gained formal access to the three study programmes, I had to be aware of the importance of negotiating access to the people within the field. One of my initial concerns was that the teachers might hesitate to give me access to observations in their classes and that they might have a sense of being kept under surveillance because my initial approval had been given by the management. Fortunately, my concerns quickly proved to be unfounded. The teachers in all three programmes showed an interest in the project, and several of them told me that they found it relevant and that they could see the point of acquiring more knowledge about how students experienced the programmes in order to improve them, bring down drop-out rates, etc.

In all three programmes, students begin with an induction period, typically lasting two weeks. The induction period is planned and carried out by tutors, who are senior students studying at the Bachelor's or Master's level. Although teachers, heads of studies and administrative staff also participate in the induction programme – for example, by providing introductory presentations – the tutors are key individuals in the new students' initial encounters with the programmes. Hence, I perceived the tutors as another crucial point of access for my project, as, if I succeeded in getting interviews with them, they could function as gatekeepers (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). I would then have easier access to the first-year students, as well as acquire informal approval to do observations during the induction weeks.

One of the things I learned in my interviews with the tutors was that they had secrets and surprises that it was important not to reveal to the first-year students, for example, that some senior students went “undercover” and acted as first-year students. This also applied to the rituals in the induction (see Paper 1), which it was also important not to reveal to the students. Because the tutors included these secrets in telling me about their preparations, I had to promise not to reveal them and thus spoil what they had prepared for the new students. Although the tutors told me about their plans for the induction and described some of the elements in the programme, there were still a lot of details I did not know. This meant that I had to decode the situations as they were happening and decide what my role should be depending on the type of activity. Explaining my project to the tutors and gaining their trust meant that they

could help me obtain access and insight. An example of this occurred when one of the tutors during induction week noticed my confusion about whether or not I should participate in the next event on the programme and said to me, “Andrea, come along here”.

DETAILS OF THE SPECIFIC PROJECT METHODS AND TYPES OF DATA

Group interviews with tutors

As the first step in data production, I conducted group interviews with the three groups of tutors, the senior students responsible for induction week and for introducing the new first-year students to the programme and its culture. The interviews served several purposes. First, the tutors and induction week are the first encounters the new students have with their programmes and are where they are presented with both the academic content, the programme structure and the social environment. Therefore, the induction set the scene for the students’ first encounter and their first impressions. The tutors acted as key persons in this very first encounter because they had both planned and executed the induction. They were representatives of the programme and provided an impression of the student population. Hence, interviewing the tutors would provide insights into the way new students are welcomed and reflections on this. Furthermore, the interviews could provide information on how the tutors themselves had experienced the first year and the programme. Their narratives about the programme could also provide me with an impression of the culture and its norms, what they either had chosen to continue or discontinue passing on to the new students, and whether there were any specific traditions or elements of the induction they wanted to highlight.

All three interviews gave clues about the rituals that are at the centre of the first article. Because the tutors mentioned these events as special traditions, I decided to make sure I attended them and made observations of the induction.

Moreover, the interviews would help create access to the first-year students and give me informal permission to do participant observation in the induction activities. The interviews were an opportunity to get to know more about the organisation

of induction week and practical issues. They also helped me make choices related to what it was important to observe and how to structure a week of observations, as well as the challenge of being in three places at once. The interview guide was divided into three main themes: 1) the tutors' own experiences of their first years and their encounter with the programme; 2) the programme, the culture and the norms of being a good student; and 3) induction and reflections on it, including how they viewed their role as tutors. In order to obtain both the tutors' individual reflections and experiences, and their discussions and negotiations together, they were asked twice during the interview to write some keywords individually and then share them and discuss them with the others:

- 1) three keywords about how you experienced the first year
- 2) three keywords characterising the programme
- 3) three key words about the planning of the induction

The interviews all had a duration of around two hours and were recorded and afterward transcribed. The interviews all ended with an agreement on the practical arrangements of my participation in the induction, and I asked the tutors what they would suggest as highlights that I should not miss. I also asked them if I could have a few minutes at the beginning to present myself and my project to the students, so they were aware of my presence and my project. The tutors also agreed to send me their plans for the week so I could see the preliminary programming.

Participant observation

The participant observation (Spradley, 1980) was conducted to gain insights into the practices and culture of the programmes and into what confronted the students when they entered them. The overarching aim was to gain insights into the broad range of different activities students engaged in during induction, namely teaching, including different types of teaching environment (lectures, seminars, lab work, study groups), and social and extracurricular events. The main focus and most of the hours went on the teaching. The challenge for me was the impossibility of being in three

programmes at one and the same time. Hence, I drew up a detailed plan of how to split my time approximately equally between the programmes (see plans below). The first weeks were especially important for two reasons. First, as they were the prelude, I had assumed that the students would be given some introductory narratives about the programme and the culture, and that some things might be more explicitly communicated. The induction was the first meeting with the senior students and the culture of the programme. The first weeks of teaching featured the students' introduction to the academic aspects of the programme, including the teachers, the content, the different types of teaching and learning formats, etc. Hence, the first weeks provided important insights into both the social and academic aspects of the programmes and their organisation, norms and cultures. Secondly, the first weeks were important in order to establish relations with the students and make them aware of my project from the very beginning in order to get them to participate in further data- production such as the video diaries. Therefore, I planned the first weeks as a 'patchwork', making sure to attend different types of activity in all three programmes. Both in the induction and when the formal semester started, I made sure to divide my time into three to acquire insights into the first weeks of all three programmes. This meant attending all the different courses and types of teaching. The subsequent weeks were planned with an entire week in each programme so as to gain more in-depth insights into what a week is like in each programme. After the first intense period of observations, the remaining observations were more occasional. These observations were nonetheless added if there were any specific events that seemed of importance to the students and if there was a new course or other changes I needed to experience. The observations counted a total of 125 hours.

Friday		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	08.00					
	08.30					
	09.00					
	09.30		Philo	FM		
	10.00					
	10.30	Philo				

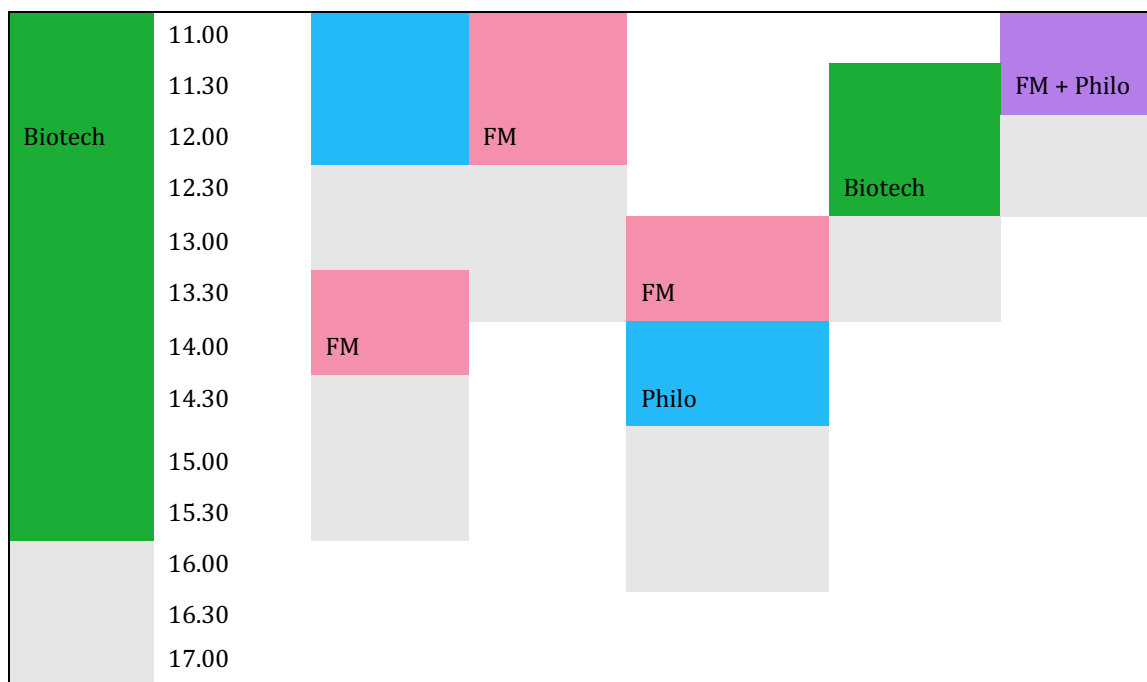


FIGURE 5: Plan for observations in the induction. The purple field refers to a departmental event for both FM and philosophy students.

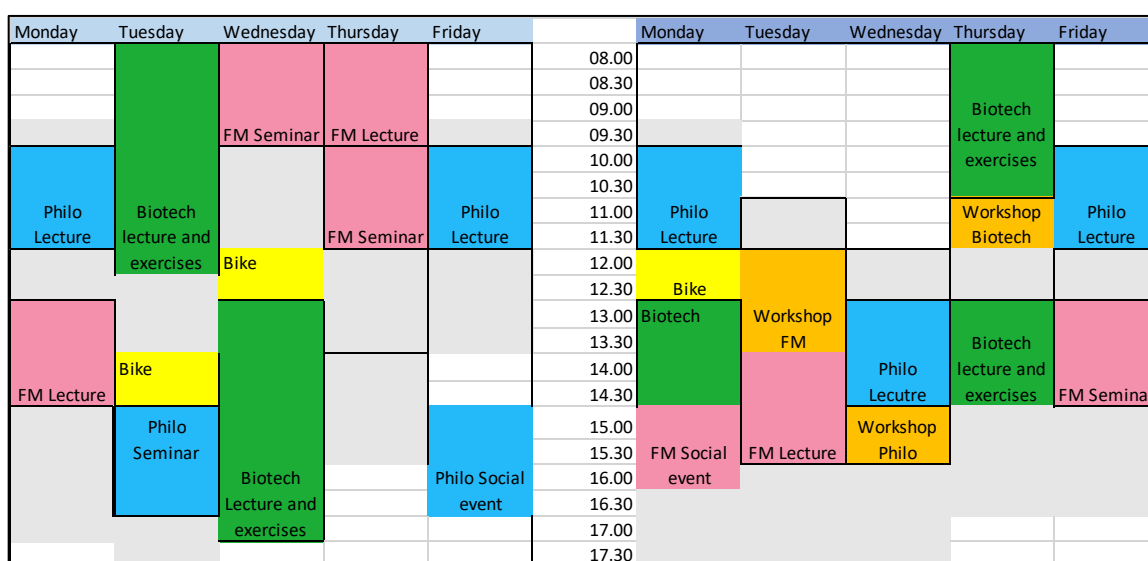


FIGURE 6: Two first weeks of teaching.

Also, worth noting is the allocated “cycling time”. Since the biotechnology programme was located at Frederiksberg Campus, about five kilometres from the South Campus, where the two humanities programmes were located, I sometimes had to move between the two campuses in a single day and therefore had to make sure to leave

enough time to move from one place to another. The grey areas in the plans were there to prompt me to allocate some time to writing up field notes. The first few weeks were very intense, and I had to pay attention to my plan in order to be in the right room or on the right campus at the right time.

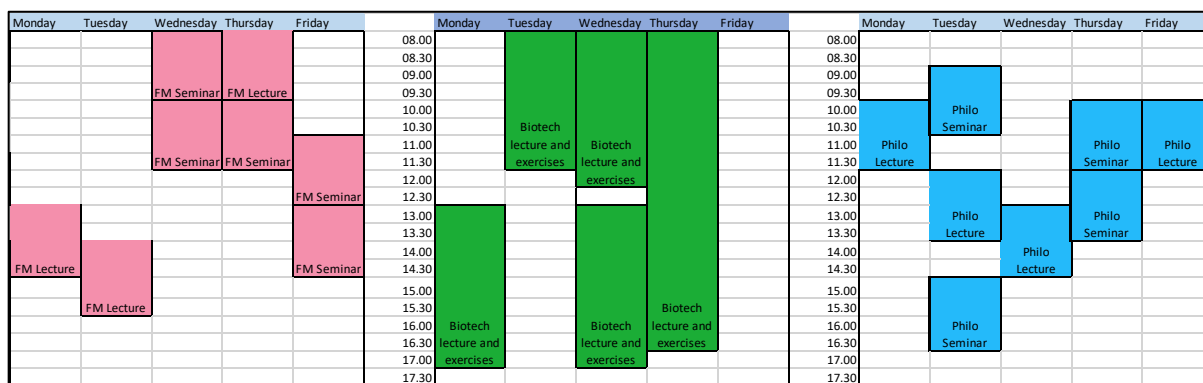


FIGURE 7: The following three weeks of one week with each programme.

In addition to what is shown in the plan, I also sometimes arrived early or stayed after the teaching. In breaks and before and after the teaching, I had informal conversations with the students in which I asked questions about their own experiences and elicited more practical information. One example was my conversation during breaks in a lecture with one of the biotechnology students about the way she had read the book. She showed me her book and explained to me what she highlighted and what she jumped over. For example, she often skipped the historical part saying who had won which Nobel Prize and so on, the figures and diagrams being what she would normally study more closely (see *FIGURE 8*).

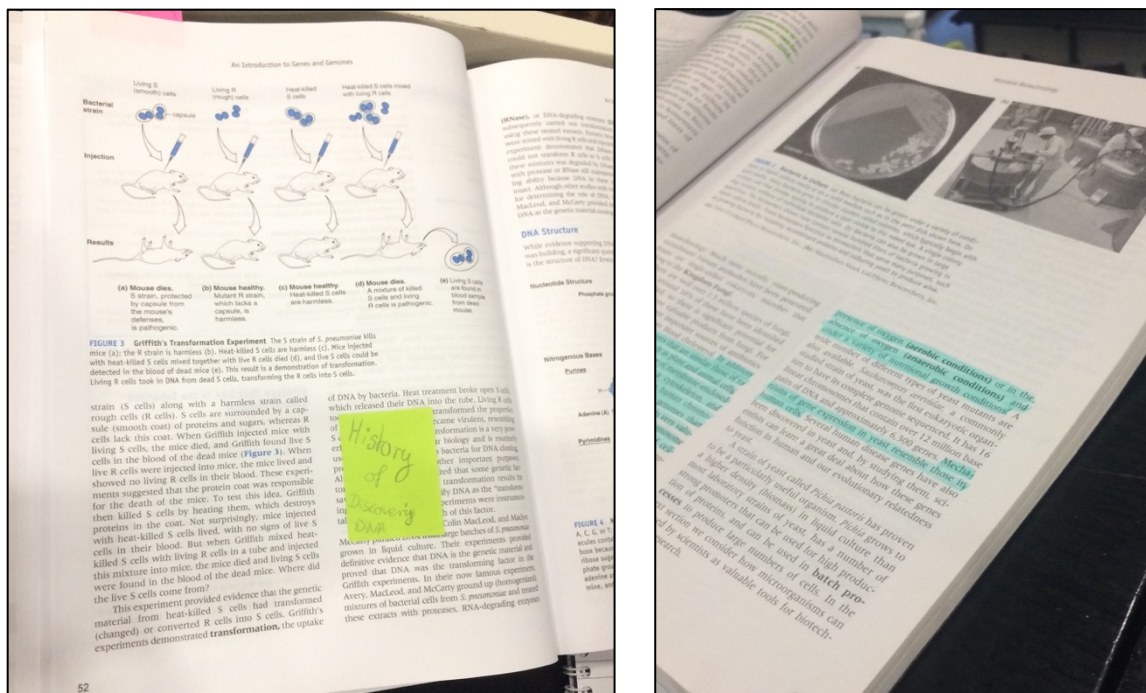


FIGURE 8

Informal, social and extracurricular activities

The formal teaching and learning activities took up most of the time for observation, but I also participated in social and extracurricular events in relation to the programmes. These more informal, social and extracurricular activities gave access to a different perspective on the students' lives and experiences, including a sense of the culture and the social life associated with each programme. One example from film and media studies was the HUGO Awards show, a yearly event organised by the first-year students. For the students this was an important event, and many of them spent a lot of time preparing for it. The event was well organised, mirroring professional events, with a red carpet, a sponsor's wall to be photographed in front of, a bar, sponsored snacks and a huge show with the first-year students as hosts and celebrities, and former students presenting the awards to the winners.



FIGURE 9

At biotechnology I participated in a 'film night' where the film *Jurassic world* was shown. I wrote this down in my field notes:

At first, I could not see how or if the movie was related to biotech. But it turned out that the dinosaurs in Jurassic world are gene-modified. One of the students

briefly explained to me what had happened prior to this film and mentioned GMO. I said “ooh”, because I realised the link to biotechnology.

While the link between the HUGO awards and the film and media programme was evident to me, it was harder for me to make a similar connection at biotechnology. This became a recurrent theme, as there appeared to be a difference between the way the content entered into the students' studies and the culture of the three programmes. Whereas the content of the film and media studies programme expressed itself very visibly in the form of the creative- and production-related activities the students took part in, the biotechnology content appeared less visible. This was one of the consequences of the structure of study in the programme, with many 'tool-box' courses in the beginning and the postponement of the more biotechnology specific courses. This is further elaborated in the analysis in, for example, Paper one. This highlights the benefits of comparing the programmes, as the differences and similarities between them provide a basis for valuable reflections and analysis.

In the philosophy programme, one of the extracurricular events I participated in was the 'Filosofisk studenter kollokvium', which was usually just abbreviated to FSK when the students talked about it. FSK was a student-organised event at which students presented a philosophical topic followed by an academic discussion among the students attending. These events were mentioned and discussed by the students in the mapping workshop, described below. These discussions are a part of the analysis in the paper on 'the ideal philosophy student'.



FIGURE 10

Although the FSK was very focused on the academic content of philosophy, it was always held on a Friday and was an informal event where it was normal to have a beer or two. After the FSK, event the organisers encouraged the students to continue the discussions in the departmental student Friday bar.

These observations provided a context for understanding student life in the programmes, as well as it provided more context to the topics the students addressed in workshops, video diaries, interviews etc. The combination of methods and data types therefore contributed to gaining an understanding of the study cultures and practices from different perspectives.

Field notes

I wrote field notes during activities wherever this was possible. In lectures, seminars and exercise classes the students would normally write notes on laptops or on paper, and the activity would mainly consist of sitting still and listening. Hence, in these situations it would not be odd or disturbing for me to write notes too. In other situations, especially in induction or during social and extracurricular events, the activities involved would be more dynamic and physically active in character, sometimes making it difficult or inappropriate for me to take notes. This could be during name games, at the Friday bar or on campus tours. Therefore, I would instead make 'mental notes' that I would write up afterwards (O'Reilly, 2008). The degree of my participation ranged from partial to minimal, depending on the situation and activity (Bryman, 2012).

Workshop on expectations and first impressions

In the second week of the semester, I conducted a workshop with the aim of generating knowledge about the students' expectations and first impressions of the programme and of being a student there. The workshop consisted of two parts, one individual, the other a group part. In the individual part students were asked to respond to seven questions in a digital survey. The survey initially asked them for their consent and provided them with a short text explaining the aim of the project and the workshop, how their responses would be used (and anonymised) and explaining that

they could choose whether to participate or not. They either accepted and continued to the questions or declined and did not participate in this part of the project. Before the actual questions, the students were also given the choice of saying yes or no to whether they were interested in being contacted concerning their potential participation with video diaries. At the beginning of the workshop, this was also explained to them orally.

The questions were all open-ended and were as follows:

- 1) Describe what made you choose [the study programme]
- 2) Is there anything in particular you imagine to be interesting? Fun?
- 3) Is there anything in particular you are looking forward to?
- 4) Is there anything in particular you imagine will become challenging?
- 5) Is there at this point anything that have surprised you in meeting the study programme? Something that is different from what you expected?
- 6) Describe yourself as you expect to be as a student (this could, e.g., be what would be important for you, what you would prioritise etc.)
- 7) Do you, at present, have any ideas concerning what you would like to do in the future (either vague ideas or more specific ones)?

If the students did not want to answer one of the questions, they could just skip it and move on to the next.

After the individual part, they were divided into groups and provided with a sheet of paper with a task on each side, as follows:

- a) Which words would you use to describe high school? Which words would you use to describe university?
- b) Write some keywords that describe life as a university student as you expected it to be in [programme name]

The workshop was organised with the help of a teacher in each programme. The teachers helped book a room and a timeslot. In practice this meant that the three

workshops were placed slightly differently with regard to when the students had their teaching, which affected the number of participants. The intention was that the whole cohort of first-year students would participate, but in both film and media and philosophy this was not the case. In biotechnology the workshop was scheduled in the middle of a whole day of teaching, which meant that all the students were present in the room already and that the workshop was just another item on the programme for that day. In philosophy the workshop was scheduled after a two-hour lecture and was placed in another room and building. This meant that the students had to make a more active decision whether or not to spend time on the workshop and move to the other room. In film and media, the workshop was scheduled an hour before the teaching began and, as in philosophy, also in another room. This meant that the student had to choose to come early and find the room and the workshop by themselves. Consequently, there were fewer participants at the workshop in philosophy and film and media than in biotechnology.

Video diaries

A number of students were selected from those who had responded positively to being contacted regarding the video diaries and contacted again, based on the principle of maximum variation sampling (Bryman, 2012). This meant that I tried to ensure diversity in the group of students based on the answers in the survey (their motivation for choosing the programme, expectations etc.) and in both gender and age. Because there were so few to select from among the philosophy students, all the students who had said yes were invited to do video diaries. Another principle in the selection process was that I wanted to have enough students engaged in the first video diary so that I could “afford” to lose some students during the process. I had concerns about how many would stick it out throughout the whole period because it was a demanding task and I feared that they would have enough to do with just being students or that some students might choose to leave the programme and therefore the video project too.

In order to make it feasible and realistic for the students to carry out, they were asked to use their own devices (laptops or phones) to record the videos. They

would have a device already and know how it worked. They were told to upload the videos to the university's Learning Management platform. This was chosen because it made the data management more secure and because it was a platform the students used already, hence they were familiar with its functionalities.

	No. 1 (Oct)	No. 2 (Nov)	No. 3 (Dec/Jan)	No. 4 (Feb)
Film & media	9	7	4	3
Philosophy	5	6	4	3
Biotechnology	6	4	3	4
Total	20	17	11	10

FIGURE 11: Overview of video diaries.

The purpose of the video diaries was to gain insights into the students' experiences in the programme and their reflections about them (Noer, 2014). Because the video diaries were structured as short recordings over several months, they also allowed insights into the students' processes and development over time (Green, Cashmore, Scott, & Narayanan, 2009). The video diaries also functioned as a practical solution to the challenge of following the students over time and having to be in several places at once. Because the students produced the videos themselves and uploaded them on to the university's Learning Management platform, it was less time-consuming for me as the researcher, thus making room for other methods and for following more people at the same time across programmes. One possible disadvantage of the method was the work and time I had to spend in reminding the students to upload and sending emails to check and prompt them to do so. After the first video, I made sure I responded to every student individually in order to make them aware that I had

received them and appreciated their contribution, as well as encouraging them to keep doing the videos.

The students were provided with initial instructions and, for every video, a set of focal points and questions for reflection (see appendix 1 for the specific instructions). Furthermore, the instructions emphasised that the purpose of the videos was to gain insights into their experiences and thoughts: the videos were not supposed to be glamorous ‘YouTube versions’ of their lives but provide honest insights into their difficulties too. The students were indeed honest about both the challenges and joys of student life. One student shared a story of previous experiences of bullying, another student talked about how stressed out she was, several mentioned winter depressions, and one student continued through all four videos to express doubts about the programme and saying that he might choose to drop out.

In order to align expectations and invite the students to share their experiences, I made videos for them prior to their video recordings. My videos included instructions for making their videos and thanked them for their participation (they also had the written versions). The videos were meant to “give them some of me”, and thereby invite them to give a personal account while at the same time showing what I expected from them. My videos were recorded either at my work base in the department or in my home. In my first video I showed myself sitting in a cosy corner at home with a cup of coffee (see photo), making sure it was not “too perfect” and rehearsed. In this way I tried to show them what type of videos I expected of them.



FIGURE 12

The instructions were semi-structured, with open-ended questions and focal points that served to direct the videos (Danielsson & Berge, 2020). The questions and focal points guided the students and ensured that they would touch upon some of the same aspects and that the material would be useful for the purposes of the study. Furthermore, they were meant as a tool to guide the students in such a way that they would not be left with a task that was too open-ended and potentially too difficult. Still, the rather open formulation and the framing left some flexibility for the students to talk about what they found pressing and relevant to their study lives and situations at that specific moment (Danielsson & Berge, 2020).

The students could access their videos again, and several of them mentioned that they had replayed their own videos and commented on the development and changes since the last video. One example of this was a student who had experienced a change regarding his participation in the programme's social life:

"I have just watched my previous video and thought that I wanted to talk from the outset of what has happened since last time – which is also an item on the agenda, or whatever you call it. Well, I talked much – or much – well I talked about how it was a bit challenging to be social in the programme. That it is easier to just go home. [...] In general, it has become much better. [...] It is more social now, and it has become more relaxed in a way. So. That is actually really nice."

This excerpt also shows how the students sometimes meta-communicated about answering the questions or focal points. Some of the meta-comments from the students also reflected the fact that the students were trying to satisfy the researcher, hoping that what they were doing was useful, as these comments show:

"I hope it is okay that it is going to be a quick one, but I have classes soon, so I hope it is okay. Good luck with the whole assignment, Andrea."

"I hope this video is useful for you."

"We will see how it goes, but I hope you get something out of all these videos you collect and that it can provide some feedback for how it is to be a philosophy student. Thanks for this time, and bye bye".

Although the videos were initiated to generate data for the researcher and the project, it was evident that the students also got something from them:

"Okay. Now, we're rolling. Hey Andrea. Eh. Yes. Well. Thanks for letting me join your project, or whatever it is called. Well, cool. I have a bit of time now to record."

And another:

"Okay. I have to check if this works. Yes. I wanna start by saying thank you for letting me be a part of this. And I hope it will be helpful with these diaries. And well, it has made some keywords. Keywords for the video. So, I can sort out and navigate my thoughts, Because after all there are so many, because there is so much ... like, it takes up some space to begin a programme, especially when it is so exciting and fits so well with your previous interests."

This excerpt shows how the videos also served as a tool for some of the students to get hold of all the impressions and new things they had to navigate in the process of becoming a student. In this way, it became visible that, by inviting the students to engage in the project – for example, by producing the video diaries – I was also affecting them by creating a space for reflections. This is an example of how the researcher can never be just 'a fly on the wall' and that doing social and educational research inevitably means that you affect the context you are studying and the data you produce (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

One of the benefits of the video-diary format as a method is the visual aspect that adds an extra layer of information to the spoken narratives. Most videos were recorded in the students' homes and showed evidence of their different life situations. Even though the students did not necessarily comment on it, the backgrounds behind them told stories too (Danielsson & Berge, 2020). Some of the students had just moved into a shared flat, some lived in their parents' homes, and one student who was much older than the average had photos of his children on the wall behind him. The living situation and the fact that the researcher was invited into their homes also made some of the students add comments like: "Yes, hey, we're rolling. I'm sorry for the awkward angle. I have moved in our teaching free-week, and, yeah, I do not have

that much furniture anymore.” In this way, the videos added another perspective and more insights into the students’ lives and showed how for some students the transition into being a student also meant a new living situation. Hence, the videos provided more nuances in understanding the possible complexities of the student transition.

The visual aspects provided information about the students’ living situations as well as the video format produced a vivid kind of data, where the students could gesticulate and thereby emphasise some of their points and experiences. This would not have been possible if I had chosen to make them write their reflections and experiences down instead.

Although the video-diary format provides this extra visual component, I decided from the beginning to not use the images from the videos in my communications unless it was possible to make anonymised versions, so that the students would not be identifiable. This was to guarantee the students anonymity, as I had promised them. Hence, I have only used the data from the video diaries as quotes from the transcribed audio track.

In-depth interviews with ‘video-diary students’

The video diaries were followed up with in-depth interviews allowing for deeper understanding, more elaborated accounts and more follow-up questions. As Danielsson and Berge (2020) point out, video diaries function as data in their own right, but they can also inform further interviews. Hence, the interview guides were semi-structured and consisted of some common themes for all students, as well as some more individualised questions based on what the students had mentioned in the videos, or questions leading them to touch upon some of the things they had not brought up in the videos.

All the students who had participated with videos were invited for interviews after the last video, and twelve students were interviewed for about one hour. All interviews started with an invitation to look back on the period from the induction until the time of the interview. Interviewees were asked to draw a curve of how happy they had been being in the programme. As they drew these and explained them, some of them wrote specific accounts in order to capture their experiences. One student

explained that she had experienced the academic and social aspects very differently and that she needed separate curves (*FIGURE 13*). Another student pointed out that specific courses had had an influence on how happy they had been (*FIGURE 14*).

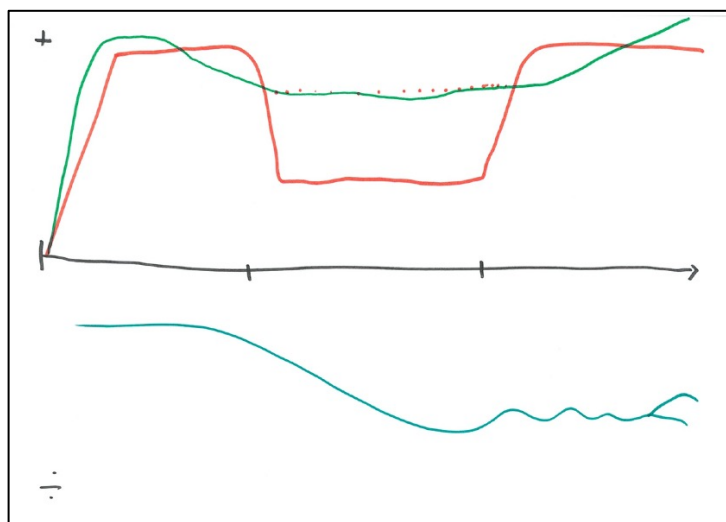


FIGURE 13

Green curve: social life

Red curve: academic aspect (dropped because of a specific course)

Blue curve: the stress level made it drop to negative

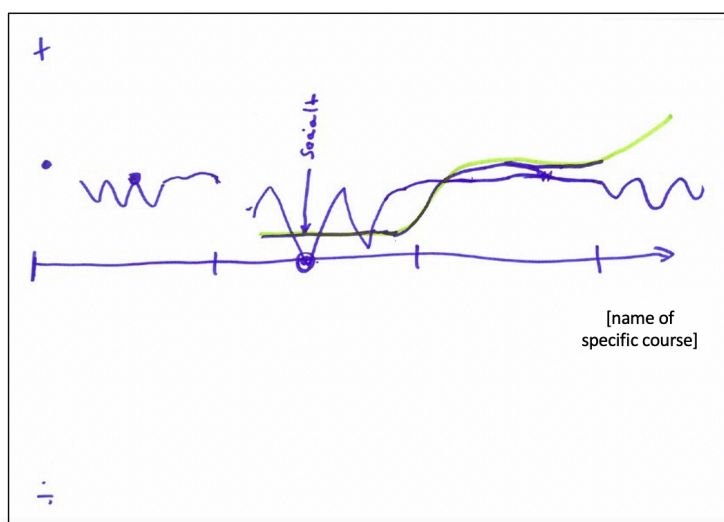


FIGURE 14

The interviews became more of a conversation than I had initially planned, in the sense that I as the interviewer sometimes commented and added reflections. The video diaries had provided insights into the students' lives, and they had already given me so much. Hence, in several interviews I felt that I could not continue to maintain a more traditional interviewer role, just asking questions and being an active listener. The videos themselves had been a one-way form of communication in which the students had shared their feelings and experiences without much response. Hence it felt wrong not to 'give something back'. It was not a conscious decision, but something that happened in most interviews, as it felt right at the time. These interviews thus also became a form of reciprocity in which I could provide the students who had participated with a space for reflection.

Mapping workshop

In order to obtain data on the students' perspectives on and experiences of the norms and culture of their programme, I developed a 'mapping workshop'. The aim was to get groups of students to discuss and generate knowledge about the culture and norms of being a student in their programmes. The mapping workshop was inspired by a colleague, Katrine Lindvig, who had come up with the idea while teaching Bachelors' students in Education. In her case the students had read sociological and anthropological texts with theories about norms, culture, and 'the outsider' (Becker, 1966; Hasse, 2008; Ulriksen, 2009). The exercise was meant to be a way in which the students could apply the concepts and discuss the implied structures and norms within the university context of their own programmes. I found the mapping exercise very inspiring, and the theories the students had read for the teaching were some of the same I had been inspired by, making the idea fit very well with my own research. I discussed my ideas of doing a mapping workshop with Katrine, she gave me inputs from her experiences, and I developed the idea further to fit my own research aim.

Since talking about norms and 'invisible' and tacit knowledge can be difficult, the mapping exercise, combined with questions and prompts, was developed to help the process of elucidation. The workshop draws on the same methodological approaches that can be found in arts-based or visual methods and focus-group

interviews. The latter is useful for capturing tacit knowledge, because the participants are forced to express themselves more explicitly (Halkier, 2016). The discussions and negotiations between the students display and mirror some of the social dynamics that are at work within the culture (Halkier, 2016). The norms that direct our behaviour in everyday practices are often taken for granted and rarely articulated: focus groups as a research method can function as an occasion where we can access and illuminate the underlying norms (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, Stewart, & Robson, 2000).

In the workshop, the students were given the task of ‘mapping’ their university. This meant that they had to discuss norms and practices and illustrate them by drawing and writing a map. The initial idea of making the students draw a map was to draw attention to *situated* practices, make them reflect on the context they had become a part of, and make them discuss what they do where and the limits to what it was accepted to do in certain spaces. When students enter a new cultural context, they will have to navigate the social and cultural landscape. In doing so, the senses are fundamental to the process of understanding and interpretation. Researchers within the field of visual and arts-based methods argue that these complex experiences and interplays are difficult to access and capture with words and numbers only. Text-based approaches are limited, and they argue that the more creative methods can open up other ways of expression and help access taken-for-granted and embodied experiences (Bagnoli, 2009; Prosser & Loxley, 2008). Hence, the idea behind letting the students create something visual and more tactile together was to bring out discussions that would capture some of these experiences and show how they were related to the spaces and places of the university. The students were given an opportunity to share experiences, and the similarities and differences were brought into the discussion.

The groups were provided with a flip chart, colour pens and post-it notes. It was clear to the students from the beginning that their discussions would be recorded and that they would be anonymised.



FIGURE 15

The initial instructions were that they should create a map of the university and that it was up to them what they wanted to include – only their own campus, or others as well. They should imagine themselves making a map that would make the norms explicit, so that a person who is not good at decoding social norms would get help and not fail if she or he had to be a student in their programmes. They were encouraged to think about questions like:

- What to do where? What should one *not* do? (is there, for example, something that would be inappropriate, wrong or awkward to do in one place, but not in another?)
- Where do you go? Where don't you go?
- What places are important to you?
- Where do you feel like you belong, and where don't you?

It was emphasised to students that they did not have to agree with everything, and that they could try to include it on the map if they had different experiences. However,

it was also emphasised that they should not write their names on the map for ethical reasons.

During the time when the students were working on the maps and sharing and discussing their experiences, I added some questions and prompts to stimulate and direct the discussions (see appendix 2 for details of the questions). I tried to balance my own interventions so that they would not be disrupted in good discussions, and not all the questions and prompts I prepared were actually used. One of the prompts that generated much discussion was a quote I had borrowed from a project conducted by my supervisor Henriette Holmegaard (Holmegaard, 2012), which I read aloud to the groups. One student talked about the students in her programme as follows:

“You have to drink lots of coffee. You have to have a scarf that you can wrap around your neck many times, one should always wear a scarf, it’s very important. And then you have to have that one famous hair bun there, there are a lot of people who have that. And then the backpack is also a really good idea, to have a backpack, and then of course you have to bike around, and then you have to talk in a low voice and be very kind.”

After reading out the quote, I told the groups that they could discuss what a student in their programme should look or act like and see if they wanted to include these aspects in their maps. The prompts generated discussions of what you should look like and what characterised the students in the programme. For example, both groups of film and media students emphasised, independently of each other, that “we wear what we want to” and that the dress code is “you do you”. One of the philosophy students divided her fellows into two types: those who wore woollen sweaters and turtlenecks, and those who wore shirts. Another added that it is more mixed, and they came to the conclusion that you should be well-groomed but appear less vain.

The maps had different contents, and the students drew, wrote and used the post-it notes. The students in one of the philosophy groups also made a list of “do’s and don’t’s” for philosophy students. The green sentences indicated what the philosophy student should do, the red sentences laid down what they should make sure *not* to do:

- Knowing memes and internet culture
- Have a “twist”, an odd way of expression
- Do not cite “pop-philosophy”: Brinkmann, Albæk⁵
- Have an interest in the right topics: logic, phenomenology, Husserl
- Have an opinion on everything
- Be critical of the programme!
- Have a style, but not too posh or make too much of an effort
- Know a lot of literature outside the curriculum, it is like you have to read so much else
- It is OK to have any opinion and take any standpoint
- Generally, an open environment, all the losers tolerate each other

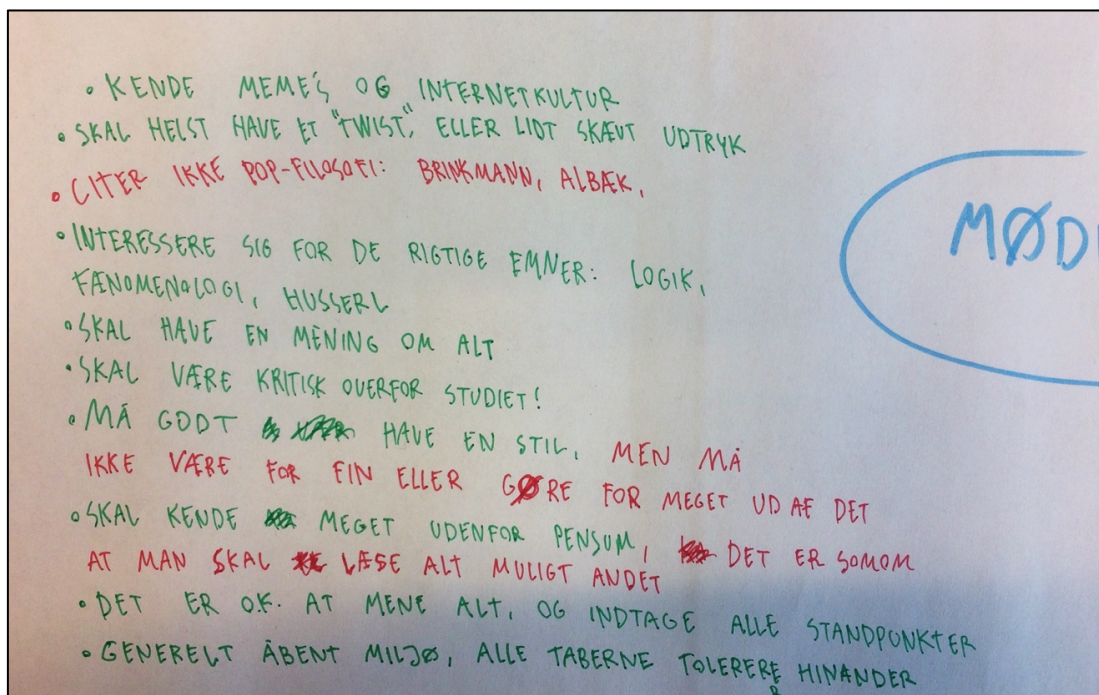


FIGURE 16

⁵ Svend Brinkman has a background in psychology, Morten Albæk has a background in philosophy and history. They are both academics who have published books directed at the layman and communicate with broad public audiences.



FIGURE 18

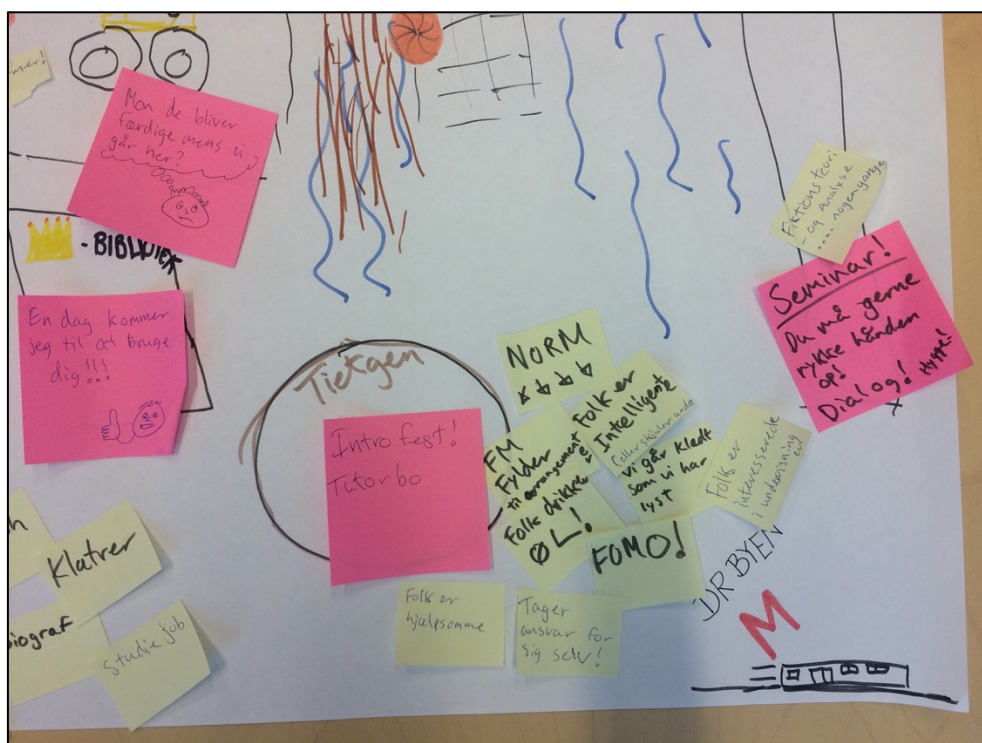


FIGURE 19

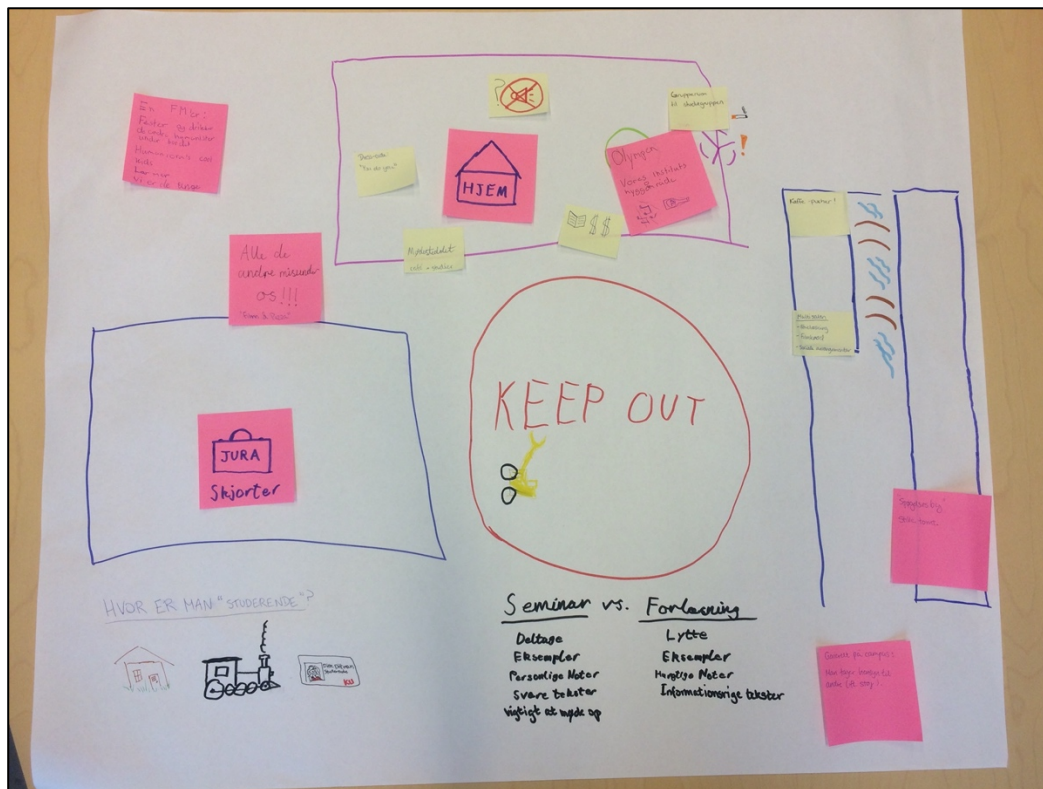


FIGURE 20

The questions addressing the *where* of being a student were answered with illustrations of a house, of transport to campus by train and of the student ID-card.



FIGURE 21

Another answer indicated how the lack of time management sometimes resulted in late hours studying at home. This is illustrated in this section of the map (figure 22) with the subtitle “at home”. The student drew a desk with a computer, books and coffee, and a window showing a night sky with stars and a moon:

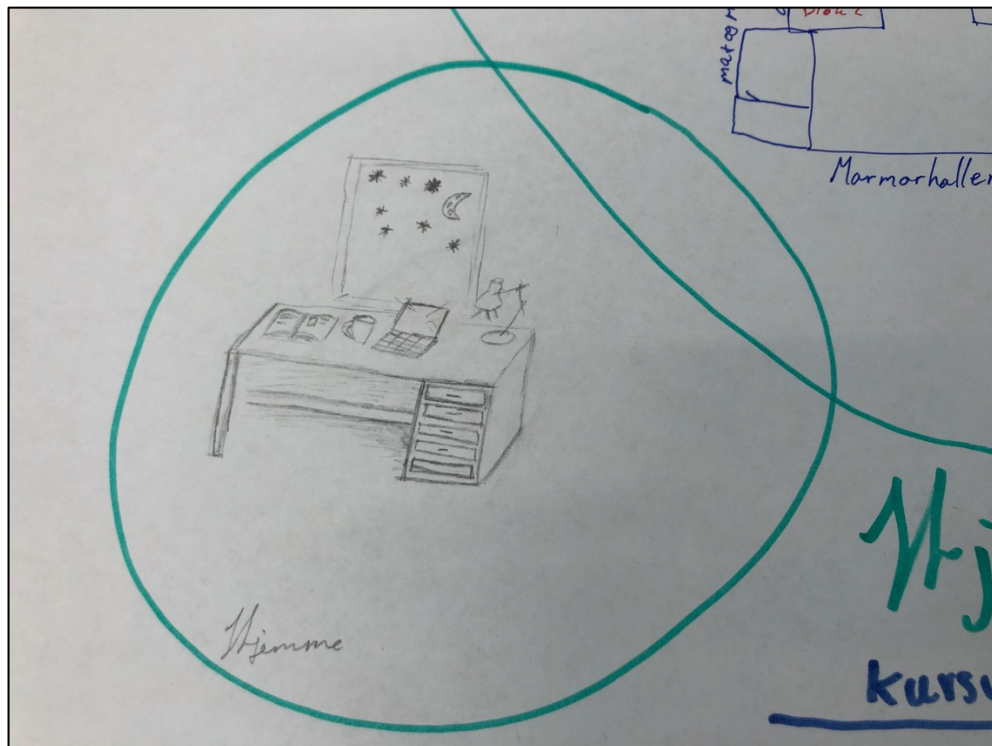


FIGURE 22

A RESEARCH DESIGN IN PROGRESS: ACCESSING THE ‘INVISIBLE STUDENTS’

Throughout the course of the project, I pursued a dynamic and reflective approach to the research design. This meant that I did not think of it as static but kept asking myself whether it was possible to answer the research questions with the data at hand, and whether this represented the field of research in a nuanced way. Even though it is never possible to make a complete or final description of fields of people that are continually changing and have high levels of complexity, it is worth aiming for a rich description and not being blind to alternative angles. At one point in my data

production, I got a feeling that some students were missing in my data. In October, in the middle of my main period of data production I wrote this note of reflection to myself in order to arrive at a better understanding of what the problem was:

I have several times in my participant observation of teaching discovered students whom I do not think I have seen before, despite having been there for a while now. At the same time, there are some students whose names I know right away and whom I find it easy to talk to. Some students who automatically attract attention, and some who do not. How can I gain insights into the nuances of being a student, into the many different experiences and perspectives on study culture and study practice, if some ways of being a student dominate my material? My challenge is to get the invisible "voices" into my data.

As a consequence, I started to make plans to interview groups of students to access their negotiations and understand the diversity of the student groups. One point of attention was that it was important to include some of the students involved who might disappear in other parts of the data, as my reflection note shows. One of the reasons for their “disappearance” in the data from my observations was that some students would say less in the teaching situations or were less active in the extra-curricular and social events of the programme. Furthermore, I also considered if it was a certain type of student who would sign up to make video diaries. Even though I had tried to select students based on the principle of maximum variation sampling, there was a potential bias in the fact that some students would not want to engage in the video project. There was a possibility that some students would simply be less visible in the material, therefore the empirical data would give a less representative and diverse image. One of the occasions on which it became evident to me that there was a difference in how much and in what way the students figured in the material was during observations of student presentations in some of the teaching. For example, in film and media studies it was a requirement in some of the courses that all students should present in groups. I noticed that there were some students I did not recognise or remember having seen before, while in the case of other students I had talked repeatedly to them and knew their names. Therefore, I began to think that there might be some particular students who attracted attention and some who

“walked under the radar” or were somehow more invisible. I decided to pay extra attention to the latter, wanting to take it into account in the next phases of the empirical production. Therefore, it became a criterion in the selection of informants for group interviews that there should be some individuals I had initially noticed less or who attracted less attention. It turned out to be logistically difficult to gather students for group interviews because they were busy with their student lives and other activities (jobs, hobbies, etc.). However, in the process of contacting students for group interviews, some of them had responded positively that they would like to participate. This was a good opportunity to continue trying to pursue the students who were perhaps less visible. Therefore, some extra individual interviews were carried out that were more open in approach and ended up being more unequally distributed across the studies: one from philosophy, one from film and media, and four from biotechnology (where one recording failed).

In some of the interviews, it turned out that the student had doubts about whether the programme was right for them. One of the students made a final decision to leave the programme just a day before I was due to do the interview. This therefore ended up becoming a unique opportunity to acquire insights into the considerations that had led to this students’ decision, and into some of the general features of the programme and the culture, at the same time allowing it to be seen from a perspective characterised by the fact that the student had made the decision to leave.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When doing research among and with humans, it is important to make sure that the participants involved are aware of what they are participating in and of how the information will be used, as well as protecting them from potential harm (Bryman, 2012; O'Reilly, 2012; Spradley, 1980).

Through the data production, I aimed to be transparent and explicit about my project and my role as a researcher. This was done in several steps and in different ways, depending on the specific type of data production method. First of all, I presented myself and my project to the students in induction and the first lectures I attended, as well as in the more informal conversations I had with individual students

along the way. In this sense my project was overt research in which the participants knew about my role as a researcher and the purpose of my being there (O'Reilly, 2012).

Another ethical consideration was to let the students who were more involved in the project (e.g., with video diaries and interviews) to agree on a written consent form. This was done in slightly different ways depending on the specific context, but in any case it was a way of making sure that the students were aware of what they were agreeing to, how I would use the data, and that they had a right to withdraw from the project (Bryman, 2012). Prior to interviews with the tutors, they were given consent forms that explained the purposes of the study and how it would be used, as well as told them about their right to withdraw from the research. For the students doing video diaries, I uploaded a text on to the platform where they were to upload their videos. The text explained my project, that the videos would be anonymised, and that they could leave the project if they no longer wanted to participate in it. The students were informed that, by participating and uploading videos, they agreed to these conditions. The interviewed students were again given an oral explanation of the study and told that the interview would be recorded. Likewise, the workshops contained information on the study and how the information would be used. In the mapping workshop, the participants were told to not write names or anything else on the map that would allow them to be identified.

I have decided to not anonymise either the university or the specific programmes, because the specific context of the study is important for the project. This meant that it was very important for me to ensure confidentiality and to anonymise individuals as much as possible (O'Reilly, 2012). This meant using pseudonyms (or no names at all), not using visual information from the videos and leaving out information that was too sensitive or that would make it too easy to identify the specific students. In my decisions and considerations, I was guided by the guidelines formulated by the Research Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Humanities (Research Ethics Committee, 2016). Ethical considerations are important in all parts of the research process, including the communication and publication of results (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002). One of my dilemmas was the promise I made to the tutors not to reveal the

secrets that were a part of the induction. As one of the papers includes a focus on the induction activities, it does reveal some of the secret aspects of the induction. I had promised not to reveal these to the first-year students I met in my project, and I did not do so. However, by publishing my paper I do reveal the secrets to other potential students and to the departments and communities involved, who might not necessarily know everything that goes on in the induction. I had not promised the tutors that I would not include these elements in my project and report about them, and they were all informed about the aims of the project and that it would end up being published. The secret parts were repeated year after year, and many students knew about them, hence the secrets could easily be revealed by others. Furthermore, since the time for publication would be a couple of years after I had made the observations, some of these secret aspects might have been changed in the meantime. Hence, I decided to write about them.

APPROACHING AND ANALYSING DATA

As shown in the previous sections, the empirical foundations for the project draw on a wide range of types of data. This also challenged the process of acquiring an overview of it all and of starting to analyse and work with the data. Analysis can be viewed as an ongoing process that starts already when designing the project and carrying out the data production, and continues even after writing the papers (Emerson, 1995). However, having finished the main period of data production I started the more focused part of the data analysis. In my approach to my data, I was inspired by the six steps described by Braun and Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first step was therefore to transcribe the interviews, video diaries and the recordings of the mapping workshops. Furthermore, I started to familiarise myself with the data by reading, re-reading and organising it by running it through the data analysis software Nvivo. In this process I started noting initial codes and themes, looked for what could be of interest in answering the research questions, and began to devise sub-questions for the specific papers. At this point, the process was divided into different subprocesses for each of the papers. The first paper started much more slowly because the data were still 'new' to me. By the fourth paper I had a much better feeling for the data,

having worked with them in the three previous papers, hence this paper could start out being more focused than the others. Although the papers were initiated one after the other, they also ran in parallel. In each paper the subsequent steps were to generate themes and revise them. This was an iterative process of going back and forth between theory and data (O'Reilly, 2012). As a part of the process of analysing, we also used a comparative approach, looking for differences and similarities between the programmes, as well as themes that cut across them or that were more specific to the specific cultures. While two of the papers focus on all three programmes, two of them go into one programme in greater depth, focusing respectively on biotechnology and philosophy. In the two papers that cover all the programmes, there is a visible process of comparing and contrasting the different cultures and programmes. However, in the two papers that focus on one programme, only the comparative element has been used indirectly in the process.

In the next chapter I present the four papers and their different foci, show how they contribute to answering the overarching research question, describe which parts of data they draw on, and detail the findings in each case.

PRESENTATION AND OVERVIEW OF THE PAPERS

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the four papers that constitute this thesis. The papers differ in their focus and in the parts of the overarching research question they contribute to answering, as well as which bodies of data they draw on and whether they compare the three study programmes or focus on just one. The table below provides an overview of the papers, following which I describe each paper, its focus and findings, and show how they contribute to answering the research question.

Authors	Research questions	Drawing on data from	Programme(s)	Status
1. Transitioning into higher education: rituals and implied expectations				
Andrea F. M. Gregersen, Henriette T. Holmegaard, Lars Ulriksen	<p>RQ1: Which expectations about how to be and become a student in the particular study programme are conveyed to first-year students in their transition to university?</p> <p>RQ2: In particular, which expectations are implicitly and explicitly expressed through the rituals that new students meet during the induction period?</p> <p>RQ3: Which student identities are recognised as viable and made available in these programmes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant observation • Tutor interviews • Individual interviews with video diary students 	Film and media Philosophy Biotechnology	Published in <i>Journal of Further and Higher Education</i>
2. Developing study practices and strategies: how first-year students learn how to study				
Andrea F. M. Gregersen, Lars Ulriksen	How do students develop their study practices, and what affects the practices they develop?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video diaries • Interviews with video 	Film and media Philosophy Biotechnology	Submitted

		diary students • Participant observation		
3. Expectations and challenges of first-year biotechnology students: the importance of social relations				
Lars Ulriksen, Andrea F. M. Gregersen	RQ1: What do students expect to be difficult when entering a study programme in science? RQ2: What do the students eventually experience as challenging during the first eight months at the programme? RQ3: Which elements in the study environment do the students draw on in order to manage these challenges?	• Workshop on expectations and first impressions • Video diaries • Interviews with video diary students • Extra interviews	Biotechnology	Submitted
4. The ideal philosophy student: a qualitative study of transition into the bachelor's programme of higher education philosophy				
Andrea F. M. Gregersen, Henriette T. Holmegaard	Which norms and values are conveyed through the social and cultural context of the study programme of philosophy, and what is recognised as an ideal student? Which student positions are in- and excluded? Which consequences does it hold for students' identity negotiations, in particular related to gender?	• Participant observation • Video diaries • Interviews with video diary students • Mapping workshop • Interviews with tutors/senior students	Philosophy	Submitted

1. TRANSITIONING INTO HIGHER EDUCATION: RITUALS AND IMPLIED EXPECTATIONS

This paper focuses on the students' first encounter with their programmes: induction. The paper investigates the implied expectations that are communicated to the students at induction into each of the three programmes. The analysis takes its point of departure in a ritual in each programme and analyses the implied expectations they communicate to the students about the study culture and the available identities. The findings show that there are differences between the rituals and in how they relate to the content of the programme. Furthermore, there were differences in what was expected of the students, as well as in the available identities that were presented to them depending on the specific programme. The rituals and the induction activities communicated each programme's formal and informal expectations. Without the new students necessarily realising this, the rituals and informal activities provided an opportunity for them to catch a glimpse of the expectations and to develop an emotional sense of belonging by being included in the rituals. At the same time, a programme's norms, cultures and expectations potentially also exclude some students and challenge them in developing a practice that could be recognised as legitimate and in developing a sense of belonging. Another point made in the paper is the importance of the senior students and their role in introducing first-year students to the programmes and communicating the expectations and culture to them. This paper focuses more on the part of the research question that concerns the culture and identity development, rather than the specific study practices the students develop.

2. DEVELOPING STUDY PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES: HOW FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS LEARN HOW TO STUDY

Like the first paper, this paper also compares all three programmes, but in contrast to the first paper, Paper 2 is more focused on the part of the research question that concerns the students' development of study practices than on the identity work. The paper explores how the students develop their practices and what affects the practices they develop. Like the first article, this one also looks at the interactions between the students, the programmes and the expectations, though the focus has shifted to students' study practices. The students themselves describe the process of learning how to study as learning by doing. However, the analysis also shows that the process of developing study practices involves a complex series of interactions, where the students try out practices, then experience formal and informal feedback and guidance from the programme, and subsequently try to decode what is expected of them. Exams and grades are one of the more explicit and effective types of feedback, although it is often a poor type of feedback if it is not elaborated. However, because the exams were key feedback formats, the type of exam and the structure of the course influenced the students' practices and the ways they prioritised their time and efforts. The students did not receive much formal or explicit feedback supplementary to the exams and grades, which often left them alone to interpret the feedback and decode the expectations and requirements themselves. Therefore, some of them turned to peers and senior students in this process, a point that is made even more visible in the third paper. The analysis also showed that there were differences between the programmes in regard to both the specific disciplinary practices and expectations, and also the students' motivations and how they related to the content of the programme. This also affected how they came to prioritise their time and tasks, and hence which practices they developed.

3. EXPECTATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF FIRST-YEAR BIOTECHNOLOGY STUDENTS: THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

Unlike the two first papers, this paper focuses on only one of the programmes: biotechnology. In this paper the aim is to explore what the biotechnology students expected to be challenging initially, and then what turned out to be challenging once they had progressed into the programme. The paper shows that, although the academic content was challenging, as the students initially expected, they were especially challenged by the organisational aspects, as when the expectations, goals and structure of the course were unclear. In the students' work on decoding expectations and navigating the transition, they also needed to find ways to overcome the challenges the programme presented them with. A point in this paper is the importance of the social aspects of the study. The analysis shows that social relations with peers and access to senior students are pivotal for the students in managing the challenges and decoding expectations, as well as in maintaining their motivation. While most students find access to peers, senior students and social networks easy, the analysis also gives the example of a student who experienced this differently than the majority, showing that some students struggle to gain access to social relations and are therefore in more vulnerable positions. As social relations are important for the students' motivation, access to help, their sense of belonging and their academic achievements, we argue that the study programmes should pay more attention to how they can facilitate these social networks. This paper addresses the part of the research question that concerns the students' development of study practices with a specific focus on the challenges they meet and how they find ways to navigate and overcome them.

4. THE IDEAL PHILOSOPHY STUDENT: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF TRANSITION INTO THE BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME OF HIGHER EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

Like the third paper, this paper also studies one programme in depth, namely philosophy. However, in this paper the emphasis is on the part of the research question that focuses on the students' identity work, as the paper investigates the cultural norms of the programme and what is recognised as an 'ideal philosophy student'. In this respect the fourth paper has similarities with the first, which also examines the implicit expectations and the available identities. The fourth paper focuses on the norms for how students should perform in order to be recognised as 'an ideal philosophy student'. The analysis investigates the subtle mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that are at play, with a particular focus on gender. The analyses show how the ideal philosophy student is expected to perform dedication, an ability to immerse oneself in philosophy and a willingness to refrain from being concerned about future job prospects. Philosophy students are expected to participate showing high levels of confidence and clear arguments in both philosophical discussions and social activities. As a consequence, insecurity and incompetence were installed as a feeling within some of the students, especially in the minority group of women.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

In this chapter I draw conclusions on the findings across all the papers and show how they answer the overarching research question. I also discuss some of the findings of the study and suggest ideas for further research.

This thesis has explored how study practices and student identities are developed and negotiated among first-year students in their encounter with their study programmes and the specific study cultures of the Bachelors' programmes in film and media studies, philosophy, and biotechnology at the University of Copenhagen.

The thesis shows that entering a study programme involves complex processes and that becoming a university student is not a simple question of enrollment and gaining formal status as student. Across the papers we show how developing a student identity and viable study practices happen through the interactions and interplay between the students and the cultural contexts they are entering. Common to all the students, regardless of which programme they enter, is that they embark on a journey of decoding the expectations and norms of their study contexts, and that they must try to navigate and negotiate in order to find viable ways to study.

HOW DO STUDENTS DEVELOP THEIR STUDY PRACTICES?

The thesis shows that the development of study practices is both a process of trying out and learning by doing, and a process of working on decoding the sometimes unclear expectations, navigating courses where the alignment is not clear to the students or there are disciplinary practices that can be hard to learn. The students receive some feedback and guidance from the programmes, but it is not always clear to them what they are expected to do in the exams, nor how they should read the texts. In the process of developing study practices, the exams, grades and the way the courses are organised are important for how the students come to study. The analysis also shows that when students have problems in decoding expectations or managing

the content, they turn to peers or senior students for help. In this sense the social networks and informal spaces in which students interact with each other play an important role in their development of study practices and their handling of the challenges they meet. I will return to this below. Furthermore, the findings showed that the students' study practices were affected by their initial motivations and ways of relating to the programme and the content it presented them with. In this respect there were some differences between the programmes. I describe these disciplinary differences below as well.

While some students managed to decode the expectations and norms of their programmes and succeeded in navigating in the study culture and creating a sense of belonging, other students were challenged by the sometimes unclear and implicit expectations of the programme. Furthermore, some students found it hard to change their previous study practices, even though they proved inappropriate in the new study context, as Paper two showed.

DEVELOPING AND NEGOTIATING STUDENT IDENTITIES

Furthermore, the analyses showed that becoming a student is also a matter of creating a student identity. When the students enter their study programmes, they enter a culture with specific norms and expectations regarding how one should perform in order to be recognised as a biotechnology or philosophy or film and media student. While some students seemed to find ways to do this, others were more challenged by the identity work, as they could not see themselves or perform in the ways that were recognised as appropriate within their programme. While the first paper showed that there were quite different expectations to the students and the available identities, depending on the disciplinary context, the fourth paper explored identity work at greater depth by investigating the norms of 'the ideal philosophy student'. This paper showed that the norms for how the students should perform in order to be recognised as an 'ideal philosophy student' also involved exclusion mechanisms that were especially related to gender. The paper also showed how some students strategically negotiated their positions as philosophy students by, for example, talking in more

masculine ways. While Paper four focuses on the identity work in philosophy, the analyses in the thesis do not explore the identity work of the students in biotechnology and film and media as thoroughly.

DISCIPLINARY DIFFERENCES

The papers show that becoming a student and developing study practices are also closely related to the disciplinary norms and practices of the programmes.

In the film and media programme, the students greatly valued the extracurricular activities, and consequently many students gave a lower priority to reading theoretical texts from the course curriculum. We identified a pattern among the students followed in the project, where they developed a performance and cost-benefit-oriented approach to the formal study activities being oriented towards what was needed to pass the exams. This was related to their motivations and interests, which pointed towards the more creative and practical aspects of film and media. Hence, they prioritised their time on relevant jobs, networking and CV-relevant activities that would bring them closer to the jobs they aspired towards. As most students in FM valued and prioritised the practical and creative parts of film and media, striving towards and identifying with these aspects of the programme were recognised as appropriate student performances. At the same time, this conflicted with what was formally valued in the programme curriculum.

The philosophy students were oriented towards the content of the programme, which was very present in the extracurricular activities, and the students discussed philosophy outside the formal teaching setting. However, the focus on the philosophical content also entailed certain expectations about how the students should perform in order to be recognised as an 'ideal philosophy student'. The students were expected to dedicate themselves fully to philosophy and to engage in discussions and perform in confident and knowledgeable ways. Furthermore, they were expected to position themselves in relation to the two main philosophical traditions and to be able to defend the positions they had taken. These norms and expectations created challenges for some of the students. The norms and practices of the study also affected the way some of the students prioritised and the study

practices they developed. The students were driven by intrinsic motivation, which made some of them prioritise reading outside the formal curriculum set by the teachers. The focus on the philosophical content and on philosophy for its own sake made it less acceptable to focus on possible applications of philosophy or on job prospects after graduation.

In the biotechnology programme, the content was present in a different way, and how it was related to biotechnology sometimes seemed more invisible. This was linked to the structure of the programme, where the students initially had a range of toolbox courses that were taught together with other programmes. These courses made the biotechnology content less visible. In a structure that placed generic courses first and specialisation later, the students were required to be persistent and were able to postpone their need for the more specialised and ‘real’ biotechnology content. This created challenges for some students because it created doubts about whether the programme was what they had signed up for and whether they could see themselves in it. While the challenges of the identity work for the biotechnology students were not expressed as explicitly in data as was the case in philosophy, there were still some indications that not all students found this easy. One example that ended up not being included in the papers illustrates this. A biotechnology student stated that, since she had not yet experienced being in the laboratory, “I still don’t know if I am really a lab girl at all”. This too is related to the way the courses were organised, with the toolbox courses coming at the beginning. The above quote illustrates the challenge that some students faced in their identity work. As the laboratory is viewed as central to what biotechnology is, it became a challenge for this student that she had to wait to see whether she was a lab-girl or not.

Some of these programme characteristics and cultural norms were communicated through the induction rituals. While induction and its associated rituals are not necessarily viewed by teachers, administrative staff and students as related to the academic or formal aspects of the programmes, our analysis shows that they do in fact communicate some of the norms and characteristics of the culture. In doing so, they create a basis for the students to get a sense of what the programme is about, as

well as potentially contributing to their sense of belonging. On the other hand, they might also contribute to excluding some students who find it hard to identify and see themselves in these activities and cultural norms.

STUDENT DIVERSITY

As outlined above, there were differences between the three programmes and study cultures investigated in this project. Another respect in which there were great differences and diversity is in the students themselves. The thesis focuses on the students' perspectives and seeks to include as many different perspectives and experiences as possible. However, there are still some perspectives and experiences that are not represented. Since the selection of students was to some extent self-selected based on who wanted to engage in the project and share their perspectives, there might be some bias in who joined and who did not, and therefore in the perspectives that are represented and those that are not. As described in the methodology chapter, I was aware of these issues during data production and tried to take them into account.

A key point in the thesis is that the students navigate in different ways and develop different study practices. In these processes the students' prior experiences and their social, economic and cultural capital enviably also play a role. However, the students' prior knowledge, experiences and backgrounds have not been placed at the forefront of this study. Other researchers have explored this interaction and, by drawing on Bourdieu's theoretical framework, they have shown how the students' habitus and their social, economic and cultural capital influence both their choice of higher education programme and how they navigate through the respective cultural practices, as well as how this affects their identity development (Archer, Hutchings, & Ross, 2005; Brooks, 2008; Thomsen, 2012). Similar to the findings in this thesis, Thomsen also found that expectations regarding students' engagement in extracurricular activities and what is viewed as important differs from programme to programme (Thomsen, 2012). Thomsen and colleagues further argue that students' backgrounds and cultural capital interact with how they view the purpose of their education,

whether or not it is important to them that the content is clearly applicable and that this can be related to their respective social backgrounds (Thomsen, Munk, Eiberg-Madsen, & Hansen, 2013). The findings of my research show that the students in the three programmes had quite different ways of relating to, navigating and prioritising within the programmes and that there were also differences in the ways they viewed the importance of the extracurricular activities. While there were some examples in the data that could indicate that the sociocultural background did have an influence, there was not enough to form the basis of an analysis. However, this appeared to be an interesting topic to explore further. Hence, a continuation of this PhD project could investigate and explore these aspects more and investigate the individual differences concerning how students' view the purpose of their education and how these are related to their backgrounds, as well as how the latter affects the development of study practices and how the students identify with the programme.

Another study of students' perspectives on the purposes of higher education has compared students across six European countries in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of their perspectives. The authors challenge the often rather narrow understanding of the purpose of higher education that predominates in discourses within higher education policy (Brooks, Gupta, Jayadeva, & Abrahams, 2020). Brooks et al. also show that, while some students view the purpose of higher education as preparation for the labour market, other students also considered that the purpose was personal growth or intellectual inquiry in line with their own personal motivations. As the students' responses consisted of a broad range of perspectives on the purposes of higher education, the study emphasised that higher education has many different purposes. The findings of my PhD project contribute to this discussion by adding insights into how students view the purpose of higher education differently depending on the disciplinary context and what is valued within the study culture. In this respect, comparing the philosophy programme with the film and media programme highlights how different students' perspectives can be in this regard. The film and media students' job aspirations proved to have a great influence on their study practices and led to them placing a high priority on extracurricular activities. In contrast, the norms and expectations of the philosophy programme devalued this

kind of job-focused motivation. The philosophy students had to show their dedication to the content instead and view this as the main purpose of higher education. My research suggests that the question of students' views of the purposes of higher education also depends on the disciplinary context and what is valued in the culture.

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT, IDEAL STUDENTS AND EXCLUSIONS

Another key point that became evident across the four papers was the importance of the social and more informal spaces and activities in the programmes. The many types of spaces and activities the students engaged in outside the formal academic sphere – like the induction activities, the social and extracurricular events, the study café and the study groups – appeared to be important for both the development of study practices and the students' identity work and their sense of belonging.

While the data showed that a lot of the students engaged in the social and informal aspects of the programmes, the findings also revealed that some students were challenged in this respect. One example is the student mentioned in the third paper who found it difficult to socialise and was poorly integrated into the social life of her study programme. Paper four likewise included an example of a student who found it difficult to find his role in the social dynamics of the programme. This student was troubled by the way he was positioned and how he ended up being more passive than he would have preferred. These stories are examples of students who had difficulties in navigating the social arenas of their programme. This had consequences not only for the students' sense of belonging to the programme, but also for their academic endeavors and their learning potential. Since the informal and social activities and spaces proved to provide crucial academic support, help in decoding expectations, enhancing motivations and creating a sense of belonging, those students who were not well integrated into the social arenas of their study programmes were deprived of these important resources. In Chapter two, Vincent Tinto is quoted as arguing that social and academic integration are related. My research adds to this, as a key point in the thesis is that the social and academic aspects are closely interwoven, and that social integration cannot be seen

independently of academic integration, since it provides access to academic support and resources.

Other students who might very well experience challenges in this respect are the mature students. In all three programmes some students were considerably above the average age, some of them in their thirties, forties and fifties, and a very few even older. They typically had a different life situation than the majority of students in the programmes, as many of them had children, a prior education and were doing jobs on the side. Although they were present in the programmes, they did not appear so much in the data, as there were very few of them compared to 'the average aged students'. It could nonetheless be interesting to explore these students' experiences and perspectives in greater depth, especially because of how important the social and informal aspects of the programmes proved to be. For the mature students, their life situations might be very likely to influence the degree to which they engage in the extracurricular activities. In a video diary, one of the mature students explained her experiences in entering the programme and described how, being older than the average student, her age created some challenges in her engaging in the social aspects of the programme. She was around thirty, so still at the lower end of the mature students:

[M]y first-hand impression of induction. I think the intro-days were a bit intense. I was pretty tired afterwards. Um, some long days with some really nice young people. Um, I sometimes feel a bit alienated in the social aspects in several areas. It is like, of course I'm a lot older than the others, which I had not really thought of as such a big challenge, but it's as if I sense that they are thinking I must be in a different place. Hopefully I have developed in the past ten years, but it is like there is a kind of expectation for me to be in a different place in life, or that I do not want to be a part of it, or something like that. That is what I am thinking. It is, in a way it also becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. [...]

People are busy making friends and are like clinging to them and creating a social ... like support base. I have less of a need for that. Which can then backfire, because you feel like lonelier out there [on the campus], because

everyone has created such close social groups. It is not a big issue for me, but it is something I think about. I think people are nice, and I am glad that we are now at the academic...”

This quote from this mature student shows that being a mature student could be an obstacle to social engagement in the programme. The student stated that on the one hand she did not have the same need as the younger students for socialising and making friends, though on the other hand she felt lonely and did not have a social support group like the other students do. Furthermore, the quote emphasises that her fellow students view her as different from the norm and do not expect the same from her. The quote illustrates one of the key points of the thesis, namely that in every programme there are certain expectations and norms – an implied or ideal student – that draw lines around what a student should be and should do. This mature student does not fit into these implied expectations and does not fit what characterises the ideal student in this study context because she is older than the average. The quote is from the beginning of the first semester, and this student did only one video diary, hence the data material do not reveal how the process turned out for her in the future. However, the student was already expressing a feeling of alienation at this point, and if this did not change, it might challenge the process of creating a sense of belonging. Research on mature students has found that they experience the transition and process of becoming a student at a mature age as challenging. One study highlights how they are viewed as being different by their peers, and that this can create challenges in the mature students’ identity work and in their process of acquiring membership of the community and its social life (Mallman & Lee, 2016). Another study demonstrates the challenges mature students face in the transition to higher education, as the new status and identity as a student affect how they view themselves and how they are viewed by their families and former friends. The identity work mature students do in the process of becoming students creates conflicts with their former identity. This is especially the case for mature students from working-class backgrounds (Baxter & Britton, 2001).

The mature students represent a group of students who are different from the average and the usually imagined student in higher education, hence they might

easily be confronted with challenges in creating a sense of belonging in their identity work. Furthermore, this thesis has shown that the development of study practices is also closely related to the students' engagement in the social environment of their programmes and that social networks and relations with fellow students and senior students have great importance in developing study practices and managing the challenges when they arise. This would be an interesting topic to investigate further.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I return at this point to the initial questions raised by practice at the outset of this thesis. The project aimed to understand why students who enter university with high GPAs from high school and who 'on paper' have the ideal requirements for being good students and should know how to study still develop practices of not attending classes or preparing them sufficiently. In addition to this, the aim was to explore the culture and practices within the programmes and potentially also help improve understanding of why some students choose to leave their programmes.

The thesis has demonstrated how entering a university programme is not just a matter of being enrolled in a study programme and receiving a student ID-card. Becoming a student entails working on decoding the specific expectations and norms of the study culture and developing both viable study practices and student identities. As the project was initiated to generate knowledge to inform practice, my hope is that this thesis can help to unpack some of the questions raised by practice and contribute with a better understanding of both the specific study cultures investigated in the project and the complex processes the students engage in when transitioning into higher education.

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Page 96-182 has been removed in this version of the PhD thesis due to copyright/publishing regulations.

Paper 1 is published in Journal of Further and Higher Education and can be found through the journal page or library services.

Paper 2, 3 and 4 are currently under review.

APPENDIX 1

VIDEO DIARIES - INSTRUCTIONS

These are my instructions for the students who have said yes to making video diaries. I wrote something about my expectations of them, about what it is about, and then there are the 4 specific "tasks" or focal points for their videos.

The whole thing has been posted in an Absalon group room (Learning Management Platform of the university) where they can't see each other, but can upload their videos to me. For all four videos I myself uploaded a video to them.

First introduction text to the students Video Diaries

Dear "Video Diary Students"

Thank you so much for saying yes to participating in this part of my project. It's a really big help and means a lot to me. By participating, you give me the opportunity to gain insight into how starting your education is experienced by you from a more personal

perspective. In addition to being a big help to me, it can also potentially help the department and your teachers to make better education and give them a better insight into how new students experience the programme - and ultimately contribute with knowledge on how to do better.

Something about my expectations to you:

I expect you to record 5-minute videos (it's not important that it's exactly 5 minutes, but somewhere around it). You will be asked to record approximately one video per month up to and including January 2019. I will make it so that you get an "assignment" here in the group room, which is to be handed in. I create the assignment about a week before you hand it in and then it's up to you when you do it during that week. I have been trying to find a way to do it, where it becomes relatively easy for you to "send" the video to me and at the same time not risk that everyone else will see it. In this way, it is only me and my supervisors who watch the video. So you won't be able to see each other's videos.

You can either record on your phone, computer or directly in the Absalon platform. It is not important how you do it, as long as it works and can be uploaded. It is also important for me to emphasise that I am interested in what you are experiencing and your honest attitudes, feelings, etc. and not that the video itself is beautifully done or anything like that. The video is not for youtube, but for me and for the purpose of being able to gain an insight into your experiences of being a student in your programme. So don't think about it being absolutely perfect or anything like that.

Questions / problems

If you experience technical problems along the way, or other problems or issues arise, then please contact me. Do not hold back. This also applies if for some reason you want to withdraw from the project (of course I hope not). Then I'd rather you just write and tell it than just stop making the videos.

Contact

If you would like to contact me, please send an email to angr@ind.ku.dk. You may also want to write or call on my phone (28433628), but I have a habit of not picking up the phone when it's a number I don't know (there are so many who call and want to sell subscriptions, etc.) - so write a text message so I know it's you who are calling / calling if it is. And of course you are also welcome to catch me when I am in your classes, but as I am not there every day I think mail is will be the easiest way to get hold of me.

I'm very much looking forward to seeing / hearing from you :) Have fun and thank you again!

Kind regards, Andrea

Video Diary # 1

Watch the video above :)

Focus of your first video:

1) Please tell me something about yourself, who are you, what is your background, what did you do before you started your programme?

2) How was the start of your studies and what is your first impression of the programme?

Video diary # 2

Hi everyone

Thank you SO much for your first video diary! I am really glad that you will participate in my project with your video diaries. It means a lot to me and my project that I am allowed to gain insight into how you feel about being a student in your programme.

I know it may be a little cross-border or weird to have to talk into a camera, but I think you're doing well.

Now it's time for the next video diary.

You can see my video for you here: [2. video diary.mov](#)

In your video diary # 2, I am basically interested in hearing how you experience being a student in your programme 2 months within.

The points below (which I also mention in my video to you) are some suggestions on what I would like you to think about:

- What has happened lately?
- What is it like to study in this programme?
- How do you experience the academic aspects?
- How do you experience the social aspects?
- Are you experiencing any challenges? (it can be both big and small things)

Deadline is Wednesday, November 14 at. 23:00

If for some reason you do not have the opportunity to do it by then, just send me an email and we will agree something (angr@ind.ku.dk).

I look forward to hearing how it goes :)

Video Diary # 3

Dear everyone

Thank you so much for your latest video diary! It is really nice to follow you and I am incredibly happy that you are part of this video project :)

I haven't replied to your videos individually, but I've seen all of them. Thank you so much for them.

Now I would like to ask you to make number 3. It would be really nice if you can make one here during the Christmas holidays – i.e. preferably before the 3rd of January.

I have made a little video for you again, explaining which themes I would like you to touch upon. But I have also written them here:

- What have happen since last video?
- How do you find the social relationships with the others in the programme (fellow students, teachers and possibly others)?
- Is there something you have had to get used to or practise? Maybe there's something you've already gotten better at or have gotten used to, maybe you're in the middle of that process.

I wish you all a really Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. See you in the new year.

Kind regards,

Andrea

Video diary # 4

Hello again :)

I hope you have passed the exams well and are ready for a new semester.

Thank you very much for the 3rd video diary.

Now it is time again for a video diary, namely the 4th and last one. For those of you who did not do number 3, you are welcome to join in and make the last one.

I've made a little video for you once again. The themes / questions also come here:

- Short status: what has happened lately and how is it going?
- Tell about the way you have been a student so far and what has affected how you have done
- If you have to give some good advice to "your past self", what would you say? Would you, for example do something different? (From the now more experienced you to yourself as a new student)

It would be great if you can do the video before Sunday 10th of February.

Thank you in advance :)

Kind regards, Andrea

APPENDIX 2

MAPPING - PLAN FOR THE WORKSHOP

This is my plan for the workshop, the students did not get this paper. Not everything from my plan was mentioned, but the plan was my guideline.

STEP 1: Start up - mapping

You should create a "map of your university" in groups.

It is up to you if you will include Frederiksberg Campus, HCØ and/or other parts of the university. It depends on which part of the university campus you use. It can also be places such as KUB Nord, KUA and CSS.

You may know that there are some people who have a really hard time figuring out what to say or do in specific contexts: what to say to whom and what to do where - that's is what the workshop is about. Imagine you have to make a map that Saga Noreen from the TV show Broen ("the Bridge") can use so that she does not fail in following the norms if she were to be a student at your programme.

It's up to you what's on the map. Think about your life as a student, and where you are and include what makes sense to you. It can be both the places you use a lot and the places that are part of what you think is the university, but which you do not use yourself (you can note why you do not use them, if you want to).

- What to do where? What should one *not* do? (is there, for example, something that would be inappropriate, wrong or awkward to do one place, but not in another?)
- Where do you go? Where do you not go?
- What places are important to you?
- Where do you feel like you belong and where do you not?

It's okay if you don't agree on all of it or if you do not have the same relation to the different places. Then you can also mark on the map that there are some places where you all go and some places where only some of you go. It's up to you in the group.

It is important that you *do not* write your own names or anything else that can clearly tell who you are. Please write some pseudonyms or something else if you need it anyway. This is for anonymity/ethical reasons.

STEP 2: Other places where you are a student than on the campus itself

In which places are you students? Are there places outside the campus itself where your student life takes place? Add places that you think are relevant.

STEP 3: To consider - additions and details

Look at your map and see what you've added so far. Is there something missing or maybe something you want to clarify?

Now I have some more inputs. You can consider whether you have already included some of it or maybe you can be inspired by it:

- Think about a week in your daily life, what do you do during such a week?
- What types of activities are you involved in? Do you think something is missing?
E.g. have you included both social and academic activities?
Do you have different types of teaching formats?
- What do you experience as different in the different teaching situations, e.g. lecture, lab, reading?
- Is there a difference between what you do in one course / subject / module compared to another?
- What role / tasks do you have in the different situations?
- What activities do you do alone and what do you do with others? and with whom?
- What kind of people are you doing activities with? Students? Teachers? Other relevant people? What do you do with whom?
- You can also consider if there is a specific way one looks/dress when being a student in biotechnology? Is there any way one should dress and some ways not to?

Example from a student in a study programme within the Humanities. In an interview the student said:

"You have to drink lots of coffee. You have to have a scarf that you can wrap around your neck many times, one should always wear a scarf, it is very important. And then you have to have that one famous tuber there, there are a lot of people who have

that. And then the backpack is also a really good idea, to have a backpack and then of course you have to bike around, and then you have to talk in a low voice and be very kind."

This is just to give you an idea of what I mean when I ask how one should look/dress. But it is of course not like everyone in a programme looks completely alike, there is always some diversity among students in a programme. However, sometimes there are some traits or patterns in how to look or how to behave - just as the student in the quote points out. Try to discuss it and see if you want to include these aspects to your map.

STEP 4 - Summary of the map and discussions

Complete the form in the group answering these questions:

- Describe the considerations you have made in relation to what should be included on your card and what is not
- Was there something you disagreed on, or had different experiences with?
- Do you have any examples of what to do to fit in
- Do you have any examples of what to do to not fit in/break the norms
- Your pieces of advice for a new 1st year student at your programme: Is there something you need to pay special attention concerning what you can and can't say and do?

STEP 5 - Gathering, Comparing and Discussing

After you have made the map and discussed in the group, please show it to the other group and tell them about it. We will look for differences and similarities between your maps.

- Is there anything that stands out as different?
- Is there something you all have in it?
- Are you thinking about something you would like to change or add?