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University teaching development workshops as sites of joint decision-making: Negotiations of authority in academic cultures

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed interactional practices in the strategic development of teaching at a research university in Finland. Drawing on a novel combination of conversation analysis and cultural discourse analysis, the study investigated how participants negotiate decision-making power and authority when developing new interdisciplinary teaching in workshop groups. Specific attention was paid to the participants' ways of making and responding to each other's proposals and invoking disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge as a basis for steering joint decision-making interaction. The study made use of the distinction between epistemic authority (i.e., expertise in a field of knowledge) and deontic authority (i.e., power to determine action), as well as the notion of academic cultures. The study identified three different academic cultures of negotiating authority, each associated with a workshop group: the collegial, developmental, and managerial cultures. Furthermore, the study showed that both disciplinary and pedagogical mastery can occasionally prevent inclusive dialogue that plays an elementary role in enabling joint decision-making in the development of teaching at universities.

1. Introduction

1.1. Decision-making in the changing teaching sector

The constant changes at today's research universities make the teaching and learning sector subject to struggles of authority and power. The regulation of degrees and the organizational investments in teaching and learning suggest for increasing administrative influence on teaching that has historically enjoyed scholarly autonomy at research universities (Bleiklie, 1998; Sewerin & Holmberg, 2017; Tierney, 2008). These shifts activate complex social negotiations (Annala, Lindén, Mäkinen, & Henriksson, 2021; Mathieson, 2019; Stavrou, 2016). Researchers have long proposed collaborative models that engage the entire university staff in joint decision-making about the development of teaching (Jones & Harvey, 2017; Jones, Harvey, & Lefoe, 2014; Scott, Coates, & Anderson, 2008). Yet, the rhetoric of collaboration and joint decision-making may hide the power and authority relations that nevertheless exist in academia (Bolden, Petrov, & Gosling, 2009; Vuori, 2019). It is therefore important to investigate empirically the bases upon which power and authority operate in joint decision-making in the teaching and learning sector at universities.

Scholars observe that authority and power are negotiated at universities across several academic cultures. Bergquist and Pawlak

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(2008) distinguish six cultures that exist in universities in parallel: the collegial, managerial, developmental, advocacy, virtual, and tangible cultures. Each culture suggests distinctive methods of social interaction and decision-making (Latta, 2020). In this study, we will focus on the collegial, managerial, and developmental cultures. *The collegial culture* (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008, pp. 15–42) emphasizes research and disciplines, the autonomy of the individual scholar, and the dissemination of knowledge. In contrast, *the managerial culture* (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008, pp. 43–71) emphasizes teaching over research, as well as organizational goals and objectives over scholarly autonomy. The managerial culture stresses the effective implementation, evaluation and measurement of institutional goals and objectives, such as competence-based degrees, quality of teaching, and effective supervision.

The sharp difference between the collegial and managerial cultures displays itself in decision-making. The collegial culture cherishes the democratic self-governance of faculty. Stemming from an era before the institutional specialization between research and administration, the collegial culture tends to resist administrative authority. Decision-making in the collegial culture is characterized by rational persuasion and coalitions (Latta, 2020, p. 1198). The dissimilar means of legitimizing, pressure, and even coercion, are activated in decision-making in the managerial culture (Latta, 2020, p. 1198).

The developmental culture (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008, pp. 73–109) exists on the continuum of collegial culture but takes a proactive, coordinated approach towards the advancement of the university. The democratic self-governance by faculty members is combined with organized planning guided by an institutional mission. Pragmatic collaboration is favored over time-consuming debates that characterize the collegial culture. Where the collegial culture emphasizes disciplines, the developmental culture emphasizes the need to overcome the disciplinary boundaries. Where the collegial culture centers on research, the developmental culture adds teaching and learning in the core agenda of universities. Institutional research is used to prompt scholars to self-reflect upon their work. Developmentalists often ignore the political nature of reforms and the presence of managerialist trends in the university (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008, p. 74). In decision-making, the developmental culture manifests itself in supportive collaboration and inspirational appeals (Latta, 2020, p. 1198). Yet, the developmental culture may align with the managerial culture, for example, in its emphases on student learning and learning outcomes (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008, p. 102).

The fundamental tension between the collegial and managerial cultures (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Latta, 2020) is apparent in the structural reforms of teaching and degrees in Finland (Himanka, 2018; Laiho, Jauhainen, & Jauhainen, 2017). The pedagogical development in turn seems to generally reflect the developmental culture that has recently gained increasing influence in the leadership and management of Finnish universities. Overall, pedagogy is gaining new weight: several universities host units of pedagogical research and development, institutional research is conducted on teaching and learning, and the results implemented in a coordinated manner, pedagogical studies are available to the staff, and pedagogical expertise evaluated in recruitment in an increasingly organized manner (Murtonen et al., 2022). Because the development of teaching and learning is often rooted in the university strategies, and the objectives of development are formally articulated in organizational documents, the development may receive also managerialist traits in ways described by Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) and Latta (2020).

In this study, we use audio data to investigate interactional practices and joint decision-making in a strategic development of teaching at a research university in Finland. Consistent with a larger tendency to develop degrees in response to the challenges of society, our target university committed to the goal of developing a new interdisciplinary, compulsory module on the topic of participation. The scope of the course is 5 ECTS credits. Combined with other externally imposed modules in degrees, the new module takes up space from discipline-bound studies. To pre-empt excessive resistance and to build on the knowledge and visions of the staff, the university sought to engage the personnel already in the planning stage by launching a voluntary design process via Zoom workshops. The online access enabled groups to form randomly across disciplines and units. We consider these workshops as sites of joint decision-making in which a wide range of interests was negotiated in interaction.

1.2. Conversation analysis and joint decision-making

In recent years, the details of joint decision-making processes have been investigated especially in the field of conversation analysis. These studies provide a range of theoretical and conceptual tools that can also be applied to elucidate the specificities of interdisciplinary teaching development. Joint decision-making may be conceptualized as a process that involves participants coordinately reaching “a commitment to future action” (Huisman, 2001, p. 70) through sequences of initiating and responsive actions. In consensual settings, a joint decision-making sequence is typically launched by one participant making a proposal for future action, while decisions emerge through the recipients’ responses to the proposal (Houtkoop-Steenstra, 1987; Maynard, 1984). Accepting responses typically lead to a decision. Hindering the emergence of a decision is a more delicate process in which no explicit rejections are needed. Stevanovic (2012) suggested that joint decisions emerge when the recipients’ accepting responses to proposals contain three components: a claim of understanding of what the proposal is about (*access*), an indication that the proposed plan is feasible (*agreement*), and a demonstration of willingness to treat the plan as binding (*commitment*). If the recipient abandons the sequence before providing all these components, the proposal is de facto rejected, without the recipient needing to explicitly reject it. In consensual contexts, speakers have been shown to constantly monitor the reception of their proposals and to reformulate them to avoid disagreement and to arrive at a mutually acceptable decision (Boden, 1995). In the inherently conflictual decision-making contexts, in contrast, disagreements are largely expected (Bilmes, 1981; Walker, 1995). For example, in a formal union-management negotiation, participants consistently made tendentious interpretations of each other’s talk, thus bypassing opportunities to reach agreement (Walker, 1995).

Joint decision-making often takes place in contexts in which participants have different areas of expertise (see e.g., Campbell, Roth, & Jornet, 2019; Housley, 2000), such different areas of expertise being a key characteristic of the notion of *interdisciplinarity*. The notion of *epistemic authority* (Heritage & Raymond, 2005) becomes then particularly relevant, as participants may have authoritative access to *disciplinary* knowledge in their own field but not in the fields of their co-participants. Importantly, however, joint decision-

making is not only about displaying knowledge but also about establishing decisions, which is captured by the notion of *deontic authority* (Stevanovic, 2018; Stevanovic & Peräkylä, 2012). In the context of teaching development, deontic authority may have to do, not only with the specific topics to be taught, but also with the concrete *pedagogical* solutions to teach these topics.

Participation in joint decision-making is not a self-evident right of each participant. Making a proposal about a specific matter (Stevanovic, 2021) or closing an episode of talk and retrospectively orienting to it as a decision (Clifton, 2009) is related to one's status and ranking in the interactive setting. Our research approach considers the negotiation of epistemic and deontic authority in joint decision-making as rooted in the academic cultures that participants activate in interaction.

1.3. Research questions

Our investigation is guided by the research question: How are various academic cultures activated in joint decision-making about interdisciplinary university teaching?

We pursue the answer through the following sub-questions:

- a) How do the participants make and respond to each other's proposals, close episodes of talk, establish decisions, and manage the scope of the decision-making agenda?
- b) Which aspects of identity, action, relations, and dwelling do the participants activate during the decision-making?
- c) What types of patterns of epistemic and deontic authority emerge, as the participants invoke their disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge and expertise?

2. Data and methods

2.1. Data

Our data consist of nine interdisciplinary teaching development workshops held on Zoom in April–May 2020. The total of 40 participants gave their written informed consent for the study in the same digital form that they submitted to enroll in the workshops. The workshops were open for all members of the university community. We did not record the participants' disciplines or other information about their background. These were taken into analytic consideration only to the extent to which the participants themselves communicated this type of personal information during the discussion (on the methodological aspects of this principle, see e.g., Schegloff, 1997). Based on the data the participants seemed to represent a broad range of disciplines, including the natural, social and behavioral sciences.

All workshops followed the same agenda. The participants received background information of the planned module in advance. When the participants logged in to Zoom, they first aired initial ideas on a digital whiteboard. The group work began with an introduction round, after which the facilitator explained the aim and procedure. Each group was supposed to fill in a concept card to produce an outline for the module: the intended learning outcomes, core contents, and pedagogical choices. The given timeslot for the group work was 30 min, some groups working up to 50 min.

2.2. Methods

The methodology developed for the study combines conversation analysis (CA) and cultural discourse analysis (CuDA). Both are qualitative methodologies aiming at revealing the intelligibility of social interaction practices to participants. CA is a data-driven method to examine sequences of initiating and responsive actions in the micro-level practices of social interaction – that is, how participants raise expectations for each other with respect to their subsequent utterances and how the subsequent utterances retrospectively define the “meaning” of the prior utterances (Clift, 2017; Heritage, 1984; Schegloff, 2007). CuDA extends the analysis to cultural meaning-making patterns that underlie the publicly observable actions and utterances (Carbaugh, 2007; Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2017). As such meaning-making is often self-evident to participants and, therefore, seldom explicated, CuDA targets elements of social interaction that are “potent in meanings” (Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2017, p. 3). These elements are referred to as ‘discursive hubs’ of action, identity, relations, and dwelling.¹ We use CuDA to identify the underlying academic cultures that the workshop participants activated in interaction.

The hub of action considers participants' interpretation of what is relevant to do in the workshop: what do participants emphasize as they discuss about the module, and to which purpose do they use the given time. For example, participants may contradict others, thereby suggesting that questioning other people's views is appropriate or even desirable in the situation. Participants may commit themselves to filling the concept card or ignore it, thereby communicating what they find as relevant action. **The hub of identity** considers participants' interpretation of who they are in the situation. Participants communicate in workshops from the positions they activate in interaction; for example, who they are academically and pedagogically. **The hub of relations** considers how participants communicate their relations to other members of the workshop group but often also beyond, for example to students or representatives of another discipline. **The hub of dwelling** considers which “concrete and contingent circumstances” (Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2013, p. 6)

¹ CuDA contains a further, fifth hub of feelings. Although also CA addresses affect displays and affiliating, we ended up removing the hub of feelings from the analysis as our main results could also be expressed without the hub of feelings.

Table 1

Three academic cultures along four discursive hubs. Aggregated from Bergquist and Pawlak (2008), Latta (2020), Carbaugh (2007), and Carbaugh and Cerulli (2017).

	Collegial culture	Managerial culture	Developmental culture
Identity	Individual scholar	Member of institution	Collaborative scholar & administrator
Action	Research	Strategy, organizational standards	Teaching, learning, development
Relations	Democratic: rational debates, coalitions	Hierarchical: legitimation of agenda, pressure, coercion	Collaborative: supporting, encouraging others
Dwelling	Disciplines, autonomy	Effectiveness, economy	Personal and institutional maturation

do participants see serving as the grounds of the curriculum change.

The discursive hubs often provide complementary information of each other. For example, when participants explicate what should be done in the teaching development workshop (the hub of action), they often reveal something about themselves as scholars or pedagogues (the hub of identity) and communicate their relations to colleagues (the hub of relations). Carbaugh and Cerulli (2013, p. 10) call this complex of explicit and implicit communication ‘a meta-cultural commentary’ that penetrates beyond “the surface of meanings”, addressing “the deeper significance and importance of the matters at hand”.

The analyses by Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) and Latta (2020) made us suggest that the planning of the new module in random groups would probably initially invoke traits of several academic cultures in the workshop interaction. Table 1 displays the academic cultures described by Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) and Latta (2020) categorized by us according to the discursive hubs of CuDA (Carbaugh, 2007; Carbaugh & Cerulli, 2017). It was from this prior understanding that we set ourselves with the task defined in the research question: How, then, is a specific academic culture activated in the joint decision-making of the development of teaching at a research university?

2.3. The analysis process

We began the analysis by listening to and documenting all nine workshops. To investigate the practices on joint decision-making we first identified all proposals from the data. Each proposal was listed in an Excel file and coded as either ‘a substantial proposal’ (N = 80; a proposal dealing with a disciplinary substance matter) or ‘a pedagogical proposal’ (N = 76). Thereafter, we documented the rationale that the speaker provided for the proposal, and the immediate response the proposal received in the group. Finally, we marked whether the proposal became included in the concept card as the group’s decision.

The initial codings were used to outline three basic patterns in the types of proposals made in the nine workshops. These patterns were the following: (1) an approximately same number of substantial and pedagogical proposals made during the workshop (indicated with red in Table 2), (2) a larger number of substantial proposals, compared to the pedagogical ones (indicated with green in Table 2), and (3) a larger number of pedagogical proposals, compared to substantial ones (indicated with yellow in Table 2).

After the identification of these rough patterns in the types of proposals made in the workshops, we returned to the original audio recordings, analyzing the workshops in full length. This time we paid attention to further interactional details, asking whether the proposals in a given workshop tended to lead to consensual or conflictual decision-making and whether the interaction resulted in the articulation of epistemic or deontic authority. Based on these considerations, we were ultimately able to select three maximally different workshops for the analysis that was now extended to also investigate the academic cultures along the four discursive hubs of cultural discourse analysis: identity, action, relations, and dwelling. The workshops indicated with asterisk (*) in Table 2 are those discussed in this paper.

In the results section below, we will present data extracts from the three selected workshops. The data extracts have been transcribed following the conventions of CA (Hepburn & Bolden, 2013). The transcripts have been pseudonymized; all topics, disciplines, and other items that might enable identification have been changed. The participants are referred to with fictive three-letter names running in alphabetical order.

3. Results

3.1. ‘Anemone G2’: collegial culture

The Finnish-speaking group consists of four participants and the facilitator. The analysis along the discursive hubs of CuDA reveals the following characteristics in the communication of the group (Table 3).

In Extract 1 below, participants begin outlining the intended learning outcomes for the module, which is one of the key activities in the workshop and the main locus of negotiations of authority. Just before the extract, Ari, Bea, Cam, and Don have agreed that the intended learning outcome of the module must be the understanding of complex connectivity. Thus, starting from line 1, Ari goes on:

Extract 1 (Anemone G2_12:36)

- 01 Ari: mä mietin kanssa tavallaan se (.) sen ninkun mm,
I was also thinking in a way about (-) like um,
- 02 (0.5) sen systeemisyyden ja kytkeytyneisyyden ymmärtäminen
(0.5) the understanding of systemicity and connectivity
- 03 että miten ihminen (.) minkä järjestelmän osana me ollaan
like how humans (.) which part of the system we are
- 04 miten me vaikutetaan itse siihen järjestelmään
how do we ourselves influence that system
- 05 et e- ei oo vaan ninku ihmisjärjestelmä ja sitte jotain muuta
so that there is not only a human system and then something else
- 06 (.) va- vaan että tää keskinäiskytkytyvyys ja et itseasias
(.) but but that this mutual connectivity and that actually
- 07 nää ihmisen ajurit on nyt vaikuttaneet aika radikaalisti siihen
these human drivers have now quite radically influenced the
- 08 että missä tilanteessa nyt ollaan.
situation where we are now.
- 09 (.)
- 10 Ari: et jotenki se näkökulma et jos aattelee ninku opiskelijaakin
so somehow the perspective that if you like think about the student too
- 11 vielä et siitä (.) minä (.) et ei vaan me (.) vaan Eninkun
so that (.) I (.) so that it is not only us (.) but Elike
- 12 kaikk(h)i€. .hh sen et mentäis aikalailla heti semmoseen
everything€. .hh so that we could quite immediately go to the kind
- 13 ninku systeemisyyden (.) ajatteluun joka voi olla haastavaa mutta
of systemic (.) thinking which can be challenging but
- 14 sen pitääki olla haastavaa koska se on sit sellasta
it must be challenging because it is then the kind of

- 15 näkökulmanmuutosta.
change of perspective.
- 16 Bea: mm.
mm.
- 17 Cam: mä sanosin tohon ihan ytimekkäästi että perustiedot, (0.5)
to this I would concisely say that basic information, (0.5)
- 18 intersuonallisista systeemeistä siis (.)
about the interpersonal systems I mean (.)
- 19 aika moni opiskelija joka ei ole kyseistä alaa opiskellut
quite many students who haven't studied this field
- 20 on ihan kujalla että mitä sillä tarkotetaan ylipäätänsä
don't know anything about what is meant by that in general
- 21 että miten ninku eri systeemit vaikuttaa toisiinsa (.)
like how the different systems influence each other (.)
- 22 ihan perustavaa laatua olevaa tietoa.
just fundamental basic information.
- 23 Don: joo.
yeah.
- 24 Bea: niin siitä ninku (.) niin tavallaan siitä (.) koko ninku
so/yeah about like (.) like in a way about (.) the whole like
- 25 tavallaan siitä .mhh (.) joo hh (.) tavallaan tohon
in a way that .mhh (.) yeah hh (.) in a way to that
- 26 systeemisyyteen mä ehkä (.) hh voisin siihen >mä en
systemicity I perhaps (.) hh to that I could >I don't
- 27 mä en itseasias< (.) >ninku ihan tarkalleen tiedä< (.)
I don't actually< (.) >like quite exactly know< (.)
- 28 tällä hetkellä parikyt vuotta sitten systeemianalyysia tein ja
it is twenty years from now that I did systems analysis and
- 29 systeemi tämmöstä (.) systeemijattelua vähän mut tavallaan se
a bit like this kind of systems (.) systems thinking but in a way
- 30 että (.) mutta mä en tiedä täsmälleen että millä tavalla ihminen
that (.) but I don't know exactly how humans are
- 31 ymmärretään tavallaan siinä systeemijattelussa koska ninku (2.0)
understood in the systems thinking because like (2.0)
- 32 mulle on ninku tosi selkeä et se (.) se tavallaan pitää
for me it is like really clear that (.) in a way it should
- 33 ymmärtää jotenkin se että millä tavalla ne (0.4) sen systeemin
be understood somehow that how those (0.4) of the system
- 34 tai sen yhteiskunnan tai, (0.8) ja ninkun mhh (.) konteksti
or of the society or, (0.8) and like mhh (.) the context
- 35 että millä tavalla ne yhteiskunnan rakenteet vaikuttaa
so that in which ways the structures of society influence
- 36 siihen ihmisen toimintaan
human action

. (continued).

Table 2

The number and the relative distribution of substantial and pedagogical proposals in the 9 workshops (identified with code names).

Group	Proposals	Substantial	Pedagogical
*Anemone	15	7	8
Balsam	19	12	7
Crocus	29	13	16
Daisy	20	9	11
Echinacea	11	7	4
Fuchsia	12	9	3
*Gerbera	25	16	9
*Hibiscus	17	4	13
Indigo	8	3	5
	156	80	76

Table 3

The CuDA analysis of the Anemone group.

Identity	Research-related identities emphasized; detailed record of past and current affiliations to various disciplines offered; all participants relate a PhD degree, one participant identifying themselves as an administrator
Action	Excessive time used to discuss broad, abstract frameworks; emphasis on conceptual discussion instead of the development task at hand; the course module planning card mainly ignored during the almost 50-minute-long discussion
Relations	Articulation of distinct disciplinary understandings of the topic not topicalized as a problem; the administrator participant remaining mainly silent, explaining the silence at the end of the workshop with reference to a lack of expertise that they hold compared to the researcher participants of the group; the facilitator's attempt to intervene in the meandering discussion to remind the group about its development task trumped by the researcher participants' competing agenda
Dwelling	The autonomy of disciplinary research

Ari raises a large question about the systemicity and connectivity of humans and things in the world (lines 1–8). In prefacing his turn with the phrase *mä mietin kanssa* “I was also thinking”, Ari frames his view as agreeing with what has been said before. In this context, Ari's turn may be understood as a proposal for what should be taught in the module. After a short silence (line 9), Ari goes on reflecting on the idea from the perspective of the students who should be introduced to systemic thinking right from the start of the module and who might find the acquisition of such a new perspective challenging (lines 10–15).

In response to Ari, Bea provides a minimal response (line 16), after which Cam makes another, more specific proposal (lines 17–22). In prefacing his proposal with *mä sanosin tohon ihan ytimekkäästi* “to this I would concisely say”, Cam frames his proposal as agreeing with prior talk, just like Ari previously did: he simply states more “concisely” what Ari has been trying to say. However, instead of adopting or elaborating on the systemic perspective by Ari, Cam deals with the issue from another perspective, reducing systemicity into the specific social psychological notion of “interpersonal systems”. Furthermore, while Ari called for a “change of perspective” (line 15), Cam reduces the learning outcome to the receiving of “fundamental basic information” (line 22).

Following Don's response *joo* “yeah” (line 23), Bea provides yet another apparently agreeing response to what has been said (lines 24–36). In this case, the linkage to the prior talk is accomplished through the confirming Finnish response particle *niin* “so/yeah”, which has been shown to claim familiarity and recognition of the matter at hand (Sorjonen, 2001). Indeed, subsequently, Bea describes her past experiences with systems thinking (line 28). She however problematizes the notion of humans in the big picture, first claiming a lack of knowledge in this respect (lines 30–31) and then coming to a more definite, sociologically inspired conclusion: what “should be understood” (lines 32–33) are the ways in which “the structures of society influence human action” (lines 35–36).

Extract 1 thus demonstrates how researcher participants with different disciplinary backgrounds maintain the surface of agreement and smooth interaction but stay within the substance area of their disciplines. What becomes apparent is the participants' lack of actual engagement with each other's talk. Each participant transforms the matter at hand into something essentially different from what was just said. The CuDA analysis above shows that the cultural discourse in the group interaction emphasizes an individual scholar representing a specialized discipline. The assigned planning task is secondary to nuanced conceptual discussion from each represented field of inquiry. The autonomy of disciplines is respected, and distinct vocabularies are not topicalized as problems for the situation. Authority displayed in the group is thus essentially of epistemic nature, deriving specifically from research work. Then again, no deontic authority develops in the group to complete the interdisciplinary and pedagogical joint decision-making task at hand.

Among the academic cultures (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Latta, 2020), the Anemone group activates the collegial culture. Although the course module planning assignment and the presence of the facilitator and the administrator participant keep open the chance for the participants to activate the developmental and managerial cultures, this does not happen. Instead, the Anemone group keeps its joint decision-making within the collegial culture.

3.2. 'Gerbera G2': developmental culture

The group consists of three participants and the facilitator, who used English as lingua franca. The analysis along the discursive hubs of CuDA reveals the following characteristics in the communication of the group (Table 4).

The CuDA analysis shows both similarities and differences between the Anemone and Gerbera groups. Both groups engage in conceptually complex discussion and emphasize the delicate nuances of disciplinary knowledge. However, unlike the Anemone group whose discussion was mainly abstract and theoretical, the Gerbera participants also bring in several pedagogical aspects and concepts and tangible views on the pragmatic application of research-based knowledge in society. The Gerbera participants commit themselves to complete the assigned task.

Extract 2 below documents a moment in which the participants discuss the core contents of the module. Fia has expressed that the task will be a difficult one. The challenge to choose from several alternative perspectives exists already within one single discipline, that of Fia's own. Furthermore, the prospective students' backgrounds and interests are currently unknown. The workshop halts at this moment for a while as if the participants hesitated to move forward. There is a long silence before Eli finally speaks, constructing what he considers as a broader approach crossing disciplinary differences:

Extract 2 (Gerbera G2_16:15)

```

01 Eli: I think like we if we try to think on broader categories
02   uhh (.) so we can (.) sort of like uh think about
03   responsibility as political processes what is happening in the
04   world, (0.3) uh and why it's that (0.4) it's political processes
05   (2.0)
06 Fia: Yes. (0.6) yeah I think that it's maybe then also like
07   what this:: connection if if, (1.0) if it would start with
08   a:: (-- columns like the (.) environmental social and
09   economic responsibility, (1.0) then (.) of course it could be
10   uhh (.) either split or then (.) uhh (0.6) go through the
11   aspects separately (.) like,
12 Eli: Uhh no what I'm trying to say because here it says that
13   what should be the core content so (.) I'm trying to (.) like
14   take the content on a more uh (.) broader level so (.)
15   one is this (.) political processes and I I see ah (1.2)
16   like responsible production and responsible consumption
17   maybe (.) [and,
18 Fia:   [Yes (.) yeah yeah and I I was thinking that
19   (.) uhhm the political process would (.) for me
20   it would belong to the social responsibility (.) and
21   the social art °maybe°
22 Eli: Yeah. (1.0) I (.) I agree with this but then a- ah (0.7)
23   then somehow it's it's very difficult uhh (.) if we take on
24   this ahh then (.) the social and economic, (0.6) because
25   in the economic there are many social questions
26   actually a[ah
27 Fia:   [yeah
28 Eli: how business is operating so that's why I'm trying to
29   separate it into production and consumption rather (.) aah
30   (1.5) but uh (.) yeah I mean (.) I actually, (1.2) hh

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At the beginning of Extract 2, Eli makes a proposal that the module would encompass the topic of responsibility and that this would be understood in the context of political processes (lines 1–4). In response, Fia makes a proposal of her own (lines 6–11), which she frames as being in line with Eli's (note the turn-initial particles "yes" and "yeah"). However, Fia suggests another perspective to the issue and does not engage with the content of Eli's prior talk. Eli orients to Fia's response as lacking in this regard, as he initiates a "third turn repair" (Schegloff, 1997). By starting his turn with a display of dissatisfaction with the prior treatment of his turn ("Uhh no what I'm trying to say", line 12), Eli brings the lack of mutual understanding to the surface level of interaction. This is followed by Fia explicating the reasoning underlying her previous proposal: from her perspective, the notion of "political" equals the notion of "social".

Table 4

The CuDA analysis of the Gerbera group.

Identity	Research-related identities emphasized; detailed record of past and current affiliations to various disciplines offered
Action	A large pool of scientific concepts used as well as tangible views on the pragmatic application of research-based knowledge in society; pedagogical aspects integrated in the discussion; the course module planning card systematically filled; confusion overcome by leaving initiatives aside at times to be completed later
Relations	First names used to engage with each other, checks made to secure that everyone's proposals are being addressed; relations communicated also beyond academia, for example to policies, businesses, stakeholders, and partnerships
Dwelling	Up-to-date, societally responsive teaching as an integral part of researcher's work

With the phrase “for me” (line 19), she displays awareness of the existence of multiple different conceptualizations related to the topic. Fia thus implicitly invokes the possibility that the previous lack of mutual understanding might also be due to a conceptualization difference. In his next turn, Eli then addresses the issue of conceptualization head on, pointing to what he sees to be a problem in Fia’s way of conceptualizing the currently relevant notions.

Extract 2 differs radically from the patterns observed in Extract 1. Even if the participants also in this case talked past each other (Fia’s treatment of Eli’s prior turn), here the participants brought the lack of mutual understanding to the surface level of interaction, which allowed them subsequently to identify a possible reason underlying the understanding problem. In Extract 2, the appearance of agreement, smoothness, and mutual solidarity were put at risk, in hope of being able to find a more genuine mutual understanding as a result.

The CuDA analysis above shows that the cultural discourse in the group interaction emphasizes a pragmatic view of university whose researchers acknowledge the changing environment by developing their work. From this premise, the group creates a substantially and pedagogically rich plan, displaying deontic authority to establish joint decisions in response to the participants’ proposals. The discursive hubs and the negotiation of authority all suggest that among the academic cultures (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Latta, 2020), the Gerbera group implements the developmental culture in interaction.

3.3. ‘Hibiscus G3’: managerial culture

This English-speaking group, consisting of five members and the facilitator, departs clearly from the two other analyzed groups. The analysis along the discursive hubs of CuDA reveals the following characteristics in the communication of the group (Table 5).

In Extract 3 below, the group is defining the intended learning outcomes. Several participants have been involved in creating the first articulation. The collaborative initiative pauses for a while, making a momentum for one of the researcher-in-another-field participants, Gus, to join the task with a comprehensive phrasing:

Extract 3 (Hibiscus G3_10:52)

01 Gus: To me a great learning outcome of a module
 02 is that exactly as we say the first (.) the first uhh
 03 learning outcome would be that they (.) would understand
 04 obviously the (.) the main concepts, (0.4) but then that
 05 they could apply this to analyze for example current emerging
 06 topics in the world.
 07 (1.5)
 08 Ian: Yes.
 09 (.)
 10 Jan: [Applic]ation kind of,
 11 Kim: [Yeah,]
 12 Gus: Exactly applying their concepts to (.) to analyze or synthesize,
 13 Jan: Yeah, (0.5) I have this one (.) uhh one post on whiteboard where
 14 I said like, (0.4) using the, (1.0) uh knowledge based kind of
 15 tools but, (2.0) I’m not sure how (.) how much should we address
 16 the: (0.3) fact that these students come from like different
 17 disciplinary contexts?
 18 Ian: Mmm.
 19 (1.0)
 20 Lea: This is very, (0.7) yeah this is quite restrictive in
 21 how much you can teach .hhh but maybe to give students
 22 some insight in how their disciplinary knowledge and skills,
 23 (0.5) that they are going to learn at the university can be
 24 of use for them.

At the beginning of the extract, Gus expresses his view on a learning outcome of the module (lines 1–6). While the need for students to learn the main concepts related to the topic of the module is self-evident (“obviously”, line 4) and something that the group has already established before (“exactly as we say”, line 2), Gus additionally proposes that these concepts also be applied during the module. In response to Gus, Ian and Kim display agreement with his view (lines 8, 11) and Jan formulates the twist of Gus’s proposal (“application kind of”, line 10). This is followed by Gus’s appreciation of Jan’s uptake (“exactly”, line 12) and a brief elaboration of his idea (line 12).

Invoking the notion of “application”, however, activates a question about the extent to which students’ various disciplinary backgrounds should be considered – the question that Jan subsequently raises (lines 13–17). Although Jan raises the questions by referring to a lack of knowledge in the relevant respect (“I’m not sure how (.) how much”, line 15), his utterance may nonetheless be heard as a proposal to consider the role that substantial discipline-based knowledge could play in teaching. After Ian’s minimal response (line 18) and a silence (line 19), Lea, who has thus far been silent during the extract, takes a turn. She defines the scope of the module as “very restrictive” and thereby removes any discussion of specific disciplinary-based substances from the joint decision-making agenda. Instead, Lea suggests that the students are given more generic insight on how to use disciplinary-based knowledge (lines 20–24).

Extract 3 demonstrates participants using their pedagogical expertise to establish a uniting domain of pedagogical speech, characterized by the ease of obtaining mutual understanding and formulating proposals and decisions. The practical pedagogical speech that moves on an applied level lacks the conceptual contestation characteristic to the other analyzed groups. The applied level of pedagogy serves as a source of deontic authority in the Hibiscus group. Next, we will consider how the pedagogically based deontic authority also begins to narrow the joint decision-making agenda associated with teaching development.

In Extract 4 below, the Hibiscus group has turned to outline the core contents. Just before the transcribed interaction, the participants have discussed what interdisciplinarity may mean. An educational scientist has suggested that the module provides a momentum to begin raising an interdisciplinary generation at the university. This proposal could open a conceptually significant educational discussion in the group, yet the group remains silent. It is on this halting moment when Lea initiates a shift away from the emergent topic of interdisciplinary education and returns to an earlier proposed idea of including the topic of wellbeing to the core contents.

Extract 4 (Hibiscus G3_28:25)

01 Lea: Just some psychological training on how to deal with anxiety,
02 (3.0)
03 Ian: Yeah.
04 Lea: to stay calm and solution-oriented in the face of (.)
05 major challenges,
06 (.)
07 Ian: Yeah.
08 Lea: You know (.) whatever.
09 (.)
10 Lea: Basics of meditation (.) heh heh (.) wha- what_ever
11 so that people are (-) (.) so that (.) these are young people.
12 (1.0)
13 Jan: So that they will (.) kind of, (0.5) set the basis for
14 a career in the future so that,=
15 Ian: =Yeah.=
16 Jan: =Not burn out like,
17 (.)
18 Lea: Exactly.
19 Ian: Yeah.
20 (1.0)
21 Ian: And as we can see from, (1.0) that almost half of them
22 are already at risk, (0.5) in the beginning of studies so we
23 that I think that this is very important that, (0.3) they,
24 (1.0) they think about that their own wellbeing not just
25 social anxiety but anxiety (.) like (.) or symptoms
26 of burnout (0.5) in general.
27 (0.5)
28 Jan: So social learning emotional learning and also (.) could be
29 things too like interdisciplinary (.) like (.) aa communication
30 (.) aspect as well,

((Lines 31-47 removed, during which Gus introduces the linkage between communication and science policy and proposes that the module would conclude with a unit on how to communicate with wider society and policy makers.))

55 Gus: There is a whole discipline about of kind of (.) science policy
56 (.) interface (.) and I think that would be really important
57 in a module like this.
58 (0.6)
59 Lea: I agree but now but listen (.) I think communication is always
60 about communicating something. (2.0) You first need to
61 learn the content that they (.) can communicate (.)
62 Jan: S[o could]
63 Lea: [the ide]as the problems the solutions and then how to
64 communicate them.
65 Ian: [Yeah.]
66 Jan: [Could] this be (.) kind of some kind of learning task that
67 is integrated into the whole module like (.) how to communicate
68 these issues (.) it could be implemented as (.) aa (.) like
69 we have the final product of the module was this (.) group work
70 (.) aa where the student groups small groups created there (.)
71 aa phenomenon (.) kind of in the wider frames of these (.)
72 kind of projects so here we have kind of (.) (---) .hhh
73 or any kind of (.) end product that (.) enhances this (.)
74 product (.) outcome or,
75 (1.0)
76 Lea: Yeah it could be, (0.7) sure, (1.5) this is about the
77 methodology of teaching.

Table 5
The CuDA analysis of the Hibiscus group.

Identity	Educational knowledge and pedagogical expertise emphasized by three participants, the remaining two participants presenting themselves as researchers of other fields
Action	Pedagogically relevant preconditions for a competently outlined module quickly collected; group work progressed effectively across the pedagogical course development stages: from intended learning outcomes to assessment methods, grading, and feedback; a large pool of pedagogical ideas introduced; disciplinary substance knowledge actively kept out of the joint decision-making agenda
Relations	Effortless relating to each other on the uncontested domain of pedagogical practice; weak, even hesitant relating from pedagogy to disciplinary knowledge. Of the two researcher-in-other-fields participants, only one engaged with the pedagogical discussion. No effort by others to invite the silent researcher into the discussion
Dwelling	Pedagogical standards

Lea makes a proposal for including “psychological training on how to deal with anxiety” as one of the core contents of the module (line 1). After a silence (line 2) and a confirmation token by Ian (*yeah*, line 3) Lea elaborates on her proposal (lines 4–5). However, after yet another silent moment (line 6) and Ian’s “yeah” (line 7), Lea ends up displaying uncertainty with her proposal: her utterance “you know (.) whatever” (line 8) conveys an appeal to the recipients to grasp the main idea of her proposal and complement it with appropriate detail to make it work. Lea’s next turn, in which she makes a more specific proposal about the “basics of meditation” (line 10–11), is produced with laughter, which marks the situation as delicate (Goffman, 1956; Haakana, 2001). Finally, after a silence (line 12), Jan responds to Lea’s proposal with a “so”-initiated formulation. Formulations are utterances that show understanding of prior talk by suggesting a specific version of it and inviting the prior speaker’s confirmation (Heritage & Watson, 1979), which Lea indeed provides (line 18).

Ian, who has previously engaged with Lea’s talk by providing several “yeah” responses (lines 3, 7, 15, 19), picks upon the topic of anxiety (lines 21–26). By prefacing his utterance with the phrase “as we can see from” (line 21), he draws attention to empirical research carried out on students’ wellbeing. Subsequently Jan invokes the notions of “social learning”, “emotional learning”, and “communication” as relevant to the matter at hand (line 28), thus providing a conceptual map that could elaborate the ongoing module development. Hence, while Lea’s initial proposal appeared to lack scientific clarity, educational scientists in the group were able to reframe the proposal so that it would make sense from the perspective of their disciplinary backgrounds. Educational scientists articulate their epistemic authority at this point, after which Gus, representing another discipline, articulates his.

Possibly triggered by Jan’s notion of “communication” (line 29), Gus introduces the linkage between communication and science policy and proposes that the module would end with an emphasis on how to communicate with wider society and policy makers (lines 31–54, not shown in the transcript). Finally, Gus points out to the existence of a “whole discipline” about such communication and highlights its importance to the students (line 55–57). Gus, in other words, suggests that communication would be one of the substantial contents covered in the module.

Subsequently (lines 59–61, 63–64), Lea agrees with the Gus’s basic idea of including communicating in the module, but she starkly disagrees with his notion that communication would constitute a learning substance in its own right. Lea prefaces her turn with the directive “listen”, which has been associated with turns that initiate some new course of action (Sidnell, 2007, p. 402). “Listen” emphasizes here the differences between Gus’s and Lea’s approaches. For Lea, communication makes sense only if there is first some substance to be communicated. In the face of this obvious disagreement, Jan’s following turn (lines 66–74) comes across as a neat compromise: he suggests that the final assignment of the module would request students to communicate about the studied topics. Jan’s solution thus circumvents the tricky issue of communication. In her subsequent response (lines 76–77), Lea however refrains from going along with Jan’s simple solution. While agreeing with Jan’s idea in principle, she casts communication as being “about the methodology of teaching”, not about its substance.

The CuDA analysis above shows that the cultural discourse in the group interaction emphasizes pedagogy as an applied practice. Among the academic cultures (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Latta, 2020), the group first activates developmental culture by the overall emphasis on teaching and learning. However, the negotiation of authority in the joint decision-making shifts the group away from the developmental culture. Applied pedagogical practice serves as a basis of all claims of deontic authority made in the group, as the participants establish decisions and control the group’s decision-making agenda. In contrast to the other analyzed groups, initiatives based on disciplinary knowledge are not endorsed by the Hibiscus group. The articulations of epistemic authority, even in the field of educational sciences, remain subject to practical pedagogical standards in the decision-making of the group. Pedagogical models, of which the planning card in the workshop is a prime example, are thus used as means to steer the decision-making. The negotiation of authority moves the Hibiscus group to the managerial culture.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The results show the uneven distribution of power and authority in the interdisciplinary teaching development at a research university. This was linked to diverse groups activating distinct academic cultures while making teaching decisions. The results highlight the role of deontic authority as a critical factor in the joint decision-making activity associated with interdisciplinary teaching development. In a research university, each participant has authoritative access to disciplinary knowledge in their own field (*epistemic authority*). Therefore, it is the power to control the decision-making agenda and establish decisions (*deontic authority*) that matters in interdisciplinary decision-making.

The analyzed workshops showed three different examples of negotiating authority. Each example was found to rely discursively on a distinct academic culture. In the first workshop, in which the group activated the collegial culture, no deontic authority to make decisions became relevant. Instead, the participants retained their separate disciplinary fields of epistemic authority. This left the group helpless to complete the interdisciplinary teaching development task. In the third workshop, deontic authority was embodied in the pedagogical decisions, which dominated over disciplinary considerations. The group adhered to practical pedagogical standards, which inflicted a managerialist character in the decision-making. In both cases, the consensual surface of interaction served to conceal the group's failure to complete the teaching development task. In contrast, the second workshop group activated the developmental culture that legitimated pragmatic negotiations of deontic authority regarding both interdisciplinarity and pedagogy, making the group operationally able.

Our results suggest that pedagogical discourses may be used in ways that reinforce the hierarchical managerialist traits in joint decision-making. As several universities in Finland and beyond invest in the research of their teaching and learning sector and include pedagogical objectives in their strategies, it is critical to investigate how the increasing emphasis on teaching and learning merges into concurrent organizational tendencies. Further research using more extensive data is therefore needed.

As for the practical conclusions of the study, the results illuminate the diversity of the groups discussing university teaching development. In this context, both disciplinary and pedagogical mastery can sometimes prevent inclusive dialogue. Therefore, when planning and implementing collaborative development events in the future, joint decision-making could be facilitated by the organizers' increasing awareness of the academic cultures and the associated discourses that the participants are likely to activate in the event.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

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