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What teaching law in Sweden and India taught me

Background

Drawing on my experience teaching law students in Sweden and India, this article examines pedagogical practices at the Department of Law at Uppsala University (*Juridicum*), Sweden and at Tamil Nadu National Law University (TNNLU), India.¹ The article offers a comparative analysis of the role of an entry-level university teacher at both universities, primarily based on my experience, and aims to identify and critically reflect on the pedagogical practices observed in both universities.

Following my qualification in the National Eligibility Test (NET)², I worked as *Assistant Professor of Law* at TNNLU from 2019 to 2022, during which I taught courses such as Public International Law (PIL), Family Law, Competition Law and International Criminal Law. In addition to teaching duties, I was also responsible for various university administrative responsibilities, including the Alumni Association, Student Affairs, the Grievance and Anti-Ragging Committee, the Welfare and Disciplinary Committee, the Trial Advocacy Committee, and the Cultural Committee. In 2024, I joined *Juridicum* as a university lecturer

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¹ Uppsala University, 'Department of Law' (*uu.se*) <<https://www.uu.se/en/departments/law>> accessed 17 September 2025; 'About Tamil Nadu National Law University' (*tnnlu.ac.in*) <<https://www.tnnlu.ac.in/About-TNNLU>> accessed 17 September 2025.

² University Grants Commission, 'Introduction: National Eligibility Test (NET)' (*ugc-net.nta.ac.in*) <<https://ugcnet.nta.ac.in/index.html>> accessed 17 September 2025. NET is a test that determines the eligibility for working as Assistant Professor in Indian universities and colleges.

(*universitetsadjunkt*), teaching Company Law (*associationsrätt*) to third-year law students (*Termin 5 or T5*) during the autumn term of 2024 (*Hösttermin or HT24*) and the spring term of 2025 (*Vårtermin or VT25*). Both of these positions require a master's degree in law as an eligibility requirement, while TNNLU additionally requires a NET qualification. It is important to note that the 'entry-level university teacher' mentioned in this article is someone who has not obtained a doctoral degree.

Although there is a wide range of aspects which could be discussed from these two diverse experiences, this article is limited to three major areas, which are structured across distinct chapters. The *first chapter* provides an outline of the course structure and the programme design, along with an overview of the nature of the responsibilities I held as a teacher. The *second chapter* outlines the teaching-learning methods and my role in relation to it. The *third chapter* focuses on student project work and the teacher's responsibilities in evaluation and feedback. The *fourth chapter* addresses matters related to student examinations and assessments, along with the associated evaluative duties. While the article adopts a teacher-centric perspective, the inextricable connection between pedagogy and student engagement necessitates consideration of the student viewpoint in certain areas.

To establish a coherent basis for comparison, the scope of this article is further narrowed to my teaching experience in the first term that I handled at both universities. This involves teaching Company Law to third-year students at *Juridicum* during the autumn term/*HT* 2024 and teaching PIL to third-year students at TNNLU in the Odd semester of 2019. The term 'Semester' in TNNLU is comparable to 'Term/termin' in *Juridicum*. *Vårtermin* and *hösttermin* are similar to 'Even semester' (January to May) and 'Odd semester' (July to November), respectively. Unlike *Juridicum*, I taught two courses per semester at TNNLU, and Family Law was one of the other courses I taught during the Odd semester of 2019. Hence, wherever relevant, reflections from Family Law will also be included, providing a more comprehensive view.

1 An overview of the course structure and responsibilities

As a lecturer (*adjunkt*) at *Juridicum*, I was responsible for teaching in *Juristprogrammet*, a 4.5-year law program equivalent to a master's degree in law (LL.M.).³ I taught Company Law (*associationsrätt*), which also encompassed capital market laws. Company Law and other courses in T5 are compulsory courses at *grundnivå*, which is in the first-cycle/bachelor's level.⁴ The T5 cohort consisted of around 200 students, of whom I taught approximately 100, divided into four seminar groups. Another lecturer was responsible for the remaining 100 students. The course directors, senior lecturers (who specialise in certain parts of the course, such as capital market laws) and lecturers together formed the *lärrarlag*, which is the teaching team that coordinated and shared responsibility for the various aspects of the course. Having a *lärrarlag* ensured uniformity in instructions to all T5 students, promoting coherence across their learning experiences.

For the Company Law course, lecturers were responsible for conducting seminars and assessing student projects and examinations. The course director, typically a professor or senior lecturer, delivered lectures periodically and handled the overall administration of the course, including framing questions for the final examination. Such a collaborative teaching model had clear advantages for both students and teachers, drawing on the strengths and contributions of each. However, it was crucial to ensure that this collaboration was managed efficiently; otherwise, it could negatively impact the students' learning experience. For instance, when one teacher sets the question paper and another grades the answers, a lack of clear communication and a shared understanding of expectations and assessment criteria could result in inconsistencies and ambiguities for students.

T5 consist of Accounting Law, Company Law and Tax Law and like other terms, students study one subject at a time. While each course follows its own distinct and independent schedule, with students complet-

³ Uppsala universitet, 'Om juristexamen' (*uu.se*, 27 August 2025) <<https://www.uu.se/student/institution/juridiska/juristprogrammet/o,m-juristexamen>> accessed 5 September 2025.

⁴ Uppsala universitet, 'Juristprogrammet: Upplägg, Termin 5' (*uu.se*) <<https://www.uu.se/utbildning/program/juristprogrammet>> accessed 5 September 2025.

ing coursework, attending seminars, and submitting projects before moving on to the next, there are certain integrative elements where the subjects are explored in relation to one another. T5 begins with Accounting Law, followed by Company Law, and then Tax Law, concluding with a final examination that covers all subjects in T5. In my role as lecturer, the primary responsibility was leading seminars, a total of 13, which spanned roughly one and a half months. Preparatory work for these seminars, along with project evaluation and examinations, was carried out throughout the remainder of the term. In most cases, seminar days did not coincide with those days allocated for assessment work. From a teacher's point of view, this allowed for focused attention on seminars, where adequate time can be allotted for students' queries or project discussions. Similarly, when evaluating and grading exams and projects, there was sufficient time available to assess students and provide detailed written feedback. Overall, the Company Law (T5) course structure offered a balanced allocation of time for both instruction and assessment. Furthermore, the term schedule allowed space to engage in independent research and participate in conferences; opportunities that not only strengthened my academic expertise but also facilitated the kind of professional growth essential for a university teacher's long-term career.

As *Assistant Professor of Law* at TNNLU, I was responsible for teaching in the undergraduate law programmes, B.A.LL.B (Hons.) and B.Com. LL.B (Hons.), which are five-year integrated degrees where law courses are combined with courses from other disciplines such as social sciences or commerce and accountancy.⁵ In India, a bachelor's degree in law (B.L. or LL.B.) typically requires, as a prerequisite, the completion of a bachelor's degree in any other field, such as sociology, history, or others, which is usually a three-year degree programme. Hence, a five-year integrated course offers a shorter route to obtaining a law degree compared to a six-year path (three years for a prerequisite bachelor's degree followed by three years for B.L. or LL.B.). If intending to pursue a master's degree in law, it would range from a one-year to a three-year programme (M.L. or LL.M), undertaken after the bachelor's degree. So, when compared to a

⁵ TNNLU, 'Undergraduate Programmes (UG)' <<https://www.tnnlu.ac.in/Course/Undergraduate-Programmes>> accessed 5 September 2025.

five-year programme at *Juridicum*, in India, a minimum of six years and a maximum of nine years is required to obtain a master's degree in law.⁶

At TNNLU, the B.A.LL.B (Hons.) and B.Com.LL.B (Hons.) programmes are structured so that courses in social sciences and commerce, respectively, are covered primarily in the first two years of the study, alongside law courses.⁷ The five-year integrated law programmes are designed to provide students with knowledge from law as well as other disciplines such as economics, sociology, and political science. This interdisciplinary approach to legal education would offer an opportunity for a deeper understanding of law itself.⁸ Later, when students enter professional life, it equips them to make rational decisions anchored in reality, conduct nuanced research and communicate effectively with professionals from other fields, such as economics or business.⁹

During my nearly three years at TNNLU, I had the opportunity to teach various subjects to students across different study periods, including semester 2, 3, 5, and 7. In my first term of teaching, I was responsible for students in Semester 5 (third-year) and Semester 3 (second-year), teaching PIL and Family Law, respectively. Both were obligatory courses. Students in a given Semester were divided into Section A and Section B, depending on whether they were enrolled in the B.A.LL.B or B.Com.LL.B programmes. Regardless of their programme, the law courses followed the same timeline. For example, PIL was taught in Semester 5, irrespective of whether students were enrolled in the B.A.LL.B. or B.Com.LL.B. programme. The lecturers, assessment and other components of the course adhered to the same schedule for both batches. The only difference was in the non-law subjects they studied, such as History or Corporate Accounting.

⁶ Depending on the university, there are one-year to three-year LL.M programmes offered in India. TNNLU offers a one-year LL.M. See, TNNLU, 'Center for PG Legal Studies' (tnnlu.ac.in) <<https://www.tnnlu.ac.in/Course/Postgraduate-Programmes>> accessed 9 September 2025. On the other hand, others like University of Delhi offer a two or three-year LL.M. See, University of Delhi, 'Postgraduate Admissions: Academic Session 2024–2025' <<https://lawfaculty.du.ac.in/Students/Admissions-To-LLM?>> accessed 9 September 2025.

⁷ TNNLU, 'Undergraduate Programmes (UG)'.

⁸ Jan Kellgren, 'Juridik och pedagogik' [1998] *Svensk Juristtidning* 652, 654 <<https://svjt.se/svjt/1998/652>> accessed 5 September 2025.

⁹ *Ibid.* 654–656.

During the Odd semester of 2019, I independently taught and evaluated Section B (B.Com.LL.B batch) for both PIL and Family Law courses, each comprising approximately 60 students. In most cases, one teacher (a Professor, an associate or assistant professor) was assigned to Section A, while another teacher was assigned to Section B. Although both followed the same course syllabus and prescribed literature, the course plan and teaching approaches differed depending on what each teacher adopted. From a teacher's perspective, this arrangement provided greater flexibility in structuring the course, aligning it with its nature and requirements, and allowing for more space for varied student-centric activities and teaching strategies tailored to each cohort. However, a counter-argument could be that such flexibility weakens the uniformity of learning experiences and, potentially, leads to disparities in outcomes across different batches of students within the same university. Another important aspect to consider in the course was the task of framing the question paper for examinations. It was carried out jointly by the teachers who taught the same course but for different batches, i.e., Section A and Section B. When the same teacher is involved in both question paper setting and evaluation, there is improved clarity on grading and what is expected from a student's responses.

In Semester 5, students studied a total of six subjects simultaneously throughout the term, namely Corporate Accounting, Company Law, Labour Law, PIL, Law of Evidence, and Law of Direct Taxation. In Semester 3, the subjects were Economics, Political Science, Contracts Law, Family Law, Constitutional Law, and the Indian Penal Code. Teaching for Semesters 5 and 3, like other semesters, was scheduled over a period of approximately four months. The teaching method primarily consisted of lectures, supplemented by student-centric activities tailored to the needs of each course, which were scheduled throughout the four-month term. Preparation and evaluation took place alongside the teaching schedule. At the end of the term, each course concluded with an individual final examination. The schedule can be intensive at times, particularly for teachers at the beginning of their careers who are eager to strengthen their expertise through independent research. Being in legal academia, it is through research that one can establish a professional

identity.¹⁰ Hence, dedicating a significant portion of time to research becomes important.

From the above discussion, it can be observed that the course structures followed at *Juridicum* and TNNLU differ significantly. *Juridicum* followed the *lärarlag* model, which placed greater emphasis on collaboration in teaching. Moreover, its ‘one-course-at-a-time’ approach allowed adequate and focused time for teaching, assessment and evaluation, while also providing space for teachers’ independent research work. TNNLU, on the other hand, is centred on the independent responsibility of the course teachers, offering flexibility to adopt teaching methods best suited to each batch of students. Furthermore, when the teacher has an overarching responsibility in a course, ranging from designing and assessing the course, it ensures consistency and clear expectations across various student course assignments.

2 Inside the Classroom: Reflections on Teaching Methods

Teaching Company Law at *Juridicum*, as mentioned above, was centred on collaborative teaching through the *lärarlag* model. My primary responsibilities were conducting seminars, while the course director/senior lecturers in T5 prepared and formulated the seminar problems. For an early-career teacher (ECT) like me, thorough preparation was essential to become fully conversant with the nuances of the seminar’s thematic focus. This preparation extended beyond possessing legal expertise in the relevant field to understanding the subject’s practical relevance, adopting a comparative perspective wherever appropriate, and, importantly, anticipating topics students might find challenging. For example, in seminars on company registration, familiarity with how the process is carried out in practice was essential. Such pedagogical grounding, in my view, truly prepares a teacher before the seminars. Periodic discussion with the *lärarlag*, particularly with experienced processors who have taught the course for many years, proved indispensable. As it was my first year teaching at *Juridicum*, the *lärarlag* provided the guidance and support necessary for me to be well-informed and effective in the classroom.

¹⁰ Fiona Cownie, *Legal Academics: Culture and Identities* (Bloomsbury Publishing 2004) 121 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781472559531>> accessed 15 September 2025.

T5 had a total of thirteen seminars, which were scheduled on two or at most three days per week. I was responsible for four seminar groups. Each seminar group comprised approximately 25 students, who were further divided into five base groups.¹¹ I taught one seminar group at a time, meaning that the four seminar groups were taught separately. In most cases, I met all the seminar groups on the same day, scheduled sequentially. At the beginning of the term, students were provided with the seminar questions. Prior to each seminar, students prepared themselves in their respective base groups and worked collaboratively to develop solutions to the assigned problems. Seminars were varied, and each typically had two to three questions per session. Lectures for the course were scheduled between the seminar days and were conducted by the course director or other subject-matter experts. These lectures were structured to support students in preparing for the upcoming seminars. However, these lectures were not mandatory for the students, while the seminars were mandatory.

The teaching methodology for the Company Law course, like other courses at *Juridicum*, was based on problem-based learning.¹² This method of problem-based learning involved collecting relevant legal rules and regulations, critically interpreting the given problem, and solving it with a strong rationale behind it. It facilitated students' active learning and aligned closely with how they would solve a real-life problem as legal professionals.¹³ Most of this work was done in students' base groups. On the seminar day, as a teacher, I provided a brief introduction to the seminar's central area, which was followed by discussions presented by each of the base groups. While most seminars required discussions on the given problem, certain seminars also included group presentations and legal drafting exercises by students. My role as a teacher is non-conventional, as I was not involved in defining what law is; instead, I adopted a passive approach, which consisted of questioning their arguments to facilitate

¹¹ Uppsala universitet, 'Juristprogrammet: Om undervisningen' (*uu.se*) <<https://www.uu.se/utbildning/program/juristprogrammet>> accessed 5 September 2025.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Suzanne Kurtz, Michael Wylie and Neil Gold, 'Problem-Based Learning: An Alternative Approach To Legal Education' (1990) 13 *Dalhousie Law Journal* 797, 798 <<https://digitalcommons.schulichlaw.dal.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1607&context=dlj>> accessed 5 September 2025.

more nuanced, reason-based discussions.¹⁴ As the seminar questions usually did not have a single correct answer, it was essential to allow varied discussions from students, as long as they provided relevant reasoning. It was equally crucial to address misconceptions in certain concepts that students held, as well as to guide the seminar in a way that concluded with questions for further analysis, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of the concepts. I usually ended seminars with a summary of the key takeaways, primarily covering points that the students had already addressed, but in a more coherent and organised manner. The teacher's role in synthesising seminar discussions ensured that all the discussions during the seminar ultimately took shape and contributed to clarity in the students' understanding.

An advantage of teaching the same seminar to four different groups was that it enabled me to understand how a single concept can be perceived in diverse ways by approximately 100 students. It enhanced my understanding of how differently a problem can be approached, and, most importantly, how various misconceptions can exist around a single concept. Experiences from each seminar group provided me with in-depth insight into the concept, and in that way, helped me to refine and adapt the teaching for the forthcoming batches. The role of the teacher in problem-based learning is unique. The method does not simply shift the burden of learning to students; instead, the teacher assumes responsibility for something more nuanced, such as stimulating discussion, encouraging students to review their own understanding, and supporting them in resolving misconceptions about the law or its application to the problem at hand.¹⁵ It can be said that in problem-based learning, the teacher acts as a guide while the students themselves explore the given problem.¹⁶ Hence, teaching Company Law at *Juridicum* can be characterised as a role that was primarily collaborative and facilitative in nature,

¹⁴ Uppsala University, 'Studiehandbok: Juristprogrammet – Läsåret 2024/2025' 19 <<https://www.uu.se/download/18.f55610e190497b5861fce8/1719394639817/Studiehandboken%20H2024-V2025%20-%20uppdaterad%20240626.pdf>>. The handbook describes teacher's roles as "Läraren ska visa hur man skaffar sig kunskaper men i övrigt först och främst fungera som en resonerande förebild. Hen ska kommentera, kritisera och lägga till rätta, men inte 'lära ut'."

¹⁵ Jayden Houghton, 'Learning Modules: Problem-Based Learning, Blended Learning and Flipping the Classroom' (2023) 57 *The Law Teacher* 271, 273 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/03069400.2023.2208017>> accessed 5 September 2025.

¹⁶ Kurtz, Wylie and Gold (n 14) 799.

yet required a high degree of pedagogical expertise, adaptability and the ability to foster critical engagement with complex legal concepts.

At TNNLU, the methodology and my role differed from that of *Juridicum*. Being primarily in charge of the PIL and Family Law courses, there was more autonomy, as well as greater responsibilities, in handling the courses. As a teacher, my responsibilities included updating the syllabus and course literature, scheduling the semester-long course plan (including plans for lectures and other teaching activities), and, most importantly, leading the course entirely, from lectures to overseeing all learning activities. Certain aspects, such as updating the syllabus, were, however, undertaken in coordination with the other teacher who taught the same subject but for a different batch, i.e. Section A/B. While there was always an opportunity to consult with the other teacher in case of queries, the level of coordination did not reflect the *lärrarlag* model practised at *Juridicum*. As a result, both teaching and the preparatory work were primarily carried out independently.

The course schedule included my direct engagement with students through lectures and a range of other teaching activities, conducted five days per week for a period of four months in a semester. Each batch consisted of approximately 60 students taught simultaneously, a setting that presented considerable pedagogical challenges, particularly when facilitating student-centric discussions or activities. Large classrooms tend to diminish the sense of personal responsibility for students in learning and make it challenging for teachers to provide individually adapted instruction.¹⁷ A tutorial hour was scheduled each week, during which I was available in person for students to clarify any questions or discuss topics. This dedicated time, although not entirely mitigating the challenges of teaching a large group, nonetheless provided an opportunity for individual attention to clarify complex concepts or address any misconceptions that may have arisen.

Lectures focused on introducing the various concepts to students, with an emphasis on foundational aspects of laws, regulations, and relevant case law. Hence, my preparation primarily focused on the fundamental elements of the legal framework, unlike at *Juridicum*, where it centred on the critical and analytical dimensions of the seminar's subject area.

¹⁷ Wilbert J McKeachie, 'Research on College Teaching: The Historical Background' (1990) 82 *Journal of Educational Psychology* 189, 190 <<https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1990-29508-001>> accessed 12 September 2025.

Students were provided with reading materials that they were expected to prepare prior to the lectures. The lectures were mandatory for students. Lectures typically involved introducing a concept to the students, using tools such as PowerPoint presentations, and then transitioning to discussion and reflection at the end of the lecture. The lecture method I followed was supplemented with student activities designed to stimulate participation and reflection, including discussions, quizzes, short debates and brainstorming exercises on the concepts taught. The traditional lecture format has been widely criticised for limiting active student engagement; therefore, pedagogically, these activity-integrated lectures serve to enhance student involvement and promote active learning in the classroom.¹⁸ Further, considering the comprehensive legal system in India, along with its extensive judicial decisions, it was crucial to provide students with a clear introduction to the course, especially those in the early stages of the programme. Hence, lectures played a key role, particularly for subjects like Family Law, which intersects with various personal (religious) laws.

A conventional legal classroom often reflected an invisible hierarchical structure, where knowledge flowed from teachers to students and information was imparted into students' minds without offering a broader scope for questioning.¹⁹ To counter this, conscious efforts are needed to bring in diversity of perspectives and critical thinking from an early stage in legal education.²⁰ To encourage critical thinking and active learning, teaching methods at TNNLU also included student-centric activities, such as debates, discussions, presentations, and problem-solving exercises. Sometimes these were integrated into lectures, while at other times, they were conducted on dedicated days set aside for such activities.

The nature of the course served as the primary factor in determining the teaching-learning activity. For example, in the family law course, problem-solving skills were crucial, such as determining who was entitled

¹⁸ Charles C Bonwell, 'Enhancing the Lecture: Revitalizing a Traditional Format' (1996) *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 32, 33 <<https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.37219966706>> accessed 15 September 2025; Daniela Crețu, 'Integrating Active Learning Methods during University Lectures' (2014) 10 *Journal Plus Education* 167–170 <<https://uav.ro/jour/index.php/jpe/article/view/223>> accessed 15 September 2025.

¹⁹ Joy Twemlow, 'Let Me Introduce My Friend, Law: A Pedagogical Tool for Supporting Diversity and Critical Thinking in the Legal Classroom' (2023) 57 *The Law Teacher* 239, 242.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

to the ownership and in what share of a property, taking into consideration various religious laws that might be applicable. Hence, almost every lecture was accompanied by problem-based questions that were given to students at the end of the session and were expected to be solved before the following lecture. As it was provided almost every day, it was ensured that solving the question was not time-consuming, but instead required a clear understanding of the day's lecture. Through all these activities, which emphasised student-centric learning, I was able to focus on enhancing students' analytical and argumentative skills.

Furthermore, being the same teacher responsible for both the lecture and other teaching activities fostered coherence in the learning process. For example, while conducting debates and discussions, drawing directly on content from my own lectures helped create a coherent and integrated teaching and learning environment. Additionally, having the opportunity to engage in every activity and gain a better understanding of the areas that were challenging for students or concepts that students commonly misunderstood enabled me to incorporate these insights into the forthcoming lectures. Being independently responsible had its advantages in adapting teaching and enhancing it throughout the semester, as suitable for each batch of students.

The teaching at *Juridicum* and TNNLU shared certain similarities, which included a combination of lectures, seminars, and other student-centric activities. However, the methodology at *Juridicum* primarily adhered to problem-based learning through seminars, whereas TNNLU employed the lecture method, incorporating problem-based learning through various student activities. My role as a teacher, nevertheless, differed significantly in both universities. While at *Juridicum*, I facilitated and guided seminars in a more passive capacity. In contrast, TNNLU required a more active and multifaceted role, including delivering lectures, facilitating student activities, and being available for individual discussions with students through tutorial hours.

3 Project Work: Evaluation and Feedback

Juridicum followed a structure where T5 students submitted a peer review and a project in the form of a short paper, also known as a PM (*promemoria*) in Swedish. The peer review is a brief text that a student writes as a critique of another student's project (PM). For example, Student A writes a peer review of Student B's project, which is typically at a

stage where the project is not fully completed. At this point, Student A provides comments on which aspects of the project should be retained and which require revision. From the student's perspective, this process helps streamline and improve the quality of their project writing. Evaluating peer review was one of my duties, and it provided insight into how students generally assess academic work and the parameters they apply in their evaluations. Grading the peer review involved determining whether it was *godkänt* (pass) or *underkänt* (fail). Although individual feedback was not provided, *lärarlag* discussions on the overall performance served as a potential means, whenever necessary, to provide the collective feedback to student groups.

The evaluation of projects (PM) was quite contrary to Peer review, as it relied heavily on individual feedback. Students submitted their projects, and the assessment was based on various criteria, including originality, the quality of arguments, how these were substantiated with references to relevant legal rules and existing literature, the nuanced use of theory, perspective, and methodology, as well as other aspects such as language, structure, and citation methods. Based on these factors, written comments were provided to the students, both as in-text annotations within the content and as an overall comment at the end of the physical copy of the project. Feedback plays a crucial role, especially in research writing, as it provides authors with guidance on producing a scientific text that presents original and nuanced arguments. To aid students comprehensively, feedback should include various stages of producing a text from planning and drafting to revising and editing.²¹ Well-developed writing skills are essential for legal professionals, and providing individual feedback helps students become proficient in them.

Assessing projects and writing such elaborate comments was sometimes time-consuming, as each project was distinct, reflecting varied perspectives, methodologies, and focus areas. Despite this, it remains one of the primary responsibilities of the teacher to provide detailed and individually tailored feedback to students, focusing on strengths and areas requiring further improvement. Additionally, during the evaluation of

²¹ Steve Graham, 'Instructional Feedback in Writing (Chapter 7) in Part II – Domain-Specific Feedback' in Anastasiya A. Lipnevich and Jeffrey K. Smith (eds), *The Cambridge Handbook of Instructional Feedback* (Cambridge University Press 2018) 145–168, 150 <<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/cambridge-handbook-of-instructional-feedback/instructional-feedback-in-writing/2A47CC7113DD5D770EFD522F36890FC4#CN-bp-7>> accessed 16 September 2025.

diverse projects with a wide range of focus areas, I had the opportunity to explore new domains, for instance, when students undertook comparative studies with jurisdictions that I was not previously familiar with. The process of assessment, while benefiting students, also serves as a means for the teacher to expand their subject-area expertise. Further, such an assessment, when it reflects students' overall subject understanding, could even be pursued as a parameter that reflects teaching effectiveness.²² One clear advantage at *Juridicum* was that project evaluation schedules did not coincide with seminar days, thereby allowing sufficient time for thorough and detailed evaluation.

At TNNLU, project submission was accompanied by additional components, including the submission of a synopsis and a *viva-voce* (oral examination), whereas it did not include peer review, as practised at *Juridicum*. Project grading at TNNLU, therefore, is determined by the cumulative performance in synopsis, written project, and *viva-voce*. The synopsis was submitted well in advance of the final project and included elements such as the project title, aim, research question, preliminary literature review, methodology and materials. Assessing and commenting individually on the synopsis before the student submitted their project provided an opportunity to guide them in moving forward with the project, ensuring a coherent argumentative structure and methodological clarity. Through advisory feedback²³, I was able to comment on the students' performance in the submitted synopsis by identifying areas in need of improvement and guiding them accordingly. It served as a means for students to ensure they were on the right track and to highlight areas where revision or reworking might be necessary. Subsequently, students submitted their project works, and the evaluation was based on criteria similar to those mentioned above for *Juridicum*, emphasising originality and the quality of the arguments.

As part of the project evaluation, a *viva voce*, an oral examination, was conducted in which students presented their project and defended their arguments in a one-on-one session with the teacher. *Viva-voce* facilitated

²² Ibid. 146.

²³ Jackie Pieterick and Deirdre Burke, 'Part I Giving Students Written Feedback', *Giving Students Effective Written Feedback* (McGraw-Hill Education 2010) 27. The purpose of advisory feedback is in threefold: "to provide learners with information about their performance in light of the task or assignment; to identify aspects of the performance which need improvement or support; and to improve student achievement by telling the learner what steps to take in order to move forward in the learning process."

an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the student's project. Compared to providing written feedback based solely on reading the project, combining it with oral feedback following the *viva-voce* was more effective in precisely understanding the student's work and providing more targeted guidance. Unlike written feedback, students have the opportunity to pose supplementary and elucidating questions.²⁴ It enabled me to accurately identify the project's strengths and, most importantly, point out exactly where the students need improvement. Furthermore, in specific cases, such individual interaction helped clarify the student's original contribution to the project. In certain other instances, I observed that students possessed a deep understanding of law and demonstrated well-developed reasoning; however, the written project did not adequately reflect this understanding. In such scenarios, *viva-voce* served as a means for students to demonstrate their knowledge more effectively, and it was a learning opportunity in itself, allowing them to receive tailored feedback for improving their research writing skills.²⁵ Overall, engaging in direct dialogue with the student enhanced the fairness of project assessment and facilitated the delivery of effective feedback.

One potential challenge during the project evaluation was that it coincided with the teaching schedule. However, as the course ran throughout the semester, such overlap was inevitable. Nevertheless, since the project submission schedule was established early, typically at the beginning of the semester, it was possible to plan and coordinate the teaching and evaluation activities in a way that ensured sufficient time for providing detailed and individualised feedback to students.

In comparison, *Juridicum* allowed for detailed written feedback on project assessment. Furthermore, peer review not only trains students in research writing but also in the critical skill of evaluating and reviewing others' academic projects. TNNLU, on the other hand, provided an opportunity to effectively understand the student's work, evaluate it and offer feedback across various stages. While the synopsis served as an early-stage check on the student's progress, the *viva-voce* functioned as a means for in-depth and thorough assessment.

²⁴ Maja Elmgren and Ann-Sofie Henriksson, 'Teaching and Learning Activities', *Academic teaching* (1st edn, Studentlitteratur 2014) 259.

²⁵ Ibid. 279.

4 Examination and Course Assessment Structures

At *Juridicum*, a final written examination (*tentamen*) was conducted at the end of T5. It comprised questions from all the courses students had studied during the term, namely Accounting Law, Company Law, and Tax Law. Course directors for each subject formulated the respective questions, and the lecturers responsible for each course were involved in grading the students' responses. This process required effective coordination within the *lärarlag*, ensuring clear communication between the person who designed the question and the one responsible for grading, so that expectations regarding the quality, structure, and content of student responses were unambiguously understood and applied. Since two lecturers shared responsibility for evaluating Company Law in T5, coordination between them was also essential to maintain uniformity and fairness in assessment across the student cohort.

The nature of the questions was analytical and problem-based, a format with which the students were already familiar, having participated in seminars. As it was an open-book examination (OBE), grading focused not on memorising or merely recalling the legal provisions, but rather on how the student applied the legal regulations and concepts to the given problem and how effectively they supported their analysis with legal reasoning and arguments. Additionally, OBE allows for a thoughtful approach to answer the question and can itself serve as a learning opportunity.²⁶ For Company law, there was only one question; however, the depth of analysis required that the question be examined thoroughly, taking into account multiple perspectives. In my opinion, this offered a fair opportunity to assess the students' in-depth understanding of a given concept as well as their overall understanding of the course. Similar to project assessment, the evaluation of the examination did not overlap with the seminars, thereby allowing sufficient time for a careful evaluation of the student responses.

TNNLU followed an assessment method comprising two types of examinations: the end-semester examination, which served as the final

²⁶ Amanda Cahill-Ripley, 'Innovative Methods of Assessment in Law: The Value of Open-Book Exams as a Catalyst for Improving Teaching and Learning in the Law School' [2015] *The Law Teacher* 206, 208–209 <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03069400.2015.1016724>> accessed 16 September 2025.

evaluation for each course, and the mid-semester examination, scheduled approximately midway through the semester. Unlike *Juridicum*, all examinations at TNNLU were conducted separately for each course. Framing of the question papers for these examinations was undertaken by the two teachers responsible for the course, each teaching a different batch, i.e., Sections A and B. The questions were primarily problem-based, which helped evaluate the students' legal knowledge across various legislations as well as their analytical skills. As examinations were not open-book, memorising a high amount of legal provisions, judicial decisions and other sources was required. Transitioning to an OBE format for all courses, particularly in Semester 5, where analytical and problem-solving skills are central, would be more conducive for students. OBE would enhance overall learning skills during preparation, ultimately enhancing the critical synthesis of course materials, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the course.²⁷ It would allow students to concentrate on applying the law rather than memorising extensive legal content, thereby better preparing them for the demands of the legal profession.

In addition to examinations, grading also encompassed students' performance in various Continuous Internal Assessments such as response papers, presentations, group discussions, and quizzes. This diversity in assessment methods supported the recognition of varied competencies and proficiencies among students.²⁸ Continuous Internal Assessments accounted for approximately 15% of the total grade. Depending on the nature of the course, teachers independently determined the format and type of assignments. The internal assessments could consist of a single assignment or a cumulative score derived from multiple assignments. These assessments also encouraged greater student engagement in the classroom, particularly through discussions or debates. By integrating evaluation throughout the semester, Continuous Internal Assessments ensured that students were consistently assessed for their sustained participation in the learning process.

Engaging in the full cycle of teaching, from delivering lectures and facilitating activities to assessing examinations, deepened my understand-

²⁷ Ibid. 208. See, Christos Theophilides and Mary Koutselini, 'Study Behavior in the Closed-Book and the Open-Book Examination: A Comparative Analysis' (2000) 6 Educational Research and Evaluation 379, 384 <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1076/edre.6.4.379.6932>> accessed 16 September 2025.

²⁸ Elmgren and Henriksson (n 25) 272.

ing of the students' learning process throughout the course. It provided a comprehensive teaching experience where I was actively involved in the students' learning. While these varied tasks benefitted the teaching-learning process, they can also be demanding for teachers, especially early-career teachers (ECT). Being new to the teaching field and having such a diverse and extensive workload within a limited timeframe would lead to potential challenges for ECTs.²⁹

Examination and assessment at *Juridicum* and TNNLU were markedly distinct, particularly in terms of my responsibilities as a teacher. At *Juridicum*, my primary role focused on evaluating final examinations. In contrast, at TNNLU, I undertook a broad range of duties, including framing examination questions, assessing student responses, conducting Continuous Internal Assessments, and evaluating them. Moreover, TNNLU administered separate examinations for each course, alongside both end-semester and mid-semester exams, resulting in a substantial volume of student submissions to be evaluated. While the end-semester exam did not coincide with teaching schedules, the mid-semester exam often overlapped with them. Although these varied responsibilities offered a more comprehensive opportunity to support students throughout their learning journey, the sheer volume of tasks posed challenges in managing time effectively during the evaluation period.

Conclusion

The analysis reveals that *Juridicum* and TNNLU had very distinct practices with respect to pedagogical approaches and the role of an entry-level university teacher. Upon examining the structure of the course and programme, *Juridicum* offered a 'one-course-at-a-time' approach, allowing for a deeper focus on each course while providing ample time for evaluation and for teachers' independent research. The teaching methodology followed a problem-based learning approach with obligatory seminars for students. Working within the *läroplan* method necessitated maintaining effective coordination among the teachers throughout the course

²⁹ Jody Crutchley, Zaki Nahaboo and Namrata Rao, *Early Career Teachers in Higher Education: International Teaching Journeys* (First edition, Bloomsbury Academic 2021) 93, 156–158, 163. Scholars from various countries (such as UK, Japan, Poland and Brazil) have emphasised the teaching workload during the early stage of their career and how it might lead to challenges in pursuing an academic career. They have also noted that such demanding workload might even adversely affect the quality of the teaching.

duration. The entire course was grounded in the shared responsibilities among the teachers. While the course director and senior lecturers were responsible for designing the overall course, lectures, identifying research areas for projects, and framing question papers, the lecturers were responsible for conducting the seminars, assessing projects, providing individual feedback to students, and evaluating the final examination.

On the contrary, TNNLU had an intensive course structure, with teaching and evaluation spread throughout the semester. The responsibility for the course rested almost entirely on the independent course teacher, who was actively responsible for delivering lectures, conducting student-centric activities, and assessing them. However, flexibility in teaching methods and activities was a strength, as it provided a platform to adapt the approach to suit each batch of students. Guiding the students' project work at various stages, from synopsis assessment to *viva-voce*, provided an opportunity for effective feedback and aided in truly mentoring the students throughout the process. While teaching in a large classroom had its challenges, various mechanisms to provide individualised feedback and the availability of tutorial hours helped counteract them to an extent. TNNLU also provided for diverse forms of assessment, taking into consideration various proficiencies and competencies that students would possess. Additionally, being solely responsible for the course offered an advantage in evaluation, as the same teacher who set examination questions was also involved in assessment, ensuring greater clarity in grading and assessment criteria.

Through the analysis, it can be concluded that *Juridicum* relies heavily on coordination within the *lärrarlag*. The effectiveness of the learning environment depends not only on the individual competencies of teachers, but also significantly on the collaboration within the *lärrarlag*. Hence, a lack of effective communication and coordination can result in ambiguities and inconsistencies in learning and evaluation across student groups. In contrast, at TNNLU, the student learning environment relies significantly on the individual competencies of the teacher and their methodological approach. On the one hand, this provides teachers with flexibility to adapt teaching to the various needs of students. On the other hand, relying heavily on individual teachers' competencies might pose a risk to the quality of learning, and this becomes even more crucial when the teacher is in the early stage of their career, with limited or sometimes no previous experience. From the teacher's perspective, a high level of responsibilities within an intense course schedule, especially

when combined with additional administrative duties such as committee work, can be particularly challenging for those at the beginning of their careers.

These contrasting approaches adopted by *Juridicum* and TNNLU offer valuable insight into how the institutional framework can shape not only the teacher's role but also the learning environment for the students. While it is crucial to ensure that these pedagogical approaches promote the quality of the learning opportunities for students, it is equally important that they provide a platform for early-career teachers to fully engage in the teaching process, while also supporting personal development through independent research, thereby fostering a long-standing academic career.