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**Abstract**

Recent research on student learning has given close attention to how students experiences and actions are mediated by the whole university learning?teaching environment in which they find themselves. The current article pursues this focus on learning?teaching environments in two stages. Guided by socio-cultural perspectives on learning, the first part: ? examines issues surrounding how best to conceptualise university learning?teaching environments, ? highlights the need to take account of central disciplinary purposes and ? presents a framework for representing disciplinary practices within higher education. The second part of the article then engages with the task of illustrating how this general framework (which foregrounds disciplinary concerns) can be applied within a specific subject. The framework is employed to structure an account of the insights gained from an ongoing research study concerning: ? the ways in which the values and central practices that characterise the disciplinary community of history relate to teaching and learning practices, how, taking account of local constraints and affordances, students active engagement with these disciplinary purposes can be

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