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Abstract

In the last decade, several classifications of the ways in which academics conceptualise teaching and learning have been proposed, including our scheme (Samuelowicz and Bain 1992). This paper reassesses the framework described in our earlier paper, evaluates the adequacy of the belief dimensions and categories in that framework and considers whether there is a "transitional" orientation to teaching and learning as argued by Kember (1997a) in his recent synthesis of the domain. Thirty-nine academics representing a range of disciplines were interviewed and in accordance with a "beliefs" framework we sought their typical ways of thinking about teaching and learning; and their dispositions to teach in particular ways. The constant comparison method (Strauss and Corbin 1997) was applied to whole interview transcripts to identify broad orientations to teaching and learning, which were then analysed to identify the qualitatively distinct beliefs constituting them. An extended framework of academics' beliefs about teaching and learning is proposed in which seven orientations are described in terms of nine qualitative belief dimensions. There is considerable overlap with our previous findings, but there are also some important refinements and additions.

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Three forms of evidence (the qualitative analysis itself, a hierarchical clustering based on that analysis, and narratives of two academics) are presented to demonstrate that there are fundamental differences between teaching-centred and learning-centred orientations to teaching and learning. Thus our data are broadly consistent with previously reported evidence, but they provide no empirical support for Kember's (1997a) "transitional" category acting as a bridge between the two major sets of orientation. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)