

Chapter 11

Student Music Teachers' Learning Trajectories

A Relational Perspective

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Questions about how student music teachers learn underscore most of the research on music teacher education over the last few decades (Thiessen & Barrett, 2002; Wilcox & Upitis, 2002). An implicit interest in student teachers' learning processes can be found in studies addressing the development of confidence to teach music (Hennessy, 2000), the impact of pre-service teacher training on early career music teacher's praxis shock (Ballantyne, 2007), and the mentoring of novice teachers (Blair, 2008). Furthermore, work on perceptions of, and beliefs about, effective teaching (Mills, 2002; Mills & Smith, 2003), and the effectiveness of pre-service music teacher education programmes (Ballantyne & Parker, 2004), demonstrates the amount of attention that is given to how student teachers learn, how their learning proceeds, and to how it can be enhanced and improved during the course of their education. Addressing student learning more explicitly, Johansen (2007) explored cognitive dimensions, such as learning styles, strategies and approaches, while Ferm & Johansen (2008) attended to student-teacher relations, and Harrison, Ballantyne, Barrett & Temmermann (2007) and Ilari (2010) studied peer learning in communities of practice.

In this article we take the concept of 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1998, 2006) as our way of entry into studying conditions for the for-

mation of student music teachers' learning trajectories (ibid.): the paths that student music teachers follow, have followed or imagine following, in order to learn something. We regard learning trajectories as, not only constitutive paths for learning within communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), but also between, for instance, institutions for music teacher education and the remote practicum (Wenger, 2006). As such they are likely to be conditioned by a variety of contextual factors that can both enable or disable their establishment, maintenance and adjustment.

Hence, the aim of this article is:

to reveal enabling or disabling factors in student music teachers' learning trajectories between communities of practice within the institution and in the remote practicum.

To this end, we drew upon the data of two previous interview studies of educational quality and student learning within music teacher education at 7 institutions of higher music education in Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway. One study focused on a specific course called *Musikdidaktik* (Ferm & Johansen, 2008), the other on the cooperating, remote practicum (Ferm Thorgersen, 2010a; b). These focus arenas constitute two of the few common components that can be found across the Nordic system of music teacher education, the national systems of which are largely dissimilar. Students in both courses gave interviews about how they felt about the other course

The *Musikdidaktik* course, hereafter referred to as 'the music teaching course', contained the philosophy, theory and methodology of music teaching in classrooms, as well as ensembles and instrumental tuition, along with its consequences for student learning. As such, *Musikdidaktik* constitutes a mandatory part of music teacher education, for it carries the responsibility for aiding student music teachers to reflect upon, and see connections between, theory and their experiences in the remote practicum.

To accomplish this assignment, the course aimed to aid the student music teachers to develop competence at three levels (Dale, 1989; Lauvås and Handal, 2000; Løvlie, 1972). Level 1 concerns practical action and reflection in the classroom, or in the instrumental tuition situation, and is characterized by the "classroom press" (Hubermann, 1983, p. 482–83), which entails pressure to achieve "immediacy and concreteness, multidimensionality and simultaneity, adapting to ever-changing conditions or unpredictability [...]" (Ibid.). Level 2 includes the planning and evaluation of these actions, which frequently raises questions about the effectiveness

and suitability of the selected content, along with others concerning how best to plan and evaluate music teaching and learning. Level 3 encompasses the theoretical and meta-theoretical thinking to which level 1 and 2 are connected, either implicitly or explicitly. This level includes theories that support a deeper understanding, and which can communicate about what is going on at all these levels, philosophical and political justification.

The content of the remote practicum was guided by a curriculum which was produced by the music teacher training institutions, and is on the whole oriented towards similar competence levels. Here, the challenges at level 1 are played out in real time, and hence require more time than in the music teaching course. Respectively, reflections about the level 3 perspectives are usually allotted a shorter time in the practicum. We suggest illustrating these relations by two, oppositely drawn triads.

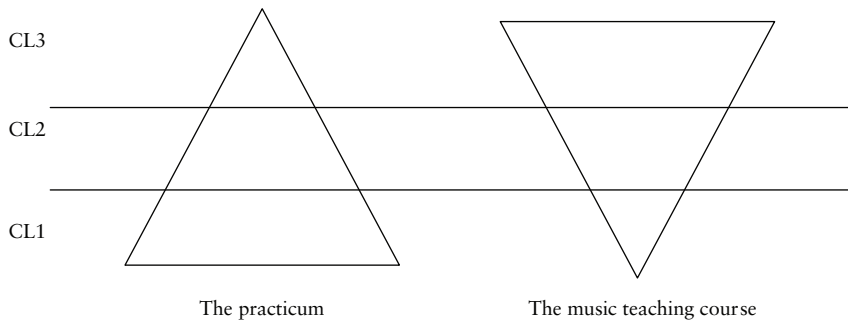


Figure 1. Fields and competence levels (CL).

One of our basic assumptions is that learning does not only take place in these two fields separately. On the contrary, learning at all three levels also takes place in the relations *between* these fields. This happens when learning experiences from one of the fields are reflected in the other by professors¹ as well as by participating students. Hence, student music teachers' learning within the music teaching course is related to supervision and training in the practicum, and vice versa, by way of the learning trajectories that connect them as parts of an internal learning system (Wenger, 2006). Moreover, these learning trajectories spread beyond the institution

¹ The participants defined as 'professors' in this text are those involved in the *Music Teaching* course at the institution; whereas 'supervisors' are the co-operating teachers in the practicum who have a guiding task in relation to the student music teachers

of learning to the large scale, external system of music teacher education with its connections to the vocational life of music teachers (ibid.).

Our definition of the groups of participants as 'communities of practice' is based on the fact that they prove several of the indicators that, according to Wenger, do not all have to be present to admit such a definition (Wenger, 1998). *Sustained mutual relationships* are feasible since the groups of the Music Teaching course as well as the practicum maintain their identity for six months to several years. The dynamics of these relationships carry several of the other indicators that Wenger suggests, including *continuous movements between the harmonious and conflictual, ways of engaging in doing things together; and absences of introductory preambles* in their communication.

Insofar as these communities of practice bear these defining characteristics, the participant groups can be further analysed in terms of some basic components that characterise social participation as a process of learning and knowing (Wenger, 1998), namely 'meaning', 'practice', 'community' and 'identity' (Ibid.). It is important to understand the particular ways in which Wenger understands these four terms: 'meaning' entails learning through the negotiation of common or individual experiences; 'practice' points to the activities and actions that cause the experiences in question; 'community' entails the idea that learning is connected to a sense of belonging to a group; and 'identity' defines learning in relation to "changes [of] who we are and [the creation of] personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities" (ibid., p. 5).

Hence, music teacher education can be comprehended as a learning system (Ibid.), whilst also being related to other learning systems. This requires us to take into consideration student music teachers' membership of formal and informal communities, as well as what they learn from moving between them, and how identity formation is tightly connected to learning within and between them. These conditions that promote or hinder student music teachers' learning trajectories are of vital significance to the quality of teaching and learning.

Earlier Studies

Ballantyne (2006) proposed that the development of music teachers' competence depends on courses that integrate pedagogical issues and musical skills, as well as those that contextualise learning in terms of the realistic roles of music teachers, both of which prepare teachers more effectively

for their future roles (*ibid.*). Meanwhile, Odena & Welch (2007) have discovered that connections between courses at the institution and the practicum are powerful factors in the development of music teachers' perceptions of musical creativity. Reflections and discussions such as these have also been reported by Duke & Madsen (1991) and Stegman (2007) to strongly influence student music teachers' competence development.

Several investigations from the general teacher education field throw light on the function of the practicum, and how it can be connected to teaching courses (Franke & Dahlgren, 1996; Yourn, 2000; Zeichner, 1986). These studies report that the practical part of teacher education is the most important. Franke & Dahlgren (1996) studied the practicum as an occasion for practice, versus an object for reflection, and concluded that in such courses student teachers were most often trained in mastering methods and techniques without reflecting on them. This lack of reflection raises questions about the relations between student teachers and supervisors, including social role-taking and critical friendship (Draves, 2008; Kettle & Sellars, 1996; Reiman, 1999), alongside the question of the extent of supervisors' influences, which have been reported to be strong (Webster, 2007), for example with respect to how student teachers develop their practical theory of teaching (Kettle & Sellars, 1996). The mentoring role of the supervisor, which involves instruction, teaching, counselling and assessment, and which offers student teachers' insights into the teaching profession as a multifaceted skill, was reported to imply real power and responsibility in the educational processes (Jaques, 1992).

Jones (2007) suggested that the internal relations of music teacher training should be organised in ways that encourage the development of the tactile work of music teachers at a more considered and professional level. Goolsby (1997) found that when student teachers in an instrumental teaching course are directed through a period of guided observation by expert teachers, they adapt strategies and patterns that are close to those of their teachers. Reciprocally, Mills (2002) found that when conservatoire student teachers spend time with successful secondary music teachers in relevant schools, it changed their attitudes towards secondary school music teaching in a positive way. Finally, Mills and Smith (2003) reported that those instrumental teachers who thought that good teaching in schools differs from good teaching in higher education nonetheless reported that their teaching in schools was significantly influenced by the ways they were taught in higher education. This apparent anomaly illustrates the importance of organising music teacher education in ways that ask student teachers to reflect continuously on the relationship between what they learn in higher education and the reality of the school.

Methodology

The two interview studies from which the data were analysed attended to the same research question, aiming to throw light on: *the participants' notions and opinions about what designates good quality teaching and learning in music teacher education*. Study One addressed the music teacher course in this respect while Study Two dealt with the remote practicum.

In agreement with Patton (1990), who propose that in small samples any common pattern emerging from great variation is of particular interest, a maximum variation sampling strategy (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) was applied. Hence, the student teachers of both studies were selected with respect to variation across countries, types of institutions and co-operating schools, main instruments and music-cultural background. Access was gained through formally contacting the institutions, after which personal contact with staff members was established. Student groups were selected according to these staff members' recommendations of student teachers who, in addition to the described criteria, were seen to be critical and verbally outspoken. 10 professors, 5 supervisors and 30 student music teachers were asked to participate, among which 2 professors and 5 student music teachers declined the invitation, whilst the rest took part of their own free will.

The final sample consisted of 7 institutions for music teacher education across Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway, varying between classical and popular music/jazz oriented music academies and teacher training colleges. In Study One 8 professors and 6 student music teacher focus groups, each with 2–6 persons of both sexes, were selected, whilst the sample of Study Two consisted of 4 practicum supervisors and 3 student teacher focus groups with 2–4 persons of both sexes. Some of the student teachers specialised in primary and secondary school classroom teaching, some in instrumental teaching, and some in both practices. All the student participants had parallel work experiences such as substitute music teachers and band directors.

The student teacher data were collected through focus group interviews (Wilson, 1997) of approximately 1 hour in length. Semi-structured interview schedules were organised similarly for all groups. These addressed the interviewees' perceptions of deep versus surface learning and its connections to the formation of identity, together with how the subject content of the course affected such learning and identity processes. The interview procedure was designed to balance letting the interviewees follow their own trains of thought, and ensuring that all questions were

answered. Both researchers participated in the interview sessions. The interviews were recorded and transcribed word by word, which resulted in about 400 double-spaced pages of text.

Analysis was carried out by means of a cyclic strategy that alternated between individual and joint processes. Each analytical step included an individual session followed by a joint discussion of the issue in question. The analysis revealed that the interviewees did not only engage in issues arising from the music teaching course or the practicum, but they also connected quality to how their learning in one field affected their learning in the other.

Hence, the data reflected in this article consist of statements from each field about its connections to the other. After having isolated such statements about the "other" field, analysis proceeded by 'meaning condensation' (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009) by labelling the content of each statement in an inductive way. Thereafter, the statements were deductively coded according to the categories of 'learning', 'identity' and 'subject content', after which they were cross-coded with respect to categories relating to communities of practice (Wenger, 1998; 2006), and to teaching as a profession (Dale, 1989; Lauvås & Handal, 2000; Løvlie, 1972). Final interpretations were carried out by reflecting these analytical layers in each other (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000).

During the processes of analysis and interpretation it became apparent that the results were mainly connected to three main arenas: (1) the organization, (2) the professors and supervisors, and (3) the student music teachers. Hence, these arenas were used to constitute the structure of the results section.

Results

We will now turn to our three result arenas, focussing on factors that were reported to enhance or hinder the formation of learning trajectories in each arena, along with exemplifying our reasoning by drawing on citations from the interview transcriptions.

The organizational arena

The order in which one course and theme followed another appeared to affect the trajectories. So also did the degree to which the music teaching course and the practicum succeed in focusing on the same issues, along

with the time allotted for the student music teachers' participation in the practicum.

The order and scheduling of courses and themes. The concept of learning trajectories offers a relational perspective on the organisation and scheduling of music teacher education by enabling questions about how its courses should be ordered with respect to the trajectories made possible between them. The interviewees pointed out such issues in statements like:

When I took the philosophy part of the music teaching course I thought that "this should have been located in the first semester" because then it would have been scheduled together with General Education and my participation in the practicum. It would have greatly improved my reflections about a basis for music education.

It is noticeable that the learning in one of the courses mentioned was perceived by the interviewee to enhance learning in the others. Consequently, depending on the reflection of experiences from the practicum on those of the music teaching course and vice versa, this synergy is connected to the enhancement or hindrance of learning trajectories at various competence levels.

The question of a common focus. The interviewees demonstrated shared concerns about the advantages of common foci between the *Music Teaching* course and the practicum.

Working with teaching strategies for improvisation and oral approaches to instrumental and vocal teaching in the *Music Teaching* course leads to only superficial learning outcomes when not reflected in the activities in the practicum.

In other words, when issues at competence level 2 are treated by the *Music Teaching* course but are not connected to actions in the practicum, they do not become fully operational for the student music teachers.

The problem also appeared the other way around, which is to say as being connected to the need for experiences from the practicum to be reflected in theory. This involves a further question about what kinds of practicum experiences are thought to be significant to the discussion within the *Music Teaching* course. Subsequently one could also question who is in a position to make these decisions, and to what extent it is the re-

sponsibility of the student music teachers themselves to discover and draw such connections.

Time in the practicum. The third issue of organisation concerned the time frames for the student music teachers' participation in the practicum. The students stressed that a minimum amount of time was needed to deepen their theoretical understanding through their teaching practice, and to use these deeper insights in their handling of practical challenges. For example, it takes time to learn how to interact with students in need of special education, or communicate with students' parents:

it can be hard to handle some students, they can have problems. And then it is important to know how to handle that in the classes. You know that the students do not bring any instrument as the parent has not put it in the bag. Then you can't be angry at the student. You have to hold the lesson anyway.

Such interaction and communication is, however, not solely dependent on a minimum amount of time. In addition it is vital for learning experiences that the allotted time is organised into extended periods, and not just distributed in small parts over a long time span. The interviewees stressed the value of grasping the whole profession, in order to be able to take part in all the included tasks and settings. Reported hindrances to such participation were, for example, that the courses at the institution are several, and that they take place in parallel and overlap. Such organisational problems diminish the space for continuous participation during extended periods of time in the practicum:

We are never free for several weeks; it is not possible to be away.

In sum, the order and scheduling, a common focus, and the amount and extent of time for continuous participation in the practicum were thought to be among the significant factors for enhancing student music teachers' fruitful learning trajectories between the practicum and the *Music Teaching* course. Consequently a relational perspective on learning could constitute a fruitful basis for the organisation of music teacher education.

The professors' and supervisors' space for action

The professors' and supervisors' dispositions proved to affect the formation of learning trajectories in terms of how they utilised the space for action. This space appeared to have been regulated by their choices concerning planning, running and evaluating their classes, including their selection of content and methods. Hence, these choices also influenced the kinds of learning trajectories between the Music Teaching course and the practicum that were made possible or hindered. In this respect the interviewees shared experiences of deliberate as well as accidental choices by the professors and supervisors:

Yes, it is, also different ways of teaching, as playing by ear, improvisation, how to work with that. Unfortunately we don't do that very much in practicum, but we do in the *Music Teaching* course.

The impact of such dispositions was related to encounters between the professors' expectations of what is to be dealt with in the practicum, and in the practicum supervisors' choices of issues. By observing and listening to their practicum supervisors, the student music teachers came close to some of the topics intended by their professors. However, sometimes this happened by random, and was accompanied by a lack of tools for observation and reflection. This combination of circumstances blurred the student music teachers' notions of what kinds of learning trajectories were afforded. In addition it caused ambiguity about the level at which their competences were expected to be developed.

On the practicum supervisors' side, one such concern was the use of dedicated students for the student teachers to observe. These choices limited possible variation to the content of the practicum:

No, most often you get to see the best students. If the parallel music teacher course you follow is directed towards higher levels, then you should observe the good students. Then you should not see the beginners albeit the advanced ones. But then you *just* get the chance to see the advanced.

Consequently, the student teachers had no experience of a music teachers' daily life, which includes several themes. The fact that the practicum was organised in various ways according to the supervisors' choices enabled only some of the student music teachers' practicum experiences

to be connected to issues from the Music Teaching course, thereby affording the theory to become embodied.

According to the interviewees some practicum supervisors thought that the student music teachers' took only that one course. Therefore, they wanted to show them everything they could think of, which made focused reflections and meta-reflections at levels 2 and 3 of the Music Teaching lessons complicated. Consequently learning trajectories were hard to construct.

From the opposite perspective, the professors did not always offer possibilities for the student music teachers to reflect upon their experiences from the practicum either:

Do you have any setting where practicum activities are discussed?

No!

This somewhat discouraging picture was balanced by reports that in other situations professors' choices and supervisors' performances made it easy to see close connections between the Music Teaching course and the practicum. Such disclosures were enhanced by opportunities for direct reflections upon the student teachers' actions, for discussing them with classmates, and for comments from engaged professors who knew what was going on in the practicum as well as in the Music Teaching course:

Yes exactly, take for example , [...] it is so important that you can go back and get feed-back and take up problems and so on [...] with an engaged professor.

In other words, the Music Teaching course was sometimes reported to continually reflect theories of what was done at practicum. When there were close connections between action, reflection and the focused content, learning trajectories seemed to be easy to establish.

One way in which professors could encourage the creation of learning trajectories was to formulate various kinds of tasks. For example, explicit challenges to reflect on actions were reported to occur quite frequently in the practicum. Nonetheless, one of the interviewees said that the questions she was given did not really focus on the content of the Music Teaching lessons:

The questions are standard ones that everyone gets. And then I don't think they function very well. It could have been interesting to have questions formulated by our professor of *Music Teaching*, like [...] how the teacher works with improvisation in the lower ages for example, then you have a specific task about that, and then the practicum supervisor should know about that when you came, and it should be more connected to what was focused on in the Music Teaching course. That could be good. More generally, from which societal groups the students come, what the room looks like, which is not exactly connected to what we learn.

In sum, the professors had some space of action that could be used to ease the formation of learning trajectories. However, this is not a one-dimensional task. If the content of the practicum and the *Music Teaching* course is to be matched, it risks the practicum becoming inauthentic. Meanwhile, it also risks the responsibility for establishing learning trajectories to be left to the student music teachers, whether deliberately or not.

Student music teachers' responsibility for creating learning trajectories

When the responsibility for finding connections that give energy to the learning process are left to the student music teachers they are unlikely to develop deep insights through reflecting practical actions in theory:

I think it's sad that it is always me that has to inform the practicum supervisor what it all is about and how long you are expected to stay and everything. And often they say, aha, you should do that....what do you want to do? I think it would be better if they got information about the title of the course to which the practicum is connected, how many hours you should be there; what you are expected to do. It is like that all the time and you have to think about everything yourself [...]

Without being supported by the professors and supervisors, many student music teachers seemed to be incapable of undertaking this responsibility. Neither did they see the necessity of doing so:

Some students just want to "surf through" to be marked as passed and do not see the usefulness of [...] what they actually learn. They think they are experienced already and do not view the practicum as a course in line with other courses. Instead they view it as something they have to have in their qualifying papers.

As the student teachers did not seem to be informed about what they were expected to learn in the practicum, some chose to merely attend, which is hardly a good precondition for the formation of learning trajectories. At the same time they value participation in the practicum to be the most important aspect of learning to teach music.

It seems clear that conversations and discussions between the professors in the *Music Teaching* course and the practicum supervisors must take place regularly if fruitful learning trajectories are to be created. These conversations should include questions about what content should be treated, what the student teachers are expected to learn, and how that learning can be organised and assessed.

The student music teachers' choices of learning trajectories. Many student music teachers recognised the importance of learning trajectories. Even if some found it difficult to develop them without support from professors/supervisors, others reported that they chose to establish and utilise such trajectories.

For example, some student music teachers chose to combine and relate experiences from their working life to their education:

And I think almost every student here is teaching somewhere, maybe once a week or twice a week or as a substitute teacher every now and then. That is an important part of the whole development of a music teacher: to work besides the studies.

The student teachers underlined that their parallel jobs as music teachers ensured them continuity in practice, and offered them good opportunities for trying out, deepening and reflecting on what they have been introduced to in *Music Teaching* classes. One of the student teachers said that her deepest learning in music teaching took place when she chose to try out some of her theories about classroom composition at an ordinary school as part of her exam thesis. Thus, she had to "live through" the music teaching concepts:

And it worked very well. I feel that the practice was very good and I got experiences beyond what was connected to the project, including concepts of *Music Teaching*.

In addition to demonstrating how the student teachers themselves created learning trajectories, this example also draws attention towards how these trajectories afford developing competence. This is also exemplified in the following words of a student regarding his learning strategies:

When I think, “this is important” I deliberately chose to think it in practice even though I am not in the practicum. I try to imagine myself in the classroom: How could I do this kind of thing?

In other words the student music teachers knew how to create fruitful conditions for their own learning trajectories when their professors and supervisors were regarded as important contributors.

Discussion

When looking back at the factors enabling or disabling learning trajectories it is remarkable how close the interviewees' statements were to the conclusions of Jones (2007), who proposed that giving clear priority to enhancing reflection on practical teacher work can enable student teachers to reach a professional level of music teaching. This cannot be expected to happen by itself but must be deliberately encouraged by organisational strategies, such as the length and pacing of the practicum participation periods, and also by the supervisors' conscious guidance of the student teachers in their purposeful reflections on their tactile (ibid.) work experiences. Such conscious guidance must encourage student teachers to adopt their supervisors' own priorities and strategies in an unreflective way (Kettle & Sellars, 1996; Goolsby, 1997), and to support their tendency to adopt the ways in which they have been taught in their higher music education (Mills & Smith, 2003).

Moreover, when related to the various arenas of the organization, and to the professors and student teachers, a question emerges about how the factors that enable or hinder trajectories relate to the basic components of meaning, practice, community and identity (Wenger, 1998; 2006), as seen in the light of competence levels C1-C2-C3 (Dale, 1989; Løvlie, 1972; Lauvås & Handal, 2000). Do the relations between factors and compo-

nents direct trajectories towards certain competence levels above others? For example, do the relations between the time factor and the basic components of meaning and identity entail directions towards competence level 1 rather than level 2, or the opposite? This question can be answered by taking into account findings about the necessity of participating in the practicum for extended periods, together with the advantages of practical teaching, as opposed to merely observing the practicum. If student teachers' experiences of extensive, active teaching is related to the negotiations of identity and meaning that highlight the classroom press (Hubermann, 1983), learning trajectories towards competence level 1 might well be enabled. If, on the other hand, these negotiations highlight the choices of music to be dealt with, trajectories towards higher competence levels may also seem to be enabled, insofar as the choices of music rest on philosophical considerations about music and education.

Another example of how learning trajectories can be directed towards various competence levels concerns findings about the importance of common traits between the courses involved in music teacher education. By relating the need for common traits to the concept of 'practice', which entails the activities and actions behind student music teachers' experiences in the practicum, consequences can be drawn about the shaping of syllables in the organisational area. From this perspective, the priorities of assisting student music teachers to draw connections and create learning trajectories to and from their practice experiences can be made explicit. Another way is to establish deliberate negotiations of meaning within the *Musikdidaktik* courses, concentrating on the ways in which practicum experiences could contribute to helping student music teachers to reach the goals of music teacher education in general, thereby enabling learning trajectories between the two fields.

We suggest that relating other factors to the basic components of meaning, practice, community and identity could also give rise to valuable insights. For example, what can be discovered by relating requests for close contacts between Music Teaching professors and practicum supervisors to the basic component of community, or by connecting the needs for clear relations between theory and practice to the basic component of identity and identity formation?

Conclusions

In describing conditions for learning trajectories in the arenas of the organisation, professors/supervisors, and student music teachers, we have connected them to enabling possibilities for reflection in and on action (Stegman, 2007).

The student teachers' emphasis on appropriately scheduled time, as well as authenticity in the practicum, shows that they really want to be practicing teachers. From Wenger's (1998; 2006) point of view, this raises a question concerning whether required reflection can emerge from simply observing and listening to supervisors or other teachers throughout the practicum? If not, practical teacher training can be comprehended as necessary for acquiring the common or individual competences and experiences around which negotiations of meaning can revolve.

Accordingly, the possibility to discuss and reflect upon actions made in the practicum, guided by tasks, and together with supervisors, professors and classmates, are emphasised as important features of our results. Such varied discussions should enable students to gain competence at all three competence levels.

The characteristics that designate communities of practice, as for example, sustained mutual relationships and shared ways of engaging in doing things together, also point to the necessity of doing, and reflecting and discussing what is done. These actions and reflections demand time and organised forums, together with communality.

The student music teachers also valued experiences from their vocational life as part of their negotiations of meaning. This is in line with the idea that 'communities of practice' join together into larger learning systems. It also involves the question of authenticity, and how to enable learning trajectories between music teacher education and student music teachers' parallel vocational experiences.

The concept of 'community' stresses the importance of a sense of belonging to a group, and to have someone to negotiate professional identity with. It seemed important for all the student music teachers that the professors, the supervisors and themselves could be able to view each other as participants or future colleagues. In such ways, the need for introductory preambles (Wenger, 1998) could be reduced along with increased knowledge about what others know, what they can do, and how they can contribute to an enterprise (*ibid.*). This would enhance the formulation of common aims, goals and foci for their courses, and help them to organise their courses in ways that reveal clear connections between theory and practice.

Perhaps the most important consequence that music teacher education might draw from our reasoning in this article is to conceive student learning as relational. The importance of this approach was advocated in the introduction wherein we suggested that learning at all three competence levels takes place in the relations between these fields. This importance was apparent among the earlier studies. Furthermore, without perceiving student learning as relational, it is impossible to understand how learning trajectories can be enabled by: utilising knowledge about various communities of practice; linking them together in larger learning systems; and by recognising that student music teachers' capacities for learning is located in the relationship between individual identities and social systems (Wenger, 2006).

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