# "IS IT POSSIBLE TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT?" CLASSROOM STUDENT TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING PRACTICE AND ITS SUPERVISIONS

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***Abstract***
*Our research explores teacher education students' experiences of the teaching practice and supervision that they receive during teacher training. We also asked the students for ideas about developing the music education module in teacher training at the University of Eastern Finland (UEF) (N=21). The data were collected during 2014-2018 in a teaching practice H2-study (elementary classroom practice) module. The teacher students responded to open questions in writing. All respondents are anonymous in the data.*
*The results show that the teacher students can be divided into three categories according to their attitude towards teaching music during the teaching practice module: Enthusiastic, Hopeful but qualified, and Fearful and qualified. The categories were analyzed separately, but the results were collected in general exploring. It shows that the teaching practice module functions well, and the students are satisfied with the supervision they receive for the most part. Each student felt that their self-assurance and self-confidence in teaching music was significantly enhanced. The students' ideas for developing the teacher education music courses largely focused on the extent of the courses and the number of optional courses and music theory lessons.*
*The teaching practice clearly succeeded in changing the prejudices of students and their meta-cognitive beliefs about themselves. These changes are based on significant experiences in teaching practice. The changes in significance relations impact changes in behavior and operations and, in this way, strengthen teacher identity and self-understanding.*
***Keywords***: *teaching practice, supervision, teacher identity*

## Introduction

In this article, our focus is on exploring and opening classroom teacher students' experiences of the teaching practice module, which was carried out at the Joensuu teacher training school. The data were collected during an H2 practice module in 2014–2018. The module was carried out in classes one through six. We asked students to

write about their experiences and emotions by freely responding to the following open-ended topics:

- Feelings before the teaching practice module (fears, expectations, joy, preparation, etc.);
- Thoughts and experiences during the teaching practice module (co-teaching with another student, personal skills and abilities, planning, etc.);
- Observations after the teaching practice module had been completed (strengths and weaknesses, etc.);
- How to develop challenging areas?
- Experiences of supervision (offered by teacher training school lecturer and university music lecturer);
- Ideas for developing the teacher education's music courses. We received responses from 21 students (19 women and two men).

The responses were written during the students' free time and were returned without identification information.

Content analysis was used to analyze the data. We classified the responses using the same classification criteria as we used in earlier studies (Mäkinen & Juvonen, 2016, 2017; Mäkinen, Eronen & Juvonen, 2018). The students were divided into three categories according to the attitudes and beliefs they expressed before the teaching practice module. The categories were:

- "Enthusiastic" (six women);
- "Hopeful but qualified" (eight women);
- "Doubtful and fearful" (five women and two men).

In our earlier classifications, there was a category named "Others", but in the present data collection we placed all the students in the three categories listed here.

## H2 Teaching Practice Module Curriculum 2014–2018

The objective of the H2 teaching practice module is to guide students in using the curriculum as a supervising document. They are expected to plan the teaching period for 10 music lessons so that it includes evaluation. The content for the period is given by the first supervisor, teacher at the practice school. Different teaching methods must be used variably concentrating in each school subject's special features and qualities. Students are supervised to collaborate with each other in a multi-professional way. Lessons are also carried out on a teaching-team principle. The student is expected to be able to differentiate their teaching according to pupils' skill and ability levels considering their special needs and requirements.

Practicing the basics of teaching (H2) takes place normally in the third year of studies, when the student has carried out all offered art and skill studies (Study modules Tata 1–3) and certain pedagogical studies. In the teaching practice module, the students teach 23 lessons, of which 10 lessons in art and skill subjects. The rest of the lessons consist of teaching how to read and other elementary school subjects. The module also includes classroom observation of which 27 music lessons. In addition to this, the students become acquainted with so-called outside school activities for 6 hours (in the

year 2014, this was 10 hours). The students receive altogether 30 hours of supervision of which 10 hours of big group supervision, and the rest is small group or individual supervision. The supervision is carried out by a university lecturer and practice school teacher. In addition to a practice school lecturer, a university lecturer and other students observe the lessons. These persons all offer feedback to the student about their lesson, which helps him/her in developing their teaching skills.

The self-reflection about own teaching practice and professional development was provided in the closing report, which was collected during the study module and given to the supervising teacher, who either accepted the report or asked the student to improve and make some additions to it if needed. The whole practice module is evaluated as pass/fail. The module is worth 7 credits. The H2 teaching practice is carried out simultaneously with the module *Planning, Carrying out and Evaluating Teaching and Learning* (3 credits). This module together with *Teaching Training Study* module (H2) form the entity called *Basics of Teaching* 10 credits (270 hours of work).

## The Goals of the Teaching Practice Module and Supervision

The teacher education is an entity of pedagogical processes intended to develop the teacher identity of future teachers (Väisänen, 2003, 132-146). Some of the essential parts of teacher education are formed by the teaching practice modules and the included supervision. Teaching practice with supervision has been found to be significant in molding the professional practices of a teacher. The assignment for the supervisors is to model the teaching and to support and guide the student and thus promote the professional growth of the student in the spirit of equal dialogue. Colwell (1998) and Fullerton (1998) have outlined supervision as a voluntary and dynamic interaction relationship that is also intensive and long-lasting. Confidentiality and mutual respect are strong elements of the supervision process. Although supervision in teaching practice is informal support from a more experienced specialist to an inexperienced student, it still has the characteristics of a master - apprentice type learning process (Anderson & Shannon, 1988, 40; Väisänen, 2003, 134; see also Nevanen, Juvonen & Ruismäki, 2012) (See Figure 1).

The supervision can be understood as a psycho-dynamic process in which the key components consist of paying attention to the inner world of individuals, mental images, values, attitudes, and conceptions of knowledge and conceptions of learning, all of which represent students' world view. All actions that are intended to develop the professional skills and professional growth of a student can be considered as supervision. The supervisor's personal working theories are reflected in their supervision and operations (van Deurzen-Smith, 1988; Oberg, 1989, 145-161). The supervisor cannot necessarily separate his/her own knowledge from life experience, instead, learning often takes place through the significances that students give to their own experiences.

A constructivist learning theory is behind the supervision. According to this theory, learning is the result of the activity of the learner. The theory emphasizes comprehension. The role of social interaction is central to all learning. At the same time, learning is tightly connected to context, content, and the learning situation. The supervision aims at deepening comprehension and increasing critical thinking to

remove the rigidness and repetitive false routines in teaching practice (Jyrhämä & Syrjäläinen, 2009). Self-reflection is one of the targets of supervision; the student learns to recognize their own thoughts and emotions that are formed through significant learning experiences (Silkelä, 1999).

The action in teacher education generally aims at controlling problems and developing the work in a positive direction while simultaneously strengthening the self-esteem and self-confidence of the students (See Picture 1). The best way to reach the target is with an investigative working method (Ojanen, 2003, 122-131.) Spiritual growth requires a changing process that is based on self-reflection and becoming conscious of ways of thinking, when the instinctive and conscious thinking unite in the changing process which builds on comprehension. When the metacognitions of a student (the consciousness of one's own knowing) improve, he/she recognizes their own emotion-based beliefs (Ojanen, 2000, 26-30).

From the constructivist point of view, a human being tries to understand new information based on earlier existing knowledge, emotional connections, and social structuring of the information (See Figure 1). A socio-cultural background helps the individual to understand information that the learner constructs themselves based on previous knowledge and on what his/her experiences and expectations are. The learner adapts new learning experiences by reflecting on an earlier significance perspective, which promotes the comprehension that takes place later. The received information, earlier personality-historic experiences, mental images, presuppositions, world view, and awareness of own thinking have an impact on learning. The individual's value-decisions guide the valuation of scientifically not proven meta- cognitions (Von Glaserfeld, 1995; Hoskins & Stypka, 1995; Ojanen, 2000, 39-47).

In the process of supervision, beliefs and presumptions should be open to consciousness, and, after that, their origins can be explored and contemplated; their relation to general significance perspectives can be interpreted and possibly form a synthesis with earlier knowledge, thus, molding the knowledge in a new form.
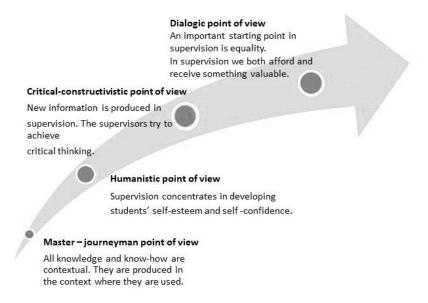


**Dialogic point of view**
An important starting point in supervision is equality.
In supervision we both afford and receive something valuable.

**Critical-constructivistic point of view**
New information is produced in supervision. The supervisors try to achieve
critical thinking.

**Humanistic point of view**
Supervision concentrates in developing students' self-esteem and self -confidence.

**Master – journeyman point of view**
All knowledge and know-how are contextual. They are produced in the context where they are used.

**Figure 1. Teaching practice module's viewpoints of supervision**

The individual collects information spontaneously in active learning, which requires metacognitive preparedness and entails the ability to control one's own learning. Active learning means searching for new information, it's comparing to earlier knowledge, and reflecting aware of own thinking. Learning by doing is one part of active learning, but it also includes the potential for trying new sides of one and to setting new goals. This requires the ability to process information and see the significance of the activity. It is also important to be able to act in a group, where discussion, listening, and exploring together accelerate active learning. Problem-based learning is based on the support of a small group and forms a broad-based professional approach (Amundson, 2005).

## Experiences are Given a Significance

Experiences are an individual's personal handiwork that includes significances that no one else can thoroughly understand. They belong to the individual's psychic and subjective world view, and they cannot be seen or heard; they are only understood (Silkelä, 1999). These experiences are not conscious, they have become like a daily routine, which is not under conscious investigation.

Significances are based on an individual's earlier personal world of experiences. The individual's worldview is enriched and broadened through new significance relationships. A human being tries to understand his/her experiences when matters gain significances. This happens all the time when we gain experiences from different issues that form significances. When a happening gains significance, it becomes an experience. Significance relations are connected with different targets, and they form broader significance schemes that keep changing in interaction with other individuals in different operational environments. Interaction between human beings also creates significances. The significances change through learning as the individual reflects on his/her own experiences. This leads to a better self-assertion and a better interpretation of reality. At its best the interpretation leads to understanding the phenomenon, adding a consciousness of the opportunities available to the individual (Ojanen, 2000, 132-134).

According to Dewey's (1951) well known idea "learning by doing", one learns through experience. The knowledge cannot be separated from genuine experiences gained in real life. When information becomes conscious, it joins learning with personal development. All learning is always in relation to earlier experiences, which means blending into an individual's uniquely, through life experiences developed, worldview. The personality of an individual is the result of his/her life's experimental history, which defines the content of the following experiences and the individual's relationship to the world. Learning expands the connections of an individual's understanding, which mold his/her personality (Kotkavirta & Nyyssönen, 1996).

Resistance to learning may occur, which may block the learning process and the process of change. This may be based on earlier events and the socio-emotional nature of the learning process in which learning is supposed to take place. An experience is usually connected to many types of experiences and beliefs, because earlier experiences are not the only truth about the accidents, it is rather how the individual experiences the matters in the moment and in the situation. In certain way, these experiences form a process-like continuity from the individual's past to their future. Mental images, associations, emotion, values and attitudes, and needs are connected to thinking,

experiencing and its content, although it is normally unconscious. The growing and learning process which is based on experiences is closely connected to those significances that individuals give to their experiences, thus, building the unique experiential world of living. Experimental learning is always built on prior knowledge and experimental history is always built on its significances. Learning is most effective when we openly meet and explore problematic experiences (Ojanen, 2000, 100-105). If some part of the cyclical learning process is left poorly handled, learning is not efficient. If the new understanding gained through experiences is integrated to individual's understanding world as a part of his/her operating theory it will change his/her significances, which afterwards should be carried out in practical level. Experimental learning requires practical and unsolved personal problematic experience that is explored and reflected on to find new ideas. This kind of critical self-reflection organizes the significance schemes and perspectives and clears them, after which the changed perspective encourages and inspires the students to new experiments and testing new action models (Ojanen, 2000, 97-109). Earlier experiences may effectively block the ability to self-reflection.

Applying Kolb's (1984) theoretic model, the pedagogical process of supervision proceeds in phases. The supervisor should encourage the student to gain experiences through their senses and avoid assessment. Certain details pop up after a chronologic examination of the practice lesson. Going through personally important experiences together in a group creates processes for new ideas. In the contemplation phase, the emotions and thoughts stirred by the experiences are reflected. In the reassessment phase, new information is merged with old through association. Simultaneously, significant information is separated from insignificant information. The information is tested and tried in practice before new information can be assimilated. When the emotions from the experiment and new ideas are connected to prior knowledge, it is time to make conclusions and test them in practice. A change in significance perspective occurs when he/she have been integrated new ideas as a part of the individual's value-world, which can be seen in behavior (Ojanen, 2000, 113-130).

The target of self-reflection is self-assertion, which forms the core of the spiritual development of a human being. We use it as a means of familiarizing our personal experiences in interaction with ourselves and the surrounding world and reality. Reflection requires openness to anything that an individual find in himself/herself through profound contemplation. Therefore, the issues start showing in a new, different light. According to Boud, Keogh & Walker (1985), three phases can be separated from the self-reflection process: remembering the experience and self-critical exploration of it, recognizing the emotions arising from earlier experiences and re-evaluation of the newborn experience, its activity, thoughts and emotions. Self-reflection is a central element in professional growth (Ojanen, 2000, 71-85).

## Operating Theory

Operating theory can be defined as a system that is built on private, personal experiences, knowledge, values, and attitudes that form the bases for an individual's behavior. Experiences function as building material for an operating theory. Operating theory is a set of rules and a guiding system that works in an individual's unconscious area of the brain. One goal in teaching practice is that the student develops his/her

operating theory. Operation theory can help in trying to understand a student's own beliefs concerning teaching and learning, preconceptions, fears, expectations, hopes, and routines of behavior. Professional skills develop when critical self-reflection merges with experimental learning.

The supervisor tries to help and support the student and asks questions and makes observations that can help the student to process their own inner issues and experiences. One target is that the student creates his/her own operating theory, which enables effecting their own working methods and changing them when needed (Ojanen, 2000, 8-93). During the process, the supervised student changes his/her experiences through reflecting on his/her significance world. It is possible to change ways of action through becoming conscious of significances and increasing understanding. The aim of supervision is to change the role of the student from mere receiver of information to information producer. The aim of the process is proceeding through reflective supervision to become conscious of issues and to understand them (Ojanen, 2000, 140-160).

## Evaluation of Supervision

One challenge in evaluating supervision is finding usable information in new connections. Evaluation is the most critical and reflective when it aims at an individual's own activities and reveals hidden significances behind every day self-evidences (Ojanen, 2000, 168-170). An important role of supervising a student teacher is evaluation from other students, which takes place in group situations as a process of interaction and common learning. The evaluation process targets supporting the development of the student's self-image. The humanistic concept of humankind and the experiential-constructivist concept of learning lead to motivating evaluation instead of competitive evaluation.

It is important to remember that the supervisor's own values, attitudes and preconceptions, beliefs, and conception of humankind impact the whole supervision process and his/her actions, at least on the unconscious level. Becoming conscious of this helps to illuminate the supervision process. An elementary part of the supervision process is integrating learning and other personal development in molding experiences through self-reflection creating experiences to learning experiences. Learning takes place in a dialogue after an experience and in giving significance to experiences than in the experience itself (Laine & Malinen, 2008).

## The Research Questions

Our research questions are:

1. *What kinds of feelings teaching practice in music education raises among classroom teacher students*
   - *before the study model started?*
   - *during the study model?*
   - *after the study model?*
2. *How could the students develop themselves in areas that are seen as challenging?*
3. *What was the supervision like?*

4. *How should we develop classroom teacher education's music education study models?*

Our aim was to explore the changes that occur in students' attitudes toward teaching music during the teaching practice and find explanations for the changes. Through the questions about supervising, we aimed to develop further the processes and the contents of it. We also tried to map the areas that the students find the most challenging in teaching music. We will use these to develop better teacher education music education study models.

## Methodological Solutions

We used theory leaning content analyses to analyze the student responses (N=21). First, we created a general overview of the students' feelings before, during, and after the teaching practicing study module. After that, we followed the changes in the students' emotions and attitudes through the three phases (before-, during-, and after the practice module) using typical examples of student texts. Then we created a view of matters that students experienced as the most challenging in teaching music and in students' thoughts about meeting the challenges. In the end, we opened the students' experiences of teaching practice and the areas that were the most difficult. We also present student ideas for developing the teacher education's music education study modules.

## Results

### A. Student feelings before teaching practice

In our earlier articles (Mäkinen & Juvonen, 2016, 2017; Mäkinen, Eronen & Juvonen, 2018), we have explored student willingness to teach music and belief in their own skills in teaching music. These articles produced a four-class classification of willingness to teach music: 1) "Enthusiastic", 2) "Hopeful but qualified", 3) "Doubtful and fearful", 4) "Others". In earlier articles, there were students who did not describe their thoughts of surviving teaching music at all, and they were put in the category "Others". In this data, there were no such responses, so the category "Others" was deleted. There were six women in the category "Enthusiastic," eight women in the category "Hopeful but qualified," and seven (two men and five women) students in the category "Fearful and doubtful".

The responses, given in the category "Fearful and  doubtful" (N=7), showed deep fear of teaching music. The reason for the fear was most often the thought that the teaching student's own skills in different areas of music were inadequate or did not exist at all. Their conception of their own musicality or musical abilities was unstable or totally negative. These kinds of concepts have usually been formed during early childhood at home, among peers, in kindergarten, or at school after negative experiences with music. Changing this sort of conception in adulthood is difficult. In addition to this, many teacher education students shared the notion that they should be able to master all possible areas to be able to teach music, at least at some basic level. Evidently, music is a school subject that touches the students deeply and in which they have built themselves a major threshold for their own activity.

> *"When I got to know that music was my practicing subject, I burst out crying... I did not feel I had the required knowledge and skills to teach music" (Woman 22);*
>
> *"...my thoughts about teaching music were not at all positive because I did not feel music was in my comfort zone. I was afraid teaching music would be too challenging for me" (Woman 22);*
>
> *"When I heard that my other responsible area was music, I was horrified in the beginning" (Man 22);*
>
> *"The disappointment changed to despair when I got to know the subjects I was going to teach. They were music, religion and mother tongue... Music is a strange subject to me. I am not musical, and I find it very difficult to throw myself in the action" (Man 27);*
>
> *"...teaching music as a thought was very frightening" (Woman 23).*

Students, in the category "Fearful and doubtful", strongly leaned on supervisors from the school for the teaching practice and the university. The supervisors succeeded in offering the students feelings of safety and knowing that help is near and always available. They also experienced spiritual growth: *"I experience that during the fall I grew spiritually as a human being and a teacher. My teacher identity developed, and I can now observe more issues and pay attention to problematic areas".* The students also speculated on the significance of music to themselves and to their pupils: *"Music may be a means of self-expression to some pupils. I see music as a very important subject, and I would like to offer the children a positive picture of music and its versatility".*

The writings show that the students had explored the significance of music education more widely, too: *"Sometimes I felt that the pupils did not appreciate music, and that it was only a mandatory subject, which cannot even cause a repeat of a class. Here is a place for thinking in the practice school: why do pupils feel music is an unnecessary subject?"* A strong feeling of self-reflection was present in all of the student responses.

The category of "Hopeful, but doubtful" (N=8) wrote fearfully, but they still had a positive belief in their own survival, in spite of a lack of skills or abilities.

> *"Before the teaching practice, I was nervous mostly because I had no earlier experience of teaching music.*
> *The conception of a modern music lesson was a little bit lost on me. On the other hand, music as a school subject seems to have expired widely compared to my own music lessons at school" (Woman 23);*
>
> *"The teaching practice with its evaluation did not make me nervous, but I was not super enthusiastic about it. I am a rather self-critical person, and I already had the attitude "I can do nothing." It partly helped me with my nerves because I really don't know anything theoretic in music"*
> *(Woman 23).*

The responses from the category "Hopeful, but doubtful" strongly mirrored experiences of success. Respondents often felt their skills were good enough to teach music. The responses also underline the significance of positive feedback from the supervisors. The students felt that their skills had developed a lot in different areas during the teaching practice module. They had also noticed that there were areas that are more challenging and presented their own ideas for developing their teacher identity in these areas. Experimental learning was also strongly present in student responses. The students were satisfied with the supervision they received in almost every response: *"The supervisors helped me to realize areas where I have a lot to develop. They were supportive and helpful to us. It was nice that they were aware that music was not our strongest area".*

The category "Enthusiastic" (N=6) highlighted in their responses strong trust in their own skills and love of music itself.

> *"I waited eagerly planning and carrying out music lessons. I have always loved music and liked music lessons. I especially love singing. I felt very lucky when I heard that my teaching practice module included music lessons" (Woman 45);*
>
> *"I was rather self-assured because I have a lot of experience and some useful material for teaching music ... Just because I have these musical skills I suppose that the teachers expect more from me than the other students" (Woman 22);*
>
> *"I am glad that I may teach music because it is close to my heart" (Woman 21);*
>
> *"I was a little nervous, but, on the other hand, my feeling was enthusiastic because music is a pleasing subject for me and my greed for developing in the area of music was strong" (Woman 23);*
>
> *"Because of my own background (piano course 3/3 done) the thought of teaching music was not horrifying; I was rather excited to be teaching a subject so important to myself" (Woman 21).*

In the "Enthusiastic" category, the students observed their own development and winning themselves, which indicates strong self-reflection. They also noticed that they are not supposed to perfectly control each small detail. Their self-confidence could be enhanced along with successful singing and piano playing performances: *"I got rid of my stage fright and developed a lot as a teacher".* Self-reflection was strong: *"I believe to be able to evolve further in these, still developing issues and observed areas, when I get more experience of teaching music and dealing with children".* Members of the category also observed the supervision more sharp-eyed than the other categories: *"Positive was also that in the feedback discussions and supervision situations, the focus moved from only teaching situations towards my own habitus and how to put my soul into teaching".*

### B. Student feelings during the teaching practice module

It seems that after initial nervousness and when the teaching practice had got off to a smooth start, the fears of the students disappeared as belief in their own skills and abilities grew and became stronger. The experiences from coeducation with another student were almost all positive, and the students realized that they did not need to master all areas of music to be able to teach good music lessons. They also noticed that mistakes may occur, and that they can learn also from them. In the category "Fearful and doubtful" the change in attitude was quick.

> *"When the practice went further, my nervousness and fear gradually disappeared... Planning the lessons was, in the beginning, really difficult, but with time it also became substantially easier... I noticed that I gained a lot of confidence in teaching music" (Woman 23);*

> *"After initial clumsiness, teaching music started to feel very pleasing... My own skills were growing along with repetitions and growing self-confidence" (Woman 39);*

> *"My fears of teaching music melted away and every now and then I even enjoyed it. I developed a new kind of respect for music teachers" (Man 27);*

> *"...after getting rid of early clumsiness, it was easier to choose contents and ways of working for the lessons" (Man 22);*

> *"During the teaching practice, my opinions about teaching music totally changed You don't have to know everything about music right away even if you are teaching music. Different working methods also offer many opportunities to teachers who are not at their strongest area in music" (Woman 22);*

> *"I noticed how my thinking developed all the time" (Woman 22).*

In the category "Hopeful but doubtful", the progress was clear, and the confidence in their own skills and abilities strengthened seemingly.

> *"I was happy to notice that my skills actually are good enough to teach a basic music lesson" (Woman 23);*

> *"My own musical skills are enough to teach music lessons" (Woman 22).*

In the "Enthusiastic" category, progress was not as clearly observed as in the other categories, but the experiences of success were strong for most members. The confidence in own skills remained strong and, in some cases, even became stronger as the practice progressed.

> *"Planning and teaching the music lessons have been really enjoyable! My own skills have been good enough and the functionality of the lessons has been agreeable and nice for myself and the pupils"* (Woman 22);

> *"I felt that my skills were good enough to carry out this teaching practice… Own skills have developed greatly in teaching music during this practice module"* (Woman 23);

> *"I felt my own skills were good enough"* (Woman 24);

> *"My own skills developed continuously during the practice when I gained experience and touch to teaching music. Pupil acquaintance proved to be the most valuable skill that I could take advantage of in any kind of situation"* (Woman 21).

The feelings of every student after the teaching practice module were much more positive and sunnier than the feelings before the module. Progress and development took place in all categories. Progress was clearly observed in the category "Fearful and doubtful". Self-reflection had changed the attitude of the students, and most of them thought that they had pulled through the study model well. In addition to issues about teaching music, the students reported developmental steps in teacher identity and classroom management. This shows success in supervision and the students' real abilities for self-reflection, and with it the development through changes in the significance contents as the understanding of students expands.

> *"I survived!! I feel that during the fall I made a spiritual growth as a human being and as a teacher. My own teacher identity developed and now I can observe more issues and pay attention to problematic areas… I learned in the practice many methods for better classroom management and for creating a good nice atmosphere for learning"* (Woman 22);

> *"During the practice module, I felt that I got very valuable experience in different teaching techniques and how they work"* (Woman 22);

> *"I am proud of having challenged myself as a music teacher and also chose working methods outside my comfort zone. I succeeded in using versatile working methods: the period included teaching singing, instrument playing, and band"* (Man 22);

> *"Teaching music is fun. I think that teaching music is important and I would like to offer children positive pictures of music and its versatility. I had set a target to learn how to throw myself into the teaching situation and I felt that it was not difficult for me"*
> *(Woman 39).*

The responses in the category "Hopeful but doubtful" clear reflect growing confidence in own skills and abilities. The doubtfulness students had felt towards teaching music had disappeared compared to the starting point.

*"Growing the self-assurance in teaching music succeeded well.*
*Self-confidence strengthened in singing with the class, the use of my own*
*voice succeeded nicely" (Woman 22);*

*"I was satisfied with the whole teaching practice module and I felt*
*successful in many ways during it" (Woman 23).*

In the category "Enthusiastic", strong self-assurance and confidence in own abilities were clear for teaching music. They explored the challenges in their teaching and what they have to offer pupils much deeper than the other categories, which reflects that their music teacher identity had grown through experiences gained during the teaching practice, new significances and self-reflection.

*"I succeeded in musical matters as a teacher. My lessons offered surely*
*challenges for the pupils and I feel that the pupils also knew that I could*
*teach them music and that I have good musical abilities" (Woman 22);*

*"I succeeded in building a nice and pleasant lesson which excited the pupils"*
*(Woman 23);*

*"The practice module went OK... My dance lesson hit the jackpot and pupils*
*were strongly thrilled with it. Playing the kantele and metallophones with*
*the pupils was a beautiful experience. Especially nice was that some pupils*
*came to tell me after my music lesson that they were excited about playing*
*the kantele" (Woman 45);*

*"The best thing about the practice period was winning oneself and noticing*
*own development. I got rid of my stage fright and developed as a teacher a*
*lot.... I saw how changing my own habitus affected the pupils" (Woman 21);*

*"I succeeded in planning and carrying out all my lessons. It was great to see*
*how the pupils were excited by rhythm notes and were thrilled with Peer*
*Gynt" (Woman 22).*

### C. The most challenging areas experienced by students

The most challenging areas for the category "Fearful and doubtful" were lesson planning, grouping pupils, holding the peace for working, organizing and controlling the class together with motivating their pupils. The lack of own skills also showed strongly in their responses as well as knowing and using musical concepts. They also felt challenged arranging for school instruments and giving instrument instruction to pupils.

*"I felt making and carrying out the school instrument arrangements was*
*very challenging. It requires mastering many areas and a real*
*understanding of what one is doing" (Woman 22);*

> *"Classroom management was often challenging… Also, there was always a*
> *please for development in noticing all pupils individually" (Woman 21);*

> *"Holding the peace for working was often challenging in the classroom.*
> *Pupils were often quite restless, and I had to use a lot of time to smooth*
> *their ruffled feathers… I also found teaching a new song to the pupils*
> *challenging because my singing voice is terrible" (Woman 23);*

> *"Classroom management and motivating the pupils were the biggest*
> *challenges in teaching music" (Woman 21);*

> *"To me it was most difficult to remember all the concepts in music and using*
> *them in changing situations in teaching" (Woman 39);*

> *"Teaching music forces the teacher to observe several issues at the same*
> *time. One must concentrate on own piano playing and singing, keeping the*
> *basic rhythm and simultaneously observing the pupils and their behavior"*
> *(Man 27);*

> *"Most challenging in music lessons for me was organizing and controlling*
> *the class" (Man 22).*

In the category "Hopeful but doubtful", the biggest challenges were in lesson planning and its details, IT problems, accompaniment, classroom management, teaching music theory and rhythms, classroom management and time usage.

> *"Planning the usage of time and organizing was challenging*
> *(not so much the contents)" (Woman 24);*

> *"Planning was challenging when I didn't know what I should do and what is*
> *useful" (Woman 21);*

> *"I felt time was challenging, because pupils learn issues with changing*
> *speed… Finding out what is easy and what is difficult was also challenging*
> *to me" (Woman 23);*

> *"Classroom management was challenging because pupils behave differently*
> *in music lessons than in other lessons, and the level of the noise gets high"*
> *(Woman 23);*

> *"Accompaniment with piano was challenging because I had not played the*
> *piano before teacher education studies" (Woman 22).*

The biggest challenges in the category "Enthusiastic" were mastering many issues at the same time, teaching music theory, differentiating, getting to the level of the musically weakest pupils, finding versatile teaching methods, giving orders, and throwing oneself into the teaching situation whole-heartedly. The challenges were deeper quality and required pedagogical exploring and speculation. The students not

only revealed the areas that were challenging to themselves, but they also discussed the areas from a pedagogical point of view.

> *"...most work I had to do was in putting my soul in the teaching and throwing myself into it" (Woman 21);*

> *"Teaching the music theory part was challenging. I was afraid that I could not express the matters with the right concepts and in a way suitable for elementary instruction pupils" (Woman 45);*

> *"It was difficult to find versatile teaching methods for each lesson" (Woman 23);*

> *"...it was difficult for me to get to the level of the musically weakest pupils and differentiate my plans downward" (Woman 22);*

> *"Mastering many issues at the same time was challenging...finding issues suitable for pupils' skills, differentiating" (Woman 21);*

> *"It was challenging to give orders in a suitable way, the right issues at the right time" (Woman 24).*

### D. Student ideas for developing teacher education music studies

In the category "Fearful and doubtful", there were not many ideas for developing teacher education music studies. Many of them felt that their knowledge and skills were not adequate for giving ideas for development. Many of them felt that what they had learned in teacher education had prepared them for very useful and successful teaching, and they realized that practice at school was a good possibility to apply learned issues in practice. The students in the category wrote that the teaching in music studies is useful, but they lasted so shot time that they could not reach the level of smooth music teaching because of their low starting skill and knowledge level. One of the students thought that every teacher, even while working should follow other teachers' work and ways of acting in other schools to keep his/her own teaching up-to-date. This indicates self-reflection on teacher identity. *"A teacher is never complete, there is always room for improvement. It is the same with teaching music".* One student wrote that teaching music theory in teacher education should be developed better.

> *"In the teacher education, more value should be given to music education. There could be more lessons because music is a challenging subject to teach. In the education, I got really valuable skills and information" (Woman 22);*

> *"I think that our music education has been really comprehensive. I cannot find anything to develop" (Woman 21);*

> *"I think that learning music theory should be obligatory for all to be able to understand issues in other music courses. Before going to music theory*

*lessons, I did not understand all the matters that we went through in our music lessons" (Man 22);*

*"My opinion is that the amount of music courses should be kept at the level it is now. Teacher education should offer sufficient knowledge and skills for teaching music. Music belongs to the subjects that every teacher must be able to teach but it is more difficult to teach. A less talented individual can survive other subjects using a teacher's guide but not in teaching music" (Woman 37).*

The developmental ideas in the category "Hopeful but doubtful" for teacher education music studies concentrated on music theory, making a periodic plan, more encouraging supervision, playing piano in the classroom, and creating musical exercises. The amount of music being taught was hoped to be bigger.

*"In the multidisciplinary studies there could be more music lessons observing ... Rehearsing music lesson planning would be a good thing" (Woman 24);*

*"Instrument playing using other than just rhythm instruments should be practiced more. For example, guitar playing was handled only in two lessons and it remained completely foreign for me, I did not learn to read notes or other markings used for guitar" (Woman 22);*

*"It is rather challenging to use in teaching music when you have had very little guidance in it" (Woman 21);*

*"Teacher education should offer a "Music for dummies" course where music theory is explained in an easy way and as simply as possible" (Woman 23);*

*"...making the periodic plan could be practiced  in music courses... maybe a little more encouraging feedback could be given in supervision" (Woman 21).*

In the category "Enthusiastic", the ideas for developing teacher education music studies emphasized learning modern up-to-date children's songs and achieving a general level of skill. One of the students lifted up the optionality in the university music studies. It could be the answer to heterogenic student group's musical skills development. Each student would get teaching in the areas where it would most be needed.

*"The skills that are learned in Joensuu teacher education do not provide the possibility to be able to teach music. Learning the piano is almost unnecessary because very few students learn anything and in other means the teaching here is quite theory oriented" (Woman 22);*

*"...more attention could be pointed in how to plan music lessons and carry out at different class levels... Also, more elective courses should be offered" (Woman 45);*

*"The only thing I missed was modern up-to-date children's songs"*
*(Woman 21).*

## Conclusions

1. An examination of student experiences of the teaching practice module, in general, showed that the study module had produced strong self-reflection, which clearly developed the student teacher's identity and opened new approaches to teaching. It is obvious that the significance world of the students changed in a way that the changes were probably permanent in nature. The interaction with supervisors (practice school music teacher and university didactics lecturer) fulfilled its significance as a molder of professional ways of action. According to the students' responses, the interaction between the supervisors and the students has been equal, confidential, and based on mutual respect. The supervisors succeeded in creating a safe atmosphere where a student's own ideas and thoughts were given the opportunity to be tried, tested, and accepted.

2. The supervision was tightly connected to the context of music lessons and their planning. Student responses describe the practice module as a time of spiritual growth and strengthening of self-confidence and teacher identity. Almost all students wrote that their confidence in their own skills in teaching music increased. This shows that their learning experiences were significant. Because the students wrote that they observed their own teaching from a new perspective, that made them notice many issues that they did not see earlier, we can speak of an investigative way of working with supervision, which led to self-reflection and, through it, recognizing individual ways of working. This leads to understanding-based change, which the students described in their responses.

3. Because many students felt that their earlier skills and level of knowledge in musical areas was low, the building of new information based on old knowledge was difficult for some of them. In these difficult cases, the earlier significance perspectives on teaching music were negatively oriented, and the student's self-confidence in teaching music was weak. The new information was filtered through earlier experiences, mental images, presuppositions, and world view. If these were negatively oriented, the music practice module was able to change the negative significance perspectives in a positive direction. When a student presupposes that he/she is unmusical without any musical talents, it is usually a scientifically unproven meta-conception. Changing this presupposition requires becoming conscious of one's own musical operational preconditions, which makes possible the change in significance perspective.

4. Many of the students said that they stepped outside their comfort zone, which shows that they had an opportunity to try new dimensions of themselves and to set personal goals for the practice module. The group formed by other students and collaborating as a teacher pair teaching together has been seen as positive elements in the practice module. According to student responses, we can say that their self-assertion grew, and, through that growth, their interpretation of

reality was enriched and their world-view expanded and diversified. The students had become more conscious of their own opportunities. In this manner, the new understanding gained through practicing experiences was integrated or is being integrated into the students' conceptional world and operational theory by changing their significances.

5.  According to student responses, the Kolb's (1984) model worked on the practical level. The supervisor's encouragement to attain experiences of teaching through the senses led to identifying some details for observation. Processing these with supervisors and other students led to inventing new ideas and learning new ways of action through it. When the experiences, emotions, and new ideas were combined with earlier knowledge, they are started to be tested in practice. It seems that many students are melting the ideas as a part of their value world, which means that their significance perspective is in the process of change, and this change is reflected in their action in teaching practice lessons. The phases of the reflecting process can be seen clearly in the students' responses: remembering of the lessons and self-critical speculation, becoming conscious of emotions that arise from earlier experiences, and rethinking and reconsidering own thoughts and actions.

6.  The students' responses show the effect of the practice on their operational theory. The students recognized their own strengths and lack of skills, but they were also conscious of how to compensate or develop these areas. This reflects that the students had moved from information receivers to information builders to becoming conscious and understanding the teaching processes.

7.  When evaluating supervision, the students mentioned that they might have needed more group discussions and exploration of common themes together. One student wished for more encouraging feedback from the supervisors. In this case, the supervised student had probably expected supervision with a dialogic approach in which the supervisor takes the master – journeyman approach. This student was disappointed because of contradictions and wrong presumptions. On the other hand, the supervisor was not able to interpret the emotional atmosphere in the right way and sensitively enough.

8.  On a general level, we saw that the self-assurance and self-confidence of three groups of students, among those who belonged to the "Fearful and doubtful" category, was strengthened more than in other categories of students. As they realized that they survive the music teaching despite the lacking skills or knowledge in music. Many also noticed that they could use their classroom management skills in music lessons. Teaching together with another student was also perceived as positive. The category "Hopeful but doubtful" quickly lost their doubts about their own skills and abilities as they started the practice lessons; support from student colleagues was important to them.

9.  The difficulties in planning decreased quickly for all categories, and common teaching helped many of the students. The category "Enthusiastic" included most students who had music as a hobby. Many of them played the piano and had taken some skill-level exams in piano. The different areas of music education seemed familiar. The students in the category "Enthusiastic" could

analyze deeper their own teaching than the students in the other categories. Their attention was not limited to their own performance; they could also evaluate the reactions of pupils more, analyze their own lesson content better, and their own performance as a music teacher. Pedagogical speculation was clearly more detailed and deeper for this category than for the other ones.

10. Music has been and will remain one of the most feared subjects taught at school. The positive experiences that we describe in this article are one way of moderating these fears and making teaching students believe in their skills and abilities and manage to teach music in spite of minor lacks in some musical areas. The changes in the UEF teacher education curriculum has also helped mold the students' attitude climate for teaching music in the future. Music studies have been integrated together with other art and skill subjects, and the progress made from this clearly helps students believe in their own potential to teach music in school despite shortages in skills and knowledge (Mäkinen, Eronen & Juvonen, 2018).

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