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CRITICAL AND CREATIVE ENGAGEMENTS WITH DIVERSITY IN NORDIC EDUCATION

Edited by
VANDER TAVARES AND
THOR-ANDRÉ SKREFSRUD

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Introduction

Thor-André Skrefsrud and Vander Tavares

EDUCATION FOR DIVERSITY IN THE NORDIC CONTEXT

What are the challenges educators in the Nordic context face when it comes to working with, through, and for diversity? What are the opportunities, best practices, and lessons learned? In what ways does diversity emerge within different educational contexts and how may current and future teachers be better prepared to work with a growing diversity? How can perspectives from the Nordic context contribute to informing research and practice within and across different sociopolitical and geographical contexts? These are the main questions and concerns that have guided the conceptualization and organization of this book.

In recent years, the global landscape of education has experienced continuous and complex transformation informed by unprecedented sociocultural and political changes. Immigration, globalization, and internationalization have contributed to redefining educational spaces from kindergarten to higher education (Clandinin & Husu, 2017). Such developments have played a critical role in reshaping the "traditional" classroom in which embodiments of diversity have moved from being an occasional minority to now an integral component of the educational experience of teachers and students (Aydin & Kaya, 2017; Miller, 2009). Considering the rapid flow in which political,

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cultural, and social changes continue to occur globally, education needs to be continually reconceptualized to remain relevant and responsive.

By recognizing, celebrating, and valuing diversity in the classroom, educators can contribute to the achievement of academic success of every student. Moreover, intercultural and multicultural experiences help create social spaces in schools in which the identities of a diverse student body can be enacted and affirmed against traditional discourses of difference as deficit (Alford, 2014; Hogan & Haltinner, 2015). Indeed, although diversity increasingly becomes the norm around the world, its value is often framed negatively by neoconservative groups, who construe diversity as a threat to political and social stability (Nowicka, 2018; Perry & Scrivens, 2019). Such ideologies have a direct impact on education when it comes to the inclusion and well-being of students and teachers of diverse and minoritized backgrounds (Shirazi & Jaffe-Walter, 2021).

Diversity is a complex construct and tends to be understood within the domains of culture, language, religion, gender, sex, age, ability, race, and ethnicity (Banks, 2015). When working in environments characterized by such diversity, educators are expected to meet the learning needs of very distinct student groups within the same space (Miller, 2009). However, teacher education continues to struggle to adequately prepare current and future teachers to critically understand, respond to, and equally important, teach through and for diversity in a manner that moves beyond superficiality (Howard & Milner, 2021; Wells, 2008). Research demonstrates that the gap between the learning needs of students and the pedagogical practices of teachers remains wide. The same research indicates that such gaps impact the educational, social, linguistic, and cultural experiences of students much more significantly, particularly of students of a minoritized background, such as refugee, first and second generation, immigrant, and Indigenous students (Mcduff et al., 2018; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012).

Teacher education in the Nordic European context is also undergoing changes in response to diversity, though this context tends to receive less attention globally. While education in the Nordic context historically has been charted for the mainstream population, promoting a policy of assimilation, and partly segregation, the challenge of raising academic achievement for all students regardless of background has put diversity high on the educational agenda also within teacher education (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; OECD, 2014). For example, meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population is at the forefront of the latest teacher education reforms in Norway as teacher education should "qualify teachers that are able to develop school as an institution for social and academic learning in a democratic and diverse society" (Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 1).

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Similar developments can also be seen within teacher education programs in other Nordic contexts. The latest Finnish national curriculum for teacher education has changed from a perspective of "us" tolerating "them" to a more critical perspective emphasizing equality, diversity, and social justice for all (Hummelstedt-Djedou et al., 2018). Teacher education programs in Icelandic universities have emphasized the need to implement culturally responsive teaching in order to promote a more inclusive framework in light of the growing immigrant student population (Gunnthórsdóttir & Ragnarsdóttir, 2020). Swedish and Finnish teacher education curricula for special needs students have started to move away from special needs as deficit and now also "underline the importance of focusing on the strengths and possibilities of the pupils" (Takala et al., 2019, p. 28).

Despite curricular initiatives, *how* to approach diversity remains a struggle for teacher education in the Nordic context (Cochran-Smith, 2013; Hummelstedt-Djedou et al., 2018). On one hand, proposed curricula not only value but also prioritize diversity. On the other hand, little seems to have changed with regard to the ways in which future teachers may be prepared to teach within this rapidly evolving context, despite curricular reforms (Anderstaf et al., 2021). In other words, teachers are expected to create more equitable opportunities for all students, but how (and) is this far-reaching goal being achieved? Simultaneously, the pressure to standardize education can undermine the need to prepare teachers for diversity. As in many parts of the world, Nordic education has experienced a contemporary standardization of education, driven forward by politicians and educational reformers.

As a result, a competing emphasis is now on international comparisons and the assessment of educational outcomes through standardized tests (Biesta, 2020; Kvernbekk, 2018). However, focusing merely on "what works" within a standardized curriculum and across different contexts may restrict the discussion of what is valuable in education (Biesta, 2018; Kvernbekk, 2018). Hence, within a standardized education teachers run the risk of conducting their teaching from an assumed neutral position, which in most cases is equivalent with a majority culture perspective. Teacher education in the Nordic context is thus faced with the challenge of enhancing and implementing a critical stance against the perceived neutrality of schools that sustains cultural and linguistic hierarchies, power relations, and other mechanisms that reinforce social inequalities.

Therefore, we find it important to continue the discussion on how teacher education in the Nordic countries can be enhanced. In this book, we offer theoretical, conceptual, and empirical works that advance relevant perspectives around the challenges, opportunities, best practices, and lessons learned in education in the Nordic context with respect to diversity. The purpose of

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this book is to foster a dialogue within the Nordic context and between different geographical contexts.

Our attention toward the Nordic context, however, does not mean that we believe there is a particular Nordic way of thinking and acting regarding diversity. In fields such as education and socioeconomics, a "Nordic model" has been proposed to denote some key characteristics that the five Nordic countries—Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland—have in common. As noted by Frønes et al. (2021), citizens of the Nordic countries have benefitted from social gains such as free education, equal access to education, universal health coverage, and several other welfare benefits, although these are not unique to the Nordic context per se. Historically, the Nordic countries have also embraced an "egalitarian idea of a classless society, which is characterized by individual democratic participation, solidarity and mutual respect and appreciation for all" (Frønes et al., 2021, p. 1). Nevertheless, as noted by Witoszek and Midttun (2018), the claim of a homogeneous Nordic society under the same "model" can easily obscure important differences not only between the different countries but also within each individual country, as some of the chapters in this volume demonstrate in relation to minoritized and majority groups. Moreover, the idea of a unitary "Nordic model" has been significantly challenged by processes of globalization and neoliberalism, indicating that virtues such as responsibility, cooperation, community engagement, and justice are interpreted and understood in very different ways (Frønes et al., 2021; Witoszek & Midttun, 2018). Such insights lend themselves to a view of the Nordic countries as places in constant change across time and space, as the notion of a "Nordic model" can often signal a static set of practices that could somehow remain unchanged by intra- and international forces.

On this background, we believe that the term the "Nordic model" should be used with caution as it can overshadow nuances and create barriers for necessary critical examinations of educational and social practices. Still, we would argue, however, that foregrounding and critically discussing experiences with diversity from the different educational contexts in the Nordic countries gives a valuable contribution to the international discourse on critical and creative engagements with diversity in contemporary education. In the next section, we present the structure and the areas of concern in this book.

Organization and Main Themes

The chapters of this book are organized in five parts which examine experiences of diversity in education in different areas and from different

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perspectives. The first part, *Student Teachers' Intercultural Competences*, consists of five chapters.

In chapter 1, Chen and Dervin problematize the notion of interculturality in teacher education through a case study from Finland. In a two-year project, Finnish student teachers were asked to discuss and examine essays written by Chinese student teachers, analyzing their take on language and interculturality in education. The authors argue that confronting future teachers with alternative and disruptive voices on interculturality can enrich their preparedness for dealing with complex and thorny situations of diversity in the classroom and beyond.

In chapter 2, Benediktsson presents findings from qualitative interviews with Danish student teachers who, at the time of the study, had completed most of their teaching education program and participated in practical training in primary and lower secondary schools. In the study, the participants reflect upon existing forms of prejudice in Danish schools, and how they might counteract discrimination and cultural stereotyping in their future professional practice. The findings underline the vital role teacher education plays in developing student teachers' intercultural competence. Benediktsson builds on student teachers' critical awareness of existing practices and abilities to create equitable learning environments.

Chapter 3, written by Tavares and Skrefsrud, foregrounds the concept of experiential education to discuss the potential of museums in supporting the development of intercultural learning and critical consciousness for Norwegian student teachers in a course on inclusive and differentiated instruction. Drawing on the Scandinavian Romani exhibition as a case study, the authors reflect on how an experiential engagement with this exhibition may create a learning space that awakens student teachers' critical consciousness and provides opportunities for self-reflection in relation to a historically minoritized group in Norway.

In chapter 4, Häärä, Rissanen, and Kuusisto report findings from a study on Finnish student teachers' mindsets and intercultural competences. Collecting survey data from Finnish first-year student teachers, the authors find strong inclinations of student teachers toward a growth mindset and moderate levels of experience of cultural diversity. Moreover, the student teachers' social justice beliefs are relatively high, while enthusiasm for teaching culturally diverse groups is moderate. Social justice beliefs correlate significantly with mindset scales and implicit beliefs of intelligence are found to be a predictor of social justice beliefs. The same association is not found for enthusiasm toward teaching culturally diverse groups. However, student teachers who reported higher levels of experience of cultural diversity display more enthusiasm for teaching culturally diverse student groups. The authors conclude by discussing the implications of such findings for teacher education.

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Chapter 5, by Guðjónsdóttir, Kristinsdóttir, Lefever, and Óskarsdóttir investigate how teacher educators in Iceland prepare student teachers to work in schools with growing diversity. Based on group interviews with teacher educators who teach courses in general pedagogy and subject teaching at pre, primary, and secondary school levels, the authors identify some common practices. The findings show that the teacher educators attempt to prepare student teachers for teaching in multicultural classrooms by organizing their courses in ways which take into account students' diverse backgrounds and needs. The teacher educators utilize a variety of approaches and aim at providing student teachers with opportunities to broaden their experience and understanding of working with diverse groups of students.

The second part, *Multilingual Learning in Diverse Classrooms*, consists of two chapters.

In chapter 6, Alisaari, Bergroth, Harju-Autti, Heikkola, Sissonen, and Vigren examine Finnish teachers' perspectives on the use of students' linguistic repertoires. The authors find that most student teachers underline the importance of using students' entire linguistic repertoires for learning, with only few reporting a negative stance toward languages as a resource. Many of the student teachers report implementing multilingual pedagogies in the classroom, as in encouraging their students to use translation dictionaries or to process content in their first languages. The authors also find that some student teachers encounter various obstacles that prevent them from implementing multilingual pedagogies, such as possessing inadequate skills, lacking time, and working with heterogeneous groups. Another obstacle is that students are not always considered willing to use their own languages or reveal their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which can hinder support towards linguistic diversity.

In chapter 7, Yli-Jokipii, Rissanen, and Kuusisto present findings from a study with a group of mother tongue teachers in Finland. In the interviews, the teachers elaborate on how they implement a culturally sustaining pedagogy as part of their professional practice. The authors find that the work of mother tongue teachers contribute to students' educational development in multiple domains. The teachers' reported practices are found to support students' academic success, enhance their cultural competence, and raise the sociopolitical consciousness of students. Considering these affordances, the authors call for more research into the role of mother tongue teachers in schools.

The third part, *Identifying Skills and Competences for Future Teachers in Religious Education*, consists of two chapters.

In chapter 8, Kimanen reflects on how critical approaches to cultural diversity in education have been and can be applied to support religious diversity in the Nordic context. Kimanen sets out to identify skills or competences that

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future teachers need in order to face religious diversity in a socially just manner. Four dimensions of teacher competences regarding religious diversity are identified: critical awareness of the category of religion, critical self-reflection concerning one's personal worldview and relation to religion, religiously responsive education, and including power structures and social change in classroom discussions and activities. Based on Nordic research on these topics, the author concludes that religious literacy may offer a practice-oriented way to help future teachers to embrace critical analysis of the category of religion. Assignments involving worldview reflection may help teachers to gain critical self-reflectivity, especially if worldview is understood as an umbrella term for religious and secular beliefs, symbols, and identities. The author argues that religiously responsive education and critical analysis of power relations in the classroom require commitment, care, and the ongoing pursuit of broader knowledge.

In chapter 9, Skrefsrud and Tavares discuss the intercultural potential of non-confessional religious education (RE) in public schools in Norway, employing Paulo Freire's theory of liberationist pedagogy as a theoretical lens. Drawing lines between RE studies and Freire's critical and constructive perspectives on teaching and learning, the chapter challenges a RE-practice where students' personal life worlds are isolated from teaching and learning in schools. The authors argue that Freirean thought and pedagogy not only offer a critical foundation for interpreting non-confessional RE in public schools, but also contribute to a constructive rethinking of the intercultural potential of the RE-subject. Building on Freire's work and the centrality of dialogue in the educational process can help educators design transformative educational experiences.

The fourth part, *Educators Supporting Cultural and Linguistic Diversity*, consists of four chapters.

In chapter 10, Larsson explores and builds on Kevin Kumashiro's suggestion to teach for uncertainty as one path towards anti-oppressive teaching in physical education. To create better conditions for teaching for uncertainty, Larsson links Kumashiro's ideas to a kinesiocultural exploration approach to movement education. Kinesiocultural exploration holds a divergent view of movement learning that promotes student-centered pedagogies and teaching for uncertainty. Larsson provides examples of what teaching based on kinesiocultural exploration could look like when social norms, such as those connected to gender, are the focus of exploration in physical education that is concerned with diversity and inclusion.

In chapter 11, Rusk and Ståhl discuss how gaming can be a gateway to developing technological competence, learning, and a sense of belonging for students. The authors focus their inquiry on the norms of technology as a technomasculine form of competence that has shaped the gaming communities.

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In doing so, such norms exclude students of a minoritized background. Rusk and Ståhl propose that teacher education is an ideal "space" in which to address these issues and argue that teachers, teacher educators, and student teachers can better understand how they can address these issues through a critical awareness of the social and cultural intricacies of gaming contexts.

In chapter 12, Wolff, Peskova, and Draycott investigate the developments of undergraduate students' understanding of concepts, skills, and pedagogical practices within the scope of multicultural education. The authors emphasize that students valued learning about multiculturalism as it expanded their awareness about diversity and inclusion, in addition to several other affordances. However, the authors argue that for teacher education to be enhanced, teacher educators will still need to promote deeper critical reflection that intentionally emphasizes social justice if they intend to prompt students' growth and development as agents of social change in and outside the classroom.

In chapter 13, Ragnarsdóttir explores culturally and linguistically responsive educational practices in preschools in Iceland. Ragnarsdóttir finds that diverse educational approaches and practices are implemented in the preschools, but that these are mostly led by dedicated individuals rather than being organized and implemented systematically in the preschools. The principals in this study reported a lack of training for teachers about relevant practices with diverse groups of children. Moreover, while policies regarding diverse groups of children are in place, some are not well developed or consistently implemented.

The final part, *Students' and Parents' Encounters with Diversity*, includes four chapters.

In chapter 14, Rasmussen and Iversen investigate Polish parents' experiences with the Norwegian education system as their children were assessed for language-related challenges by the school. Drawing on critical discourse analysis, the authors analyze the parents' experiences through the Bordieuan concepts of *habitus*, *capital*, and *symbolic power*. The chapter shows how and why the teachers' habitus prevented them from identifying misunderstandings in the meetings and how the parents experienced cultural capital devaluation and disempowerment by the school. The authors identify areas for improvement in the context of home and school collaboration in multicultural and multilingual settings.

In chapter 15, Winlund examines how learning about sexual and gender diversity may enhance recently arrived immigrant students' understanding of different cultural norms, including taboos, in an introductory language course in Sweden. The analysis of the interactions shows examples of a pedagogy which is both inclusive (advocating tolerance to differences) and critical (through analysis of practices linked to sexuality). Perspectives of individual students illustrate that this inclusive-critical pedagogy contributes to the

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students' acquisition of cultural knowledge and the possibility to participate in discourses of the mainstream society. This chapter demonstrates how teachers may implement an inclusive-critical pedagogy in second-language courses to immigrant students in relation to developing literacy and knowledge of diversity, specifically sexual and gender diversity.

In chapter 16, Basha and Skrefsrud investigate how students experience multicultural school events based on sixty interviews with students at the primary level in a multicultural school in Norway. The study also included photo-elicitation to invite students to document their experiences with their mobile phones. Applying a theoretical lens of belonging, the authors identify how the students experience the event as a place to feel "at home," build networks, and share common memories and experiences. Basha and Skrefsrud conclude by reflecting on how the students' counter-narratives about identity and belonging can inform the work of teacher educators working with student teachers' intercultural competence.

In chapter 17, Melnikova employs Bordieuan conceptual tools to explore the way students and teachers construct the roles of migrant parents in supporting their children's high school education in Norway. Melnikova finds that most students and teachers view migrant parents' direct contact with the school or active engagement in the discussions of educational plans as less appropriate than their more subtle demonstrations of care and interest in school matters. Melnikova argues that equity-seeking teacher educators need to be aware of these and other student-parent-teacher tensions and reflects on the benefits of inviting teacher candidates to discuss a broader spectrum of roles for parents with diverse backgrounds.

This book makes an important and timely contribution to the field of education given the challenges and opportunities around diversity in the present time. The contributions offered in this book reflect the work of authors at different stages within the continuum of the academic journey, including PhD students, postdoctoral researchers, assistant, associate, and full professors in diverse fields within the field of education, such as physical, religious, language, multicultural, and settlement education, in addition to teacher education more broadly. We believe that this book will be of great interest to a broad audience of scholars (researchers, teaching faculty, and graduate students), policy makers, school administrators, and curriculum designers.

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I

STUDENT TEACHERS' INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES

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1

"The More We Know, The More We Feel What We Know Is Limited"

Finnish Student Teachers Engaging with Chinese Students' Ideas about Culture*,* Language*, and* Interculturality

Ning Chen and Fred Dervin

In his now considered 1850 classic moral novel *The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote (2009): "It contributes greatly towards a man's moral and intellectual health, to be brought into habits of companionship with individuals unlike himself, who care little for his pursuits, and whose sphere and abilities he must go out of himself to appreciate" (p. 16). Focusing on the thorny idea of interculturality in teacher education, this represents the core message of this chapter: We must be companions with people *unlike ourselves* in order to explore the complexities of this globally used, even over-used, and abused notion. For (future) teachers it could mean enriching their intercultural experiences in schools.

Here, tackling interculturality does not correspond to learning a few tricks to be able to "communicate" with people of different cultures, races, ethnicities, languages, religions, and worldviews (see, e.g., Eng, 2022; Skrefsrud, 2016). Instead, what we propose is to focus on the multifacetedness of interculturality as an object of research and education, reflecting on the ideologies that the notion contains in different parts of the world. Ideologies are understood here as "orders" to think and act in specific ways as well as

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"windscreens" to hide certain economic-political agendas (Ostrowski, 2022). We argue that interculturality is never *one* but *several*.

Having had the opportunity to focus both on Finnish teacher education and Chinese general higher education, we present one aspect of our work on the notion with Finnish student teachers. In this chapter, we explain how we use texts written by Chinese postgraduate students (teacher education) about culture, language, and interculturality to make Finnish student teachers reflect on their own take on interculturality. The Chinese texts serve (indirectly) as mirrors for the Finns to confront themselves with other discourses and potentially stand outside their own comfort zone. We argue that circulating discourses of interculturality within a given context of teacher education and training need to be disrupted so as to help teachers open up to other ways of conceptualizing the notion. This is not about telling preservice teachers how to "do" interculturality once they start teaching but to support them in realizing and acting upon the diversities of entry points into the notion. Our hypothesis is that meeting diversity in the classroom requires acting as a diverse thinker and mediator of interculturality—the "Other" serving as a mirror to enrich teachers' thinking and power to unthink and rethink. We argue that a lack of discussions around the intricacies of the notion with, for example, colleagues, students, and parents is detrimental to the work of the teacher. Listening carefully to how they voice, how they see the notion, and especially how interculturality could be "done" is thus central.

Critical and Reflexive Perspectives for Teacher Education

Prelude: A Few Words about the Finnish Context

We need to say a few words about the specificities of Finnish teacher education here, which revolves around a university program of five years that is very popular and competitive. Being a teacher educator in Finland might not mean the same as in other contexts (Chung, 2022). A teacher educator in Finland is a researcher, from Senior lecturer to Full Professor, who introduces the students to their own research. A teacher educator does not teach future teachers how to teach but supports them to build up intellectual, critical, and reflexive skills to tackle the complexities of their future profession. A teacher educator does not tell preservice teachers what they should do as future teachers but guide them to think about the teaching situation as a context to research and where to test different concepts, theories, and methods. Teacher education in Finland is very much research-based, leading to teachers working on their reflexivity and criticality to make decisions *by themselves* in the classroom (Sahlberg & Walker, 2021). In general, teachers are highly valued in Finnish society and this "freedom" to make what teachers consider as decisions based on their

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knowledge of a specific field of research is highly respected. This is why teacher educators avoid providing "teaching recipes" or examples of "good practices" but support future teachers in thinking about what teachers can do and say in certain situations. In some other contexts, this type of "academic freedom" is somewhat unknown (Chung, 2022). This is why what "works" in Finland may not "work" elsewhere—especially if one considers the complex ways of thinking about and "implementing" interculturality available around the world.

I Say Interculturality . . . You Say? "My" Interculturality Is Not Necessarily "Your" Interculturality

In some of the teaching that we have done on interculturality for teacher education and training, we have often been asked the following questions:

- "Do you have any practical tips for being good at interculturality as a teacher?"
- "How can we do interculturality concretely?"

These questions would appear "normal" and somewhat "obvious" to many pre- and in-service teachers or to anyone involved in doing interculturality. It is also understandable that the work of the teacher might appear like a daunting task—how to deal with all the diversity in one's classroom? However, our answer to these questions is always the same: *Would we ask for practical tips about how to "do" being a human/social being?* We argue that "practical" and "concrete" can never match the complexities of what interculturality means for all kinds of people in the world and what it might entail for them and others. As such interculturality is a riot of polysemy globally. Teacher education and training should prepare teachers for this plurality instead of imposing one limited vision of the notion, as is the tendency in teacher education and training (e.g., Gay, 2018).

Based on our cooperation and Fred's 20-year engagement with the notion, we maintain that interculturality is not something to recite, apply, and copy-paste in teacher education but something to think *about and with* constantly and to revise as we engage with the complexities of the world. We would even go as far as saying that interculturality is a potentially "treacherous" label, which can give the illusion of universality. As asserted earlier, there is not one way of conceptualizing and doing interculturality globally (Dervin, 2022; Eid & Fadel, 2015). Different (and sometimes similar) traditions, practices "governed" by beliefs, glocal laws, and curricula influence the way teacher educators might introduce the notion (and its companions such as multicultural, cross-cultural, global . . .) to teachers.

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The question of the definition of interculturality is a difficult one, although one might find a few in the literature in English (e.g., Holliday & Amadasi, 2019) and in other languages (e.g., Maache, 2021). It is also important to note that international and local literatures make use of other terms that intersect with interculturality. We refer to this ensemble as the "archipelago of terms"—small islands that are sometimes interconnected and that have developed their own parlance, discourses, ideologies: *cross-cultural*, *multicultural*, *transcultural*, *polycultural*, *global* but also *postcolonial*, *decolonial*, *indigenous*, and *interculturalidad* (South America), *Ubuntu* (e.g., South Africa), *Minzu* (Mainland China). In different contexts, ideological takes and languages might overlap or differ immensely—even within the use of one such notion.

When we work with preservice teachers, we cooperate with them to examine different entries into the notion of interculturality, interrogating the words used, and, more importantly, the ideologies that they contain. The following questions are systematically considered with future teachers:

- What ideologies do perspectives on interculturality contain? (what "*Orders*," "*Screens*?")
- What key concepts are found behind the notion? For example, tolerant, democratic culture, community of shared future, decolonial . . .
- What is their "history" and archaeology? Who does interculturality refer to (e.g., migrants, certain minorities, religious groups)?
- What is the economic-political backbone? "American" Multicultural education? Chinese Minzu "ethnic" education? "French" intercultural education? The OECD PISA model of global competences?
- Who speaks of interculturality for us and influences us? Do we really understand what lies behind these discourses?
- How compatible are these voices with our "glocal" concerns, economy-politics, and the way we are made to see *us-other*?

In Finnish education, interculturality is often limited to "*some* foreigners," "*some* migrants," "*some* migrant-background students." We use the adjective "some" here because not every person who could fit into these categories is included in Finland when one discusses, for example, intercultural preparation. It is clear that "local" issues of race, nationality, and even language do lead to such categorizations. In general, the ideological takes revolve around the passé and problematic concept of "culture," the polysemous idea of ethnicity, and "speakers" of languages other than Finnish or Swedish (the two national languages of Finland) (e.g., Kuusisto et al., 2015). Some Finnish "minorities" might be included in discussions of interculturality such as Roma people or (rarely) Sámi people (e.g., Seurujärvi-Kari & Kantasalmi,

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2016). Finally, and as a reminder, approaching and observing interculturality in Finland requires bearing in mind the strong influence of the European Union on the way the notion is used in education but also of the OECD and the UNESCO.

In our own research and teaching, we have noted how very little interculturality is found in the way interculturality is discussed, researched, used, and taught. In an international project including both Chinese and "Western" scholars about teaching interculturality, we noted how localisms, field-centrisms, and other kinds of -isms (see below) seem to limit scholars' take on the notion, even when they assert that their work was "critical," see even "decolonial" (see Dervin et al., 2022). Globally, there are ideological constructions of the notion that tend to dominate, with, for example, "models of intercultural competence" by Byram (UK) or Deardorff (US) pushing educators to consider the notion under specific "Western-centric," "neoliberal," and "democratic" lenses. There is a danger in applying these elements as automatons in a classroom where interculturality is more alive than what an economic-political model from only one "corner" of the world might want to impose on educators.

The mirror perspective proposed here, observing and reflecting on how student teachers from another part of the world engage with interculturality, is meant to help move away from potential (blinding) ideological indoctrination so that future teachers can engage with real fluid meanings and connotations of the notion. This includes building up curiosity about its polysemy in "preservice" and "in-service" teachers instead of merely "feeding" them with our (limited) knowledge and/or ideologies since interculturality cannot be pinned down in any one formula in different contexts and languages. In what follows, we examine how student teachers from Finland have dealt with the proposed perspective, having been asked to read and engage with texts written by student teachers from China about culture, language, and interculturality.

Data Analysis: Preservice Teachers Observing Preservice Teachers *Interculturally*

For this chapter we work with data collected from two groups of 10 primary student teachers from Finland over a period of two years. The students took part in an online course taught by the authors about culture, language, and interculturality (number of hours: 20). The aims of the course were to reinforce awareness of the importance of language in relation to interculturality both as a concrete phenomenon of educational encounters and as

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an object of research and education and to introduce the students to critical and reflexive methods to engage with the notion (Atay & Toyosaki, 2017). All the students had taken at least 10 credits in "multicultural education" studies before the course (N.B. in English and Finnish, the word *multicultural* is used in the names of the courses but the focus of most lecturers is *interculturality*). During the course, the students listened to short lectures, discussed together some of the topics covered, and prepared together a professional development program for teachers on culture, language, and interculturality. As part of the final (formative) assessment, the future teachers were given 20 short texts (500 words each) written in English by Chinese preservice teachers based at a university in Beijing (master's in education, year 1). The Chinese were asked to reflect on the links between the three keywords of culture, language, and interculturality. They also had taken courses on intercultural issues from mostly "American" multicultural perspectives (e.g., Banks & McGee Banks, 2020) with a touch of Chinese ideological take on interculturality, notably through the idea of Minzu (ethnic) relations which refers to economic-political elements related to the diversity and unity of the 56 official Minzu "ethnic" groups of China (e.g., Dervin & Yuan, 2021).

Among the 20 short texts, the Finnish student teachers had to choose five and to reflect on the following questions:

- What are the main arguments presented by the students about culture, languages, and interculturality?
- Did you find anything special in their writings about the topic?
- Do you think that Finnish students would have similar arguments?

These questions were formulated in such a way that they would "orient" the student teachers in their answers. Our focus in the chapter is on the Finnish student teachers' voices. We will be examining if they question the "turn" that the questions contain (e.g., the essentialist goal of comparing "Chinese" and "Finns" or the idea of "finding something special"). Our rationale in presenting the students with the texts was to observe how being confronted with ideologies of interculturality that would probably be both similar and different from theirs led them to consider their own views on the notion ("the mirror"). We are also interested in how they imagine "Finnish students" might have engaged with the three keywords.

In order to analyze the answers provided by the Finnish students (some were written in Finnish and translated by us, others in English), we make use of a dialogical analysis of the voices they use to construct their arguments (e.g., use of the passive voice, pronouns such as "we" and "they," direct citations, see Markova et al., 2008). This perspective allows exploring the student

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teachers' socially shared and constructed knowledge, social representations, beliefs and explanations, about interculturality. The following elements are covered: *fear of stereotyping and (sub-)categorizing, observing the mirror effect, comparisons with Finns.*

From the Fear of Stereotyping to (Sub-)Categorizing

In more than half of the answers, the student teachers seem to argue that the Chinese texts that they had picked all shared the same opinions about culture, language and interculturality and were positioned in the same way—with the Finns often making an obvious or hidden hint at "Chinese propaganda"—while a minority seemed to be excited by the diversity of views that were presented by the Chinese. For example, Student Teacher 1 reviews the different arguments in two of the texts that they read:

Excerpt 1

> One essay I read argued that only by knowing other languages and cultures we can tolerate their [others'] ways of living, while another essay I read argued that just because you know about other cultures and languages it doesn't mean that you are more open-minded, but it helps. I agree to some extent with both arguments. (ST1)

Student Teacher 1 summarizes two opposed views from the texts on the benefits of knowing cultures and languages while positioning themselves by agreeing with both texts.

Why some student teachers see the Chinese texts either homogeneously or heterogeneously is hard to explain. They had to choose five out of the 20 texts written by the Chinese so one could assume that "randomness" might have led to them picking texts that contained more similar views. What is more, one can feel stereotypes and see indirect biases about Chinese people's discourses in some of the Finnish student teachers' writing. Student Teacher 6 problematizes this issue—their fear of stereotyping—in the next excerpt:

Excerpt 2

> I found that the answers had a lot of similarities with each other. Without knowing what has been taught on the course it is impossible for me to know whether these similarities are about what the students have been taught about different languages and cultures or whether this is

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> about their culture. I must say that I don't know much about the Chinese culture other than what media has taught me or the usual stereotypes. The image that the stereotypes and media paint about Chinese culture is somewhat gloomy. (ST6)

This Student Teacher shows a level of reflexivity and criticality which is encouraging here. After noting the similarities in the way the five students she picked discuss the three keywords, she reflects on the lack of information that was provided on the kind of courses that the Chinese students had taken in relation to interculturality. She then self-reflects on her own fear of drawing too quick conclusions, evaluating ("Western"?) media discourses about the Middle kingdom as "gloomy" (see Cheng, 2007, on similar arguments). Here the mirror effect is not so much about the future teacher's own take on interculturality but on the role of channels of information.

Among the 20 student teachers, about one third are critical of either the way the Chinese texts were collected or of the very exercise of having to analyze the texts. Student Teacher 2 comments on this aspect at least three times in his answers to the three questions that we asked. In excerpt 3, while reviewing the different arguments presented by the Chinese, the student mentions that the idea of "language and culture awareness as means of self-improvement" was omnipresent. He hypothesizes that the instructions led to its use by all the students he read:

> Excerpt 3
>
> This discourse was prevalent in the majority of essays, likely due to the framing of the essay question. (ST2)

Later in his own essay, the same Student Teacher appears to be critical of the idea of having to compare the Chinese texts to what Finnish students might say. He explains:

> Excerpt 4
>
> We were asked to reflect on whether students from our own country would have similar arguments. The task did not specify the age group or educational institute of the students. In this paper I chose to reflect on today's teacher students. I however feel uncomfortable basing this reflection on solely personal experiences. Thus, in the second section my reflections will be based on some research on factors which may affect the way a teacher student today might understand the benefits of learning about languages and cultures. (ST2)

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Having identified flaws in the proposed approach and sharing his own feelings about it ("uncomfortable"), Student Teacher 2 describes his strategy to avoid having to generalize and base his arguments on impressions: He will refer to current research on Finnish preservice teachers.

While some student teachers worry about stereotyping the Chinese, the fear of stereotyping Finns is shared by others. Some student teachers adopt the strategy of compartmentalizing "Finns" so as to provide an answer to the comparison with what the Chinese had to say. Let us consider the cases of Student Teacher 3 in excerpt 6 where the student hesitates in relating Finns' potential discourses on interculturality and language with the Chinese texts and adopts a strategy of reflecting on the people around her:

Excerpt 5

> Do I believe that Finnish students would have similar answers?
>
> This is hard to say. The people in my immediate circle basically only know Finnish and English. Some have a fear of speaking English, but that can be blamed on our elementary school's English teaching, which did not emphasize conversational skills or pronunciation in our time.
>
> If, for example, my circle of acquaintances were asked the same question: "Do you think that being multilingual would affect your way of seeing the world more openly?" so I would think that many would answer this, yes. However, they could come up with other related examples. They might answer that multilingualism certainly promotes a more open worldview, but many other things affect openness. These things would be, for example, the way you were raised and your own religion or viewpoint and your own political orientation. Many people might answer that multilingualism is not the same as an open view of the world's different people and languages, but knowing several languages can nevertheless contribute to a more open perspective. (ST3)

Referring first to their (limited) language skills or interests in languages, they try to provide explanations as to why they might see language and interculturality as important—hinting at the influence of a negative aspect of the Finnish education system (language education). The Student Teacher then speculates indirectly as to why they might explain that language does matter, comparing without mentioning the Chinese texts ("they would come up with other related examples"). What the Student Teacher seems to tell us indirectly is that, unlike what they noted in the five students' texts, their close friends and relatives might not just be positive about the influence of language on interculturality and that some might disagree depending on their "religion" or "political orientation."

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This first analytical section focused on how the student teachers engage with the Chinese texts from a meta-perspective. We note that some of them are honest and direct about their feelings in having to reflect on the texts, fearing stereotyping and generalizing, while subcategorizing Finns and, in a few cases, the Chinese student teachers. In some excerpts, they do approach interculturality in ways that could be labelled as reflexive and critical (Atay & Toyosaki, 2017; Holliday, 2021).

Observing the "Mirror" Effect

Until now we have noted some aspects of criticality and reflexivity in the students, but very little to do with the very notion of interculturality itself—more about methods (potential stereotyping in comparing) and commenting on what some students perceive as one-sidedness in what the Chinese wrote. In this section we examine moments of "mirroring" whereby the students look back at themselves, and especially the way they conceptualize interculturality, after being confronted with what the Chinese students wrote (see Consoli & Ganassin, 2022).

In the entire data sets we have identified only three potential elements that trigger some to look in the mirror, with more or less depth. Excerpt 6 relates to just one Chinese text and contains a minor hint at mirroring:

Excerpt 6

> One essay also mentioned national development. In order to develop as a nation and stay up-to-date, developing language skills and cultural knowledge is really important. In other texts, I did not find similar political views. I think this was a very interesting point of view on the subject. (ST12)

The idea of interculturality and language contributing to "national development" is very common in the context of Chinese Mainland and is often put forward locally, especially in reference to economic aspects (Kadri, 2021). Student Teacher 12 notes that only one Chinese makes a reference to this argument—calling it "political views." This only triggered a short comment on the argument being "interesting" without further elaboration. This could be a minimal hint at future thinking about the "development" for interculturality.

In the following excerpts, the students seem to be looking into the mirror of the Chinese, not to fully reflect on their own takes on interculturality but to "expose" some of the issues that they seem to find problematic in what they write or to ask further questions about the content.

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In Excerpt 7, Student Teacher 9 challenges the argument that having a multicultural family background will lead people to be more interculturally included:

Excerpt 7

> One student said morality depends very much on the family background. I started reflecting about this topic in the light of interculturality and how people can develop more tolerant and open-minded ideas independent of their family background. Being born or raised in a multicultural family could definitely provide a lot of advantages, for example growing up with more than one language. Having parents with different nationalities or relatives living in different countries, also expands the opportunity to travel between different nations and learn about different customs and traditions. Still, the question rises whether these are strong enough reasons for making a person understanding more about interculturality? Does a person's intercultural family background make the person automatically more knowledgeable or understanding, about the complex problems of conditionings and prejudice that is still existing in the global world of today? (ST9)

Starting from the concept of *morality*, which was introduced by a Chinese student to talk about the influence of one's family, Student Teacher 9 speculates about interculturality and family backgrounds, providing two arguments "for." However, she finishes her turn by asking two questions that show another side to the issue, opening up an indirect dialogue with the Chinese student while questioning their assertion. In Excerpt 8, Student Teacher 3 does the same about the benefits of multilingualism, begging for someone to potentially differ:

Excerpt 8

> What interested me the most was the idea that at least all those essays I read, their authors felt that multilingualism was a good thing. I was left thinking, does anyone see it as a bad or negative thing? (ST3)

By asking "does anyone see it as a bad or negative thing?," the Student Teacher seems to be involving "voices" beyond the Chinese texts. She might in fact be referring here to similar positive discourses that one notices in Finland too (e.g., Blommaert et al., 2012). In Excerpt 9, Student Teacher 7 evaluates another argument found in the texts ("surprising" and "strange"):

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Excerpt 9

> One other argument mentioned in several of the essays, was the idea that knowing languages and understanding cultures, will affect one's own personality. This, to me was really surprising and somewhat strange. It was said in one text that people who know many languages are more outgoing and friendlier than people who only speak one language. Not only in situations where one might need the other language, but in general, if you speak many languages, you are believed to be a friendly person. I believe the argument behind this belief was that knowing different languages will in general make you know more things which therefore makes it easier for you to make friends. I personally did not understand this connection. (ST7)

The evaluated argument of knowing different languages affecting one's personality by, for example, making one friendlier or more approachable, is described as a "belief" by the student teacher. In the coda of the excerpt, the student clarifies her take on the issue by sharing her lack of understanding of the connection between language and personality in the Chinese student's argument, thus negating it. She does not elaborate on the aspect of the argument about which she is unclear.

Many other student teachers are in fact also critical of the use of two terms that are omnipresent in the Chinese texts—terms that are often used in the European context too to discuss interculturality: *tolerance* and *open-mindedness* (see Tagliaferri, 2022 for a historical perspective). This is the case (among others) of Student Teacher 6. In Excerpt 10, the Student Teacher labels what she calls a "cultural difference" as "somewhat strange":

Excerpt 10

> What kept repeating was the open mindedness and tolerance. It was generally thought to bring people open mindedness and tolerance to know different languages and cultures. Open mindedness was also considered to be a good thing because that made it easier to learn and adapt new things and, in that way, make us better citizens. Here I found a cultural difference. In the answers of the Chinese students, they were thinking what would make a good citizen and I found that thinking somewhat strange to me. I think that I don't quite understand what they mean with this, I think I have to still ruminate about this. (ST6)

About the use of the two key terms, the student wonders about their connection with the idea of becoming a better citizen (again a very common

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Chinese ideology of interculturality and diversity, see Dervin & Yuan, 2021). Although she evaluates the argument, the end of the excerpt seems to indicate that it has triggered an interest to think it further ("I think I have to still ruminate about this"). Interestingly the Student Teacher refers to this as being "a cultural difference" while the core of the issue has more to do with politics and economic aspects (see Dervin & Simpson, 2021).

Finally, Student Teacher 15 shares in the following excerpt what many Finnish student teachers argued for explicitly—or often in disguised ways—about what they had read: *Why is it that the Chinese students write what they write?* In Excerpt 11, the student makes several assumptions in the form of questions, reflecting on the fact that none of the students she had read mentioned "bad experiences or fears" of intercultural encounters:

Excerpt 11

> I assume that even if the respondents are young, their answers do not show much prejudice, bad experiences or fears about encounters between languages and cultures. I was wondering why they are not really visible? Is it a cultural/societal difference between different people? Do you want to please the teacher with your answers? Or is it an age group-related way of handling the matter? (S15)

The questions show that the student puts the "blame" on differences between China and Finland, potential censorship or adaptation to teachers' discourses. She also wonders if it could have to do with age. What she does not suspect is that the Chinese students have never met or interacted with people from other countries directly and thus, sharing about "bad experiences" and such, might be impossible for them—hence the potential impression that their vision of culture, language, and interculturality is overly positive. This second analytical section was devoted to the potential mirror effect that the Chinese texts could have on the Finnish preservice teachers. One notes some reflexive and critical activities; however, this rarely seems to lead to the preservice teachers observing their own engagement with the notion of interculturality. One also notices stereotypes and what could be described as prejudice in the way Chinese discourses are evaluated ("parroting," "political propaganda," see Gu, 2012).

Comparisons with Finns

In this section we focus more specifically on what it is that the student teachers do when they try to compare what Finnish students might have written, had they produced the texts that they had to comment upon. According to anthropologist Candea (2018), comparisons are used to describe and to explain, to generalize and to challenge generalizing. These somewhat

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contradictory aims, inherent to any comparative work, must be born in mind in what follows. Although many of the elements discussed below will not necessarily appear to be positive for the student teachers, we note that the very act of teacher educators like us asking to compare will lead to such contradictions and somewhat problematic statements—as was noted by a student teacher in the first analytical section.

We start with remarks or hints from some student teachers about Finnish students being more "critical" than Chinese students. Some of these elements were hinted at earlier and explanations as to why some believe so discussed.

Student Teacher 19 is not sure if Finnish students would share similar arguments as the Chinese. However, they appear certain that there would be a bigger variety of arguments in the way they problematize language, culture, and interculturality:

Excerpt 12

> Whether Finnish students would answer a similar question in the same way would probably depend on many factors. However, it is hard for me to imagine that the answers of Finnish students would be so clearly consistent. If such a task were to be carried out in a similar environment (in my understanding, the Chinese students studied at the so-called Minzu University, where the position of minorities is already better), the Finnish answers could be similar. But I'm terribly afraid that you wouldn't necessarily get such a positive perspective from Finnish students if the question was so-called from a regular educational institution. (ST19)

Interestingly, the student teacher takes on an institutional perspective to try to justify their argument, mentioning the very specificities of the Chinese institution (a so-called Minzu "ethnic" university with a particular ideological take on interculturality). They argue that, should there be a similar institution in Finland, students would probably share very similar ideas—"positive ideas" as they frame it. In other words, the student teacher seems to be implying that the Chinese students fall "victims" to propaganda, while Finnish students (see the structure: "But I'm terribly sorry that . . .") would have different opinions. Student Teacher 7 even explains that "criticality" is taught to young people in Finland and that thus the Chinese students' arguments would not be so easily presented:

Excerpt 13

> Also, when asked how knowing about culture and languages makes a person more open-minded and tolerant, I do not believe Finnish people

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> would agree as easily as the Chinese students did. In Finland, we are thought at a young age that there should always be critical thinking evolved when writing essays. Even if the Finnish students did agree, I believe they would have brought up the fact that speaking many languages and knowing about cultures would never automatically make a person open-minded and tolerant. Of course, that could happen in some cases, but it is a statement far too big to state without scientific research to back it up. (ST7)

In the excerpt the student teacher insists on the fact that Finnish students would question arguments about languages and interculturality, making a reference to the lack of "scientific research" to justify their interrelations. All in all, they also construct some sort of ideal image of Finnish students as questioners, people who do not take things for granted—while the Chinese are described indirectly as "uncritical," "rehearsing" (see Gu, 2012).

Finally, Student Teacher 11 is one of the only ones to seem to be critical toward their assertion that Finnish students would not use terms such as tolerance without questioning it:

> Excerpt 14
>
> On the other hand, I can't say what Finnish students would think. Tolerance is still a fairly dominant word in discussions about interculturality, so I wouldn't be surprised if the answers of Finnish students were similar. (ST11).

Generally speaking, in the previous excerpts of comparisons, very few of the student teachers seem able to hold off their (indirect) judgment of the Chinese, although some do highlight the potential influence of the addressee to their text and institutional ideologies, and even argue that Finnish students might use some of the same terms "uncritically," thus questioning their own potential stereotype.

To finish the analysis, we explore how the student teachers construct and/or imagine what different foci Finnish students might include in dealing with the three keywords of culture, language, and interculturality.

Student Teacher 14 makes an interesting claim about what Finnish students would (not) say, had they been given the opportunity to write texts:

> Excerpt 15
>
> It was interesting that many people wrote about "strange habits" and were aware that a new one may seem difficult at first, but in the end it opens the mind. This seemed like a mature and well internalized thought.

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> So it sounded like the students were also aware of their own prejudices. In their essays, all the students therefore had a positive attitude towards learning new cultures and languages and saw a lot of opportunities in it. I was surprised at how openly the subject was treated. I don't think that Finnish students' texts would produce similar information, or at least there would be a lot of variation in them. This may be due to the fact that, compared to China, Finland has long been fairly homogenous in terms of population and different cultures have not been used to in the same way and they are often seen as more intimidating. I believe that several students, at least in teacher education, could answer like Chinese students, but it may be that Finnish students are not as open to dealing with their own prejudices. (ST14)

In general, this student teacher appears to be one of the most positive and appreciative of what the Chinese students had written ("they were aware of their own prejudices"). Unlike many other students, Student Teacher 14 argues that Finnish students would not have the same attitude of self-reflexivity and self-criticality about their own prejudices and experience "intimidation" and limited "openness." Her explanation concerns the two different contexts, whereby China seems to be constructed indirectly as a more diverse context than Finland, which is described as "homogeneous"—a typical stereotype about the Nordic country, see Raento and Husso (2002).

In Excerpts 16 and 17, two differences are introduced: an emphasis on climate anxiety and social media (Finland) and history (China):

> Excerpt 16
>
> The political discussion and news coverage of each state also shape the attitude towards intercultural issues. In Finland, we are currently talking about climate anxiety among young people and the unpleasant aspects of social media life. These are also aspects of language and cultural expression. (ST15)

> Excerpt 17
>
> One thing that I noticed in three texts was the Chinese history aspect and some descriptions/References to Chinese society. The students seemed to be interested and know their history and I am not sure if a Finnish student would have brought up our history in the writing task. (ST5)

While Student Teacher 15 hypothesizes that "political discussions" and "news coverage" influence what one considers to be relevant for culture, language,

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and interculturality, and differentiates such elements between China and Finland, they do not realize that climate anxiety and social media are also very much discussed in mainland China and that thus the two contexts share this similarity (see, e.g., Kuang, 2018). The argument made by Student Teacher 5 about history relates to the fact that some of the students they read made references to Chinese philosophy (e.g., Confucius in China), whose ideas are often used to discuss issues of diversity, harmony, and interculturality. This is not history as such.

Finally, the topics of travel and work were picked by the student teachers as absent from the Chinese texts.

Excerpt 18

> I believe Finnish people would have brought up the possibility to travel when discussing other cultures. Especially when it was asked if knowing other cultures would make you more open-minded and tolerant, I believe traveling, student exchanges and working and living abroad would have been almost everyone's first thought. It is quite often brought to our attention in Finland that even if you only go on a short trip, you should try and see the locals and speak their language if you are able to. That way you will see their culture with your own eyes and understand the differences and similarities, which then might help you become more open-minded in some sense.
>
> The second big difference that I imagine would be there if Finnish students wrote about this subject, was the lack of mention to work or careers. I think in Finland we often talk about how beneficial it is in work settings to be able to communicate with people from other countries. It is also often mentioned to us that knowing more languages than the basics (Finnish, English and Swedish) will help you stand out when applying for a job. There wasn't a single mention of work in any of the Chinese students' essays that I read. (ST7)

Here, a lack of information and knowledge about the Chinese students might have influenced the student teachers in identifying these major differences. First about travel: after checking with our Chinese colleague, none of the students had ever been abroad and, due to the COVID-19 crisis since 2020, would probably not envisage "traveling" abroad for the years to come. So, for them not thinking of interculturality and travel is not surprising. As for work, although knowing a language and being interculturally competent do matter in Chinese education, the students in question specialize in Chinese primary teacher education, which means that language and connections to people from outside China are not required since these do not play any role in the

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work of most primary teachers. So, for these Chinese students, linking work and interculturality does not seem to come "naturally."

This last analytical section gives an overview of how the Finnish student teachers dealt with the thorny task of speculating while comparing what Finnish students might have (not) written, had they been tasked to produce a short text about culture, language, and interculturality. In general, the students were not too enthusiastic or positive about what the Chinese wrote, either noting that they use "old-fashioned" terms or "propaganda-like" statements. The image of Finnish students appears to be idealized, "freer," and somewhat more interculturally competent in the comparisons. The fact that the preservice teachers did not have much information about the Chinese students and the Chinese context could have been detrimental to being more critical and reflexive (Dervin & Jacobsson, 2021).

Conclusion

One of the Finnish student teachers who took part in this study claimed to have been surprised by a statement from a Chinese student: "The more we know, the more we feel what we know is limited." This is how we would like to summarize the perspective that was put forward in this chapter. Being confronted by different ways of engaging with interculturality, from real global perspectives, that is, beyond our own ideological comfort zone, is central in a world where multifaceted clashes of ideologies occur via (social) media, politics, and academia—with preferred "Western-centric" ones dominating (R'boul, 2022).

What the chapter shows is that the proposed method for Finnish student teachers does not appear to function in the data analysis. Obviously, writing short texts about other short texts cannot reveal the complexities of how the students engage with or would "do" interculturality as teachers—which is always much more complicated and unstable than what a short text might contain. It could even be that, if they reread what they wrote today, they might disagree entirely with what they asserted. Dialoguing with the Chinese around what they wrote might also lead to completely different views on the three questions that were asked to the Finns. What is more, since the task was taken into account in the final assessment of a course, the preservice teachers had no choice but write answers to the three questions we asked them. A minority of them did question the exercise and one even refused to play the game of "comparing" what Finnish students might have written instead of the Chinese. This refusal could be a good example of interculturality as such: the refusal to use the "Other" as some sort of a deformed mirror to engage with the notion. Although refusing to "play the game" was minor, many student teachers shared their

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anxiety about having to compare Finns and Chinese for the following reasons: they lacked information about the Chinese students' context, they were aware that generalizing about Finns is problematic—hence many subcategorized them while, at times, making broad (implicit economic-political) statements about the Chinese. Yet, for those who compared, clear "ideological clashes" accompanied by representations of China and the Chinese were used to do so (Cheng, 2007). In general, although the student teachers had been trained to examine and reflect on discourses of interculturality—beyond "their" own, we felt that the mirror effect that we promoted did not lead to looking back at the self but merely staring at the "Other," leading to, for example, *ethnocentrism* (the argument that Finnish students are "critical"—meaning indirectly that Chinese might not be) and *ideologism* (criticizing the Chinese for not mentioning equality, which the student teachers often described as a "Finnish value"). We believe that the way the very task was set, and that its formality, its inauthenticity (no dialogue around interculturality with the Chinese) and the lack of information about the Chinese contributed to this issue.

How to modify the task then to make it more fruitful concerning the diversities of interculturality as an object of research and education (Eid & Fadel, 2015) and to trigger mirror effects that could be more effective? Working from the short texts written by Chinese students needs to be accompanied by the student teachers interrogating the texts from broader perspectives. In the future, the following questions could be considered by the Finnish students while engaging with the Chinese texts:

- Why am I asked to complete this task? What is the agenda? What am I supposed to demonstrate in my own writing?
- Who speaks in the Chinese texts? What information do I need about them to be able to make sense of their texts? How could I find out more? If I don't have enough information, do I feel that I can complete the task about interculturality the way it is set? How can I modify it?
- To whom are they writing? Why did they write the texts? Who asked them to write the texts? What instructions were they given? How does the addressee seem to influence what and how they are writing about culture, language and interculturality?
- Where do they write from (institution, economic-political context)? Can I see multiple ideological influences in their writing (which might lead to contradictions)?
- Whose voice(s) do they speak with? What authorities do they support/negate? Why might this be the case?

In our future work, we have decided to expand this study by organizing online encounters between Finnish and Chinese student teachers to discuss

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the texts that they have written (Peng & Dervin, 2022). This time, the Finnish students will share their own reactions to the Chinese texts about interculturality, which would serve as a basis for discussing, asking questions to each other, and more importantly, listening carefully to what everyone has to say to trigger further curiosity and a mirror effect that goes beyond staring at the "Other" (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2006). Since this would have to take place in English as a lingua franca, paying attention to the use of words and asking questions about them would allow all student teachers to interrogate their ideological contents and to review their potential preconceived ideas about these words and what they might hint at. In a world that appears to be very divided and conflictual at the moment, such dialogues cannot but contribute to enrich future educators' engagement with diversities in their classrooms and beyond.

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2

"We have Three Common Enemies"

Student Teachers' Perspectives on Existing Prejudice in Danish Multicultural Schools

Artëm Ingmar Benediktsson

The composition of the pupil body in Danish primary and lower secondary schools is becoming increasingly diverse (Statistics Denmark, 2021). Although this diversity creates unique opportunities for pupils and school personnel, the Danish school system still lacks success in finding holistic ways to improve culturally diverse pupils' sense of belonging in the school environment and Danish society (Jantzen, 2020; Kristensen, 2022; Shirazi & Jaffe-Walter, 2021). Sense of belonging is seen as a central element in the Danish school culture that emphasizes the notion of "togetherness" [da. fællesskab] as a social construct in which schools are grounded (Jantzen, 2020; Mason, 2020). While the notion of togetherness is seen as a guiding light, prejudice and cultural stereotypes still exist in Danish society and schools (Kristensen, 2022; Larsen et al., 2013; Shirazi & Jaffe-Walter, 2021). These issues contribute to the creation of discriminatory learning environments, where pupils' cultural and linguistic experiences are given lower status and legitimacy. Teacher education therefore plays a key role in raising awareness of discrimination in public schools and encouraging student teachers to discover ways to confront discriminatory narratives and practices, in order to create equitable learning environments where every pupil can feel valued. This chapter explores findings from fourteen qualitative interviews with Danish student teachers who, at the time of the study, had completed most of the courses included in their teaching education program and had

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participated in on-site schoolteacher training in primary and lower secondary schools. The research questions are as follows: What are the student teachers' perspectives on existing prejudice in Danish multicultural schools? And how do they plan to counteract prejudice in the future?

Teacher Education in Denmark

Ordinary teacher education in Denmark is regulated by the national regulations regarding teacher education, which establish the structural framework for the educational program, including teaching and assessment requirements, as well as general guidelines for the syllabi (Ministry of Higher Education and Science, 2015). To attain professional teacher status in Denmark, a student must complete a four-year program in one of the six university colleges. Teacher education is a 240 ECTS credit program that leads to the professional bachelor's degree, which is placed at level six according to the national qualification framework for Denmark (Ministry of Higher Education and Science, 2015). The Danish national qualification framework corresponds to the European qualification framework (Ministry of Higher Education and Science, 2022). The teacher education program consists of mandatory and elective modules. Although the contents of the modules can vary between the university colleges, they all comply with the national regulations regarding teacher education (Ministry of Higher Education and Science, 2015). Multicultural perspectives are included in the curricula as a part of the unit on teacher's fundamental expertise, which is obligatory for all students. The teacher's fundamental expertise is divided into four modules, one of which is a module on teaching bilingual pupils. According to the national regulations, the module on teaching bilingual pupils introduces student teachers to various teaching methods that have been developed for work in linguistically diverse classrooms, including second language teaching. Upon completion of the module, the students should be able to provide appropriate support to bilingual children and create an inclusive learning environment by including bilingual children's language repertoires in teaching. Additionally, multicultural perspectives are also included in the modules on teaching foreign languages, such as English or German, assuming that student teachers choose these as their teaching subjects.

Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

Previous studies have shown that history, culture, beliefs, and other social constructs shape peoples' identities and may influence the way people

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think of various social groups (e.g., Duckitt, 2010; Gordijn et al., 2001). Furthermore, social constructs may create different forms of biases toward individuals or groups of people. The biases manifest in the demonstration of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. These concepts are comparable and are usually applied in similar contexts to describe an unjust treatment of people, mainly on the grounds of nationality, race, age, and so on, irrespective of their individual characteristics (Dovidio et al., 2010; Stangor, 2016). Defining stereotypes and prejudice is problematic because the definitions are constantly reevaluated and adjusted (Stangor, 2016). This chapter uses social psychological interpretations. Stereotypes are conceptualized as mental pictures of a social group and represent a set of qualities and features—both negative and positive—that are expected of an individual belonging to this group (Dovidio et al., 2010). Prejudice is defined as an attitude that, according to Dovidio et al. (2010), includes cognitive (beliefs, presumptions), affective (moods, feelings), and conative (behaviors, actions) components. Prejudice is largely based on common beliefs, misconceptions, and generalizations that are used to maintain societal hierarchies. Although prejudice and stereotypes can theoretically be both negative and positive, they are primarily negative attitudes and preconceptions, and people generate far more negative prejudice and stereotypes (Stangor, 2016). Furthermore, a study conducted by Czopp (2008) revealed that even "positive" stereotypes are not taken as compliments by people targeted by those stereotypes. Discrimination is conceptualized as biased behavior that may maltreat people and unfairly put them in disadvantaged positions (Dovidio et al., 2010). Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination are interconnected and codependent phenomena. Stereotypes and prejudice are both the products of discrimination and the instruments that are used to uphold discrimination and justify the unfair treatment of people belonging to different social groups (Dovidio et al., 2010; Stangor, 2016).

Prejudice Reduction, Color-Blind Perspectives, and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

Multicultural education theory emerged as a movement to counteract biased teaching and assessment practices that placed students from cultural minority backgrounds in discriminatory positions (Banks, 2009). In order to present the distinctive features of multicultural education, Banks (2009) created a model that included five dimensions: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture (Banks, 2009). These dimensions are interrelated and are equally significant for building an inclusive learning environment (Banks, 2009). This

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chapter focuses on exploring one single dimension of multicultural education: the prejudice reduction. Banks (2009) argues that the aims of prejudice reduction are to improve intergroup relations and to develop positive and democratic cultural attitudes via the utilization of appropriate teaching methods and materials.

With regard to the practical implementation of prejudice reduction, interventions, and explicit teaching about intergroup biases seem to be favorable methods (Grapin et al., 2019; Losinski et al., 2019; Vassilopoulos et al., 2020). Explicit teaching about intergroup biases can potentially motivate children to challenge discriminatory discourses within and outside the school, and hence have an impact on their peers (Losinski et al., 2019). A study conducted in Greece aimed to investigate the effects of interventions on school children's attitudes toward refugees (Vassilopoulos et al., 2020). It revealed that the children in the intervention group expressed greater cultural tolerance than those in the non-intervention control group (Vassilopoulos et al., 2020). The interventions included intergroup contacts, dialogues about refugee issues and labelling, critical examination of prejudice and its impact on refugees' status in society and reading and reflecting on real-life stories about child refugees (Vassilopoulos et al., 2020). The authors claim that this comprehensive approach has the potential to significantly decrease prejudice in Greek schools (Vassilopoulos et al., 2020). While the Greek study focuses on majority group students, Grapin et al. (2019) highlight the value of more inclusive approaches to prejudice reduction, which should involve all students in order to raise their awareness of the impact that discrimination might have on all members of society.

Intergroup contacts and interventions can potentially improve relationships and reduce prejudice, especially when these contacts are positive. However, Stangor (2016) points out that contacts are not always positive. Accordingly, interventions and intergroup activities should be systematically planned by school personnel who are aware of the existing intergroup dynamics. Careful planning will help to minimize the possibility of negative experiences, which may have a reverse effect on group members' attitudes (Stangor, 2016). Furthermore, poorly designed, low-quality interventions could lead to generalizations and the adoption of color-blind attitudes (Grapin et al., 2019; Stangor, 2016). A color-blind approach to tackling discrimination is characterized by actively ignoring diversity (e.g., culture, race, and gender) in order to promote societal equality (Dovidio et al., 2015; Rosales & Jonsson, 2019). Various researchers argue that a color-blind approach to prejudice reduction is not only unhelpful but can also even be harmful, as it creates an environment where discrimination still exists but is rendered invisible (Dovidio et al., 2015; Jones & Rutland, 2018; Rosales & Jonsson, 2019; Stangor, 2016). Color-blindness may seem like an easy solution that can, on a superficial

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level, decrease intergroup tensions; however, on a deeper level, it would justify the unfair treatment of minority groups (Dovidio et al., 2015; Jones & Rutland, 2018). Despite the criticism of the color-blind approach, there is still a tendency to disregard ethnicity or race in school, rather than adopting a multicultural approach that acknowledges diversity and promotes critical discussions about interrelationships between groups (Jones & Rutland, 2018). Teaching materials may also push teachers to apply easy solutions if there is no mention of ethnicity or race (Jones & Rutland, 2018). Obondo et al. (2016) reported that schoolteachers in Sweden experience a deficiency in high-quality teaching materials designed with diversity in mind, making it more complicated for them to adjust their teaching practices to multicultural classrooms.

The preference for easy solutions, the depoliticization of culture and the failure to create truly inclusive and empowering learning environments are among the reasons for criticism of multicultural education theory (Ladson-Billings, 2014; May & Sleeter, 2010). Consequently, critical multiculturalism has emerged as a challenge to multicultural education. Critical multiculturalism encourages a systemic analysis of power relationships and challenges structural discrimination in modern societies (May & Sleeter, 2010; Vavrus, 2010). Culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012) is a critical framework for teaching practices in multicultural classrooms. This was developed as a response to culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000). Becoming a culturally sustaining teacher is an active process that requires the implementation of teaching practices that empower and sustain classroom diversity (Paris, 2012). Key features of culturally sustaining pedagogy include the following: acceptance of the dynamic nature of culture, communities, and languages; acknowledgment of the active role of communities as central agents in learning environments; and recognition of the ecological value of, and building positive relationships with minoritized communities (Paris, 2021). Furthermore, culturally sustaining pedagogy counteracts existing prejudice and structural discrimination by bringing active discussions about systems of power and social injustice to educational institutions, by refusing discriminatory policies, and by encouraging all stakeholders to continue these discussions in the outside world (Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris, 2021).

The implementation of culturally sustaining pedagogy and the creation of an empowering learning environment where all children feel valued is a complicated task. Shirazi and Jaffe-Walter (2021) highlighted that, although Danish schoolteachers openly rejected right-wing nationalist ideas, their daily practices still echoed anti-immigrant discourses that are evident in the Danish political arena. Anti-immigrant discourses are manifested in, among other things, the unfavorable labelling of culturally diverse children and youths.

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Kristensen (2022) researched the issues of labelling in Danish schools and revealed that so-called third-generation immigrant youths are being assigned labels of inferiority, despite being born and raised in Denmark and speaking local Danish dialects. The labels are often based on racial characteristics that are impossible to hide in order to avoid stereotypes (Kristensen, 2022). Kristensen's study touches upon the notion of the school-to-prison pipeline, by discussing negative narratives surrounding culturally diverse youths and low expectations concerning their futures. Young people, especially youths of color, are often unfairly portrayed as enemies of societies and as individuals who struggle with developing self-discipline; as such, they considered doomed to fail (Dunn et al., 2022; Winn & Behizadeh, 2011). When juvenile detention and prison are even mentioned as practical solutions for handling behavioral issues, this creates a hostile and destructive school culture (Winn & Behizadeh, 2011). The school-to-prison pipeline narrative is also addressed in a study conducted by researchers from Michigan State University, United States (Dunn et al., 2022). The American researchers emphasize that culturally diverse youths are aware they are subject to negative portrayals and low expectations (Dunn et al., 2022). However, instead of silently accepting these labels, many young people choose to resist the discriminatory discourses by raising discussions about schools (in)directly pushing youths of color into a stereotype box (Dunn et al., 2022).

In order to build an inclusive learning environment and reduce prejudice, it is necessary to apply holistic approaches and provide support to culturally diverse families (Grapin et al., 2019; Jantzen, 2020; Losinski et al., 2019; Miklikowska et al., 2019). Additional support can contribute to their sense of belonging to the school environment and the local society. Grapin et al. (2019) recommend starting with a reevaluation of policies with cultural diversity in mind, in order to provide equal opportunities for all, regardless of background. Furthermore, parents' effects on children's attitudes should also be considered when designing prejudice reduction interventions in schools (Bergamaschi et al., 2022; Miklikowska et al., 2019). The active involvement of parents may pay off in the long-term and help create a supportive home environment (Bergamaschi et al., 2022; Miklikowska et al., 2019).

Although most of the literature focuses on reducing prejudice among children and youths, teachers' bias levels, according to Starck et al. (2020), reflect those of the larger population. It should not be assumed that teachers are inevitably equipped with positive racial attitudes and are ready to communicate them to their pupils (Rakhawy et al., 2021; Starck et al., 2020). Therefore, if schools expect teachers to carry out prejudice reduction interventions, teachers should be given real opportunities for professional development and participation in prejudice reduction programs that are designed for school personnel (Rakhawy et al., 2021). The reality is different; for instance,

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a research study from Finland reveals relatively low awareness of multicultural issues among schoolteachers, despite years of experience of working in culturally diverse school environments (Acquah et al., 2016). The study also calls for better support and more professional development opportunities for teachers (Acquah et al., 2016). This extends to higher education institutions that must commit to the elimination of discriminatory discourses from teacher education and the empowering of future teachers to confront their own cultural attitudes and beliefs, as well as challenging existing structural discrimination and systems of power (Ladson-Billings, 2021; Wynter-Hoyte et al., 2019).

The Study at Three University Colleges in Denmark

This chapter includes findings from a comparative qualitative study entitled *Multicultural Education: A Utopia or a Functional Framework for Successful Teaching Practices?* The study's primary goal is to explore student teachers' perceptions of multicultural education and to analyze how well prepared they feel about working with culturally diverse children in the future. Moreover, the study aims to provide insights into student teachers' perspectives on existing prejudice in public schools, based on their experiences from on-site teacher training and working as substitute teachers. The study was conducted by the author of this chapter.

Data collection took place during the spring semester of 2022 at three university colleges in Denmark that agreed to participate in this project. The participants were fourteen student teachers (nine females and five males), with an average age of 26 years. They were in the final year of their studies and were in the process of writing their final thesis. At the time of the study, the participants had completed the obligatory on-site schoolteacher training and most of the courses included in the teacher education program. In addition to the on-site training, most participants had part-time jobs as substitute teachers in Danish public schools. The researcher travelled to the university colleges, and conducted individual interviews with the students, in person. Prior to the interviews, the researcher had also held meetings with teacher educators and other personnel at the university colleges, who provided valuable contextual information that helped shape the interview guides.

The participants received and understood the information about the project and their participation. They were also given the opportunity to ask questions. All participants gave written consent to participate and agreed to be audio recorded. The privacy considerations followed European general data protection regulations. The project received a positive review and research clearance from the Norwegian Center for Research Data.

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The interviews were in-depth and semi-structured using an interview guide that included themes and proposed questions. The interviews were conducted in Danish and transcribed verbatim. The quotations presented in this chapter have been translated by the researcher, who has aimed to keep the translations as close as possible to the original Danish transcriptions.

The interviews were analyzed using NVivo analytical software, which facilitates the arranging and reassembling of codes, categories, and quotations within the themes, and helps to visualize findings by mapping them into code networks. The findings presented in this chapter have been analyzed through the lens of multicultural education theory (Banks, 2009) and critical multiculturalism theory (May & Sleeter, 2010). Furthermore, the ideas of culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012) have been used as a guiding light during the critical analysis of the interviews. A thematic analysis approach was applied, as described by Braun and Clarke (2013). The interviews were coded using a complete coding approach (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In the initial stage of the analysis, a codebook was created, which included researcher-derived codes based on the theoretical constructs in which the study is grounded. Researcher-derived coding was applied in order to reveal implicit meanings within the data and to summarize them in relevant and descriptive codes (Braun & Clarke, 2013). During the coding process, data-derived codes were added to the codebook to include the themes that were not covered by the interview guide and that had emerged naturally during the interviews. In the final stage, the codes were evaluated, refined, and merged when needed. Thematically matching codes were assembled in categories, which later developed into themes. The findings are presented in the following sections, where the participants' voices are put in the spotlight. Pseudonyms are exclusively used to refer to the participants.

"We Have Three Common Enemies, and They Are Management, Parents and Pupils"

During the interviews, the participants revealed that they had witnessed different stereotypes and prejudice in Danish public schools. The examples varied from prejudiced assumptions about culturally diverse pupils to structural discrimination. The participants pointed out that negative attitudes toward accents and "incorrect" usage of the Danish language often create and uphold prejudice about immigrants in Danish society. Derek explained that both school personnel and pupils have misconceptions about first-generation immigrant children.

> I think the biggest prejudice I hear is that minority children with different ethnic backgrounds are stupid because their Danish sounds funny,

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> their language sounds funny. So, automatically, you don't sound so smart. (Derek)

Dorotea shared her experiences from the on-site teacher training where she was assigned to work in two different classes, one of which was a regular class, and the other was a special reception class for asylum-seekers. She explained that the contacts between the asylum-seeker children and the rest of the school were limited, which triggered tensions between the groups.

> There were some comments about this asylum-seekers class here, that they make a lot of noise, so it was very negative and again the "us and them" thing. They are not mixed with other children, so maybe this is the reason for that. (Dorotea)

In the same interview, Dorotea tried to reflect on the reasons why the labels are being attached and concluded that school personnel usually prefer easy solutions and explanations based on stereotypical beliefs rather than trying to identify the core of the problem.

> I have heard people say that this happens because she or he comes from a certain place. But I think it is because they don't have a deeper explanation for why the person had acted as she or he had done. And then I think it would be easy to jump to a quick conclusion, because we can all relate to this prejudice. (Dorotea)

When stereotypes and prejudice become accepted by most of the school personnel, it can be damaging to the whole school environment—instead of being a safe space for learning and development, it transforms into a battleground, where new members are pressurized into choosing sides. During her interview, Ditte described the school culture in the public school to which she was assigned in the first year of her studies.

> It was my first on-site training, and I remember we sat in a team meeting where they said: "We have three common enemies in this team group, and that is why we get along so well, and they are management, parents, and pupils." So, that's what made that team so good, and it just painted a picture of a tremendously unhealthy culture. I was really, really unhappy during the time when I was at that school. . . . But then I also reasoned with myself that there must be some schools where it is different, where you don't feel so much contempt for those you work with. (Ditte)

Although Ditte's experience may be an extreme example of existing prejudice among school personnel, interviews with other students revealed that

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teachers often indirectly justify existing stereotypes. Another participant, Dicte, said that she once had a conversation with a teacher about expectations for pupils' futures. The teacher praised an immigrant family for being well integrated into Danish society. Despite being generally positive toward this particular family, the teacher's arguments were characterized by stereotypical ideas about immigrants.

> There was a pupil, a boy. And she [the teacher] just explained that his brothers were in higher education. And the family was very like . . . they were not criminal and . . . I think she called them "an integrated family." And then, right after that, she said that he had the potential to be a top criminal. And I think that was a very strange thing to say. (Dicte)

The school-to-prison pipeline narratives were also brought up for discussion by Ditte, who revealed that the teachers at a school where she was undergoing on-site training had shallow expectations concerning culturally diverse pupils.

> They [the teachers] used ugly words to talk about the pupils. They were like: "You know, they just have to finish the ninth grade and then they will go to a juvenile detention center." So, that was how they referred to their students. Structural racism! (Ditte)

The stereotypes and prejudice leave imprints on the self-image of children from cultural minority backgrounds. As a result, the children develop self-prejudice and expect unfair treatment from school personnel. Dorotea described her experience of working with youths from minority groups who labelled themselves and used the labels to explain their bad behavior during extracurricular activities.

> Actually, it really hurts to hear from them [the youths from cultural minority backgrounds]: "You don't want us to be here, we are just perkere [racist term, especially for people from the Middle East], we just cause trouble—I'm going out to do some crime now." You can really feel that they feel that we are prejudiced. I alone cannot help them and say: "It is not true", because that is just what I feel. I can hear that these pupils here are burdened with certain things. (Dorotea)

During the interviews, the participants not only shared their observations from the public schools but also suggested ways of resolving some of the issues. They reflected on the support they received from the teacher educators at the university colleges and the supervisory teachers during the on-site training. Their ideas and reflections are presented in the following section.

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"I Am a Small Fish in the School. How Can a Small Teacher Change the School Structure?"

While discussing the stereotypes and prejudice in Danish public schools, the participants deliberated about good practices that may help to counteract discriminatory discourses and build healthier learning environments. During the interviews, the participants were asked whether they received any support or practical advice to address discrimination issues in public schools. The majority stated that teacher education is primarily theoretical, and there was little discussion of practical implementation of the theories, especially when it comes to counteracting bullying or resolving intergroup conflicts. Daisy admitted in her interview that she is willing to share the responsibility for the lack of skills, and she should probably have been more active in asking for practical advice from the educators.

> It is something that we did not have at the university college. And I agree that I am also responsible for my education. I should have asked more questions. But they [teacher educators] could also add the themes about prejudice and conflict management in the subject pedagogy and pupil-related skills. (Daisy)

The participants emphasized that they gained a deeper insight into the profession during the on-site training. They therefore wished to have extended training periods and a better connection between theory and practice. Despite the gaps in the teacher education program, the participants, with the help of teacher educators and supervisory teachers, were able to discover ways to reduce stereotypes in the schools. One approach was mentioned in several of the interviews: adopting the resource view of culturally and linguistically diverse children and rejecting negative attitudes toward accents and grammatical mistakes. Dorit said that she had initially learned about this approach at the university college. Later, her supervisory teacher highlighted the importance of developing tolerance toward pupils' languages and regarding them as resources.

> I learned that mixing languages could be an excellent resource. If you cannot remember the word in Danish, well, then find it in the bag of the languages you have! And then we will see if we understand it. So, if you don't know the word for triangle [in Danish], but you know it in German, then use it, and we will probably find a solution. (Dorit)

On the other hand, some participants were leaning toward color-blind approaches to addressing discrimination. For example, Daniel repeatedly mentioned in his interview that he would rather adopt a color-blind

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approach, as he feels it might positively impact the sense of belonging of pupils from culturally diverse backgrounds.

> I see them as my pupils, not my minority group pupils [. . .] I don't believe in the idea of treating them differently, because I think that would further stigmatize them. (Daniel)

Dorit considered the issues of prejudice and stigmatization from a different angle. She explained that children are being judged and put in a prejudice box solely on the basis of their names, even before they step into school. In her interview, she underlined that she disagrees with this practice.

> I also experience that . . . the pupils with foreign-like names become something . . . when we form classes A, B, and C, we make sure to distribute 'them' equally, so there is an equal number of Hasims and Mounas in each class, because they are an academic burden or a social burden. But how can I accept that? I don't know because I am a small fish in the school. How can a small teacher change the school structure? But I can allow myself to say that I disagree with that. And I see those children as a resource rather than a burden. But I don't quite know how to do it, how to change these stereotypes. (Dorit)

Several other participants shared Dorit's concerns that a single teacher's voice might not be enough to change discriminatory narratives in public schools. David believes that schools should promote open discussions about discrimination and prejudice, and challenge negative attitudes that exist in society.

> If it is society that created those narratives, then I think that the school has a responsibility to break these narratives down. If you are an immigrant, you are not a bad guy, or you are not a criminal, as portrayed in the media. I actually think so. I think it is actually the school's responsibility [. . .] I feel that the class teacher is responsible for bringing up these topics in the classes. Active discussion, but maybe also... talk about the statistics in the media, you can break these statistics down and convey them to the pupils. Yes, there are some statistics, but it is also interesting to see how the statistics are being used and how they are used in political debate. (David)

Although the schools were mainly held to be responsible by the participants for resolving discrimination issues, they also acknowledged the role of parents and extended families. The participants have learned that teachers' duties extend beyond subject teaching. Good teachers, in their eyes, are

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the ones who know their pupils' backgrounds, communicate with families, and provide relevant support to family members. Damian emphasized that families play an equally important role in the building of inclusive learning environments in schools. He suggested encouraging family meetings at weekends, where families from diverse backgrounds could meet and get to know each other, which could help to break down the barriers and reduce prejudice.

> You need to get help from the parents to facilitate something [meetings] where they can all be together, and they can play together. And then sitting and eating something together and having a chat about how things are going. This could break some barriers and taboos. So that is something I want to propose, but of course, I must have support from the home front to implement this. (Damian)

Dorotea developed the theme of the significance of building good relationships with pupils by underlining that teachers should allow themselves to be vulnerable in front of the class and to share their own experiences. She believes that teachers serve as examples for children who tend to replicate good or bad behaviors.

> I have really learned that it is so important to be open and dare to be vulnerable myself. I dare to be authentic and ask them questions because it helps me to understand them. Because if I just close myself off and let my prejudices thrive, well then, they [the children] will too. (Dorotea)

Derek also believes that working to address one's own prejudice is a crucial part of a teacher's work. He stressed that teachers must be aware of everything they say in a classroom, including jokes or statements that might justify the unfair treatment of minority groups. Derek explained that he wants to be a role model for his pupils, someone they can trust and identify with. He wants to become the kind of teacher that he did not have when he was a child.

> If the teacher is not open toward the minorities, and asks questions such as, "Isn't it a little strange that they don't eat pork?" or "How can they understand Russian? It looks weird." In other words, if you come up with those things, pupils see that—it is fun, and they join in because, if the teacher does it, then it must be OK. I think you have to be careful and come with open arms and be like, "You know, it is cool, a very interesting culture." So, the teachers are the biggest role models, I would say. (Derek)

Although all participants came up with some suggestions or described experiences of working on reducing prejudice in public schools, they admitted that

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they lack the necessary practical tools to address these issues systematically. During the four years of teacher training, there had been some discussions about stereotypes and prejudice. However, according to the participants, these were limited to theoretical considerations, and rarely put in context. Although the on-site training and part-time jobs as substitute teachers in Danish public schools compensated for the lack of practical tools, the participants still thought it was insufficient to close the knowledge gaps.

The Student Teachers' Dilemma: Pursuit of the Perfect Ideas, or Acceptance of The Reality?

During the interviews, it was apparent that the participants possessed various ideas about how they could contribute to building inclusive learning environments where all pupils would feel valued. However, it was also evident that some ideas were treated as pictures from an ideal and unreachable universe. This can be explained by the lack of focus on prejudice reduction in teacher education. Banks (2009) describes prejudice reduction as a holistic process that involves the implementation of appropriate teaching methods and materials, working to address one's own attitudes and promoting positive intergroup contacts. Research studies point out that the involvement of families is also greatly beneficial (Bergamaschi et al., 2022; Miklikowska et al., 2019). Indeed, all these aspects are visible in the findings, but they do not derive from the same interview. None of the participants had a clear and holistic approach in mind that was grounded in the theory and supported by experiences from the field. Some participants said that they are ready to accept the reality, at least for the first few months or years until they have become acquainted with their future workplaces, before they try to act and challenge the system.

The language-related issues were mentioned by several participants, who expressed their concerns that the accents and grammatical mistakes cause mistrust in pupils' learning abilities. The participants offered to adopt a resource view on pupils' home languages as a solution. When they were asked to elaborate on the resource view, the participants said that they had heard about the benefits of including pupils' languages in the educational process; however, they did not have a clear idea of the practical implementation of this. The importance of valuing and using pupils' languages corresponds to the notions of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000), which preceded culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012). Gay (2000) described various steps for adopting a culturally responsive approach to teaching. However, the analysis of the interviews did not indicate an awareness of a systematic approach to culturally responsive teaching among the participants.

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With regard to culturally sustaining pedagogy and critical multicultural approaches to teaching, the participants' views diverged. Some participants prioritized the color-blind approach, which has been largely criticized for being a simple solution that justifies the unfair treatment of minority groups (Dovidio et al., 2015; Jones & Rutland, 2018). The participants who decided to disregard ethnicity and cultural backgrounds believed it would help in the building of an inclusive learning environment. However, an environment that is built upon color-blind perspectives can be harmful to youths, who might learn to ignore the prejudice rather than confront it (Dovidio et al., 2015; Jones & Rutland, 2018; Stangor, 2016). The other participants indicated preferences for a more holistic approach that somehow corresponds to the ideas of critical multiculturalism (May & Sleeter, 2010; Vavrus, 2010) and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012). Instead of proposing easy solutions, this group of participants suggested bringing active discussions to the classrooms, including discussions about the current political debates and the role of the media in creating and reinforcing prejudice. Furthermore, they called on the public schools to abolish the discriminatory practice of dividing the pupils based on their ethnic backgrounds and not on their abilities. This also leads to the discussion about labelling, especially the school-to-prison pipeline narratives, which were repeatedly brought up by the participants. Schoolteachers not only demonstrated negative attitudes and prejudice, but they also pushed student teachers to adopt their views and join them in the alliance against the common "enemies," which include pupils who, according to the schoolteachers' words, would probably end up in juvenile detention centers anyway. This particular example indeed presents extreme views, and it is not likely that this is the norm in Danish public schools. However, another study by Shirazi and Jaffe-Walter (2021) also indicated that teachers' practices echoed anti-immigrant discourses. School management, policymakers, and school districts should therefore systematically address discrimination issues and provide better support and real opportunities for professional development.

With regard to intergroup contacts, the participants revealed that asylum-seekers and newly arrived immigrant children are usually placed in special reception classes. This is justified by the fact that those children have little to no knowledge of Danish and need special support to develop language skills. However, according to the participants, the isolation from the rest of the school creates tensions and contributes to the development of negative attitudes toward this group of pupils. Therefore, there is a need for interventions and positive intergroup contacts to foster tolerance and mutual respect between the groups. For instance, a Greek research team (Vassilopoulos et al., 2020) concluded that carefully planned intergroup activities helped to reduce prejudice toward refugees in the intervention group of Greek children. The Danish student teachers also mentioned that there should be interventions and in-school

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activities to foster intergroup tolerance. However, they consider the school management to be responsible for taking the initiative. Previous research backs up the notion that, although every single teacher's voice is essential, the issues of bullying, racism, and discrimination should be addressed systematically and at the school level (Grapin et al., 2019; Losinski et al., 2019).

The participants observed that discrimination had a negative impact on the self-image of youths from minority cultural backgrounds. Young people who felt marginalized developed self-prejudice, and, in some cases, accepted the labels given to them by society. This manifested in the provocative behavior toward the school personnel, as in the example shared by one of the participants who felt powerless in this situation. One suggestion for how to address this issue may be found in Dunn's (2022) study, which revealed that channeling youths' feelings into art forms may help them to make sense of the surrounding (often discriminatory) narratives and find creative ways to challenge them.

Family involvement in prejudice reduction was discussed in the interviews. The participants admitted that parents' attitudes and beliefs shape children's identities, and a good teacher should be aware of their pupils' family circumstances in order to see the whole picture. Furthermore, earlier research underlined that, in order to achieve positive long-term results in prejudice reduction intervention, the participation of parents is crucial (Bergamaschi et al., 2022; Miklikowska et al., 2019). Although the Danish participants were not formally trained to involve families in prejudice reduction interventions, they could suggest ways of bridging the cultural divide with the help of families. Their suggestions, however, were limited to home visits, food events, and conversations with parents.

Self-reflection is a significant aspect of both prejudice reduction and culturally sustaining pedagogy that was brought to light by several of the participants. Working to address one's own prejudice, attitudes, and beliefs has always been regarded as an essential step for implementing teaching methods with diversity in mind (Gay, 2000; Paris, 2021). Nevertheless, many teachers tend to look for an easy solution, and omit the self-reflection step when implementing culturally responsive/sustaining pedagogy in practice, which diminishes the purpose of these methods (Dixson, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2014). Several Danish student teachers were aware of the significance of self-reflection and attached great importance to it as they considered themselves to be role models for their pupils. This perception gives them both a power that they are willing to distribute in a positive way and a great responsibility for their words and actions, both within and outside the schools.

Implications for Teacher Education

This chapter contributes to the discussion about the relevance and practical value of multicultural education and critical multiculturalism for teacher

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education programs. The analysis of the interviews revealed that, although the participants were aware of the existence of these theories, their knowledge of them was rudimentary. During the interviews, it was apparent that the participants felt self-conscious about their lack of practical knowledge of addressing discrimination issues. Several of them mentioned that they actually should have known better, but they were not given the opportunity to fully develop and practice the necessary skills. At two university colleges, the module on teaching bilingual pupils, which included themes related to multiculturalism, was taught in the final year. Consequently, the student teachers did not have any chance to practice the new skills and teaching methods in schools. The participants underlined that it could have been more beneficial for them to have this module earlier in their studies, and they wished that the supervisory teachers in schools showed more awareness and initiative when it came to multicultural issues. Furthermore, during the on-site training, the student teachers were hardly given access to culturally diverse children and their parents.

Looking back at their four-year journey, the participants concluded that the education they received was mainly theoretical and focused on acquiring general knowledge of the philosophy of education and general pedagogy. Although theoretical knowledge is essential, teacher education programs are expected to provide students with a functional framework for successful teaching practices that they can utilize in various settings. In her recent work, Ladson-Billings (2021) found that teacher educators exposed students to different theories and concepts, yet rarely utilized the teaching methods grounded in these concepts in their own practice. Instead of taking the students on a superficial journey around different theories, teacher educators should commit themselves to social justice, implement prejudice reduction interventions, and promote culturally sustaining pedagogy by actively applying these in their own classrooms. To become culturally sustaining teachers, students need to gain a deep understanding of the theoretical constructs, experience culturally sustaining teaching methods, and have an opportunity to utilize them during the on-site training. This will equip future teachers with the necessary skills to confront the three real enemies in their work in multicultural schools: stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination.

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3

Experiential Education, Museums, and Student Teachers' Intercultural Learning

Reflections on the Scandinavian Romani Exhibition

Vander Tavares and Thor-André Skrefsrud

In this chapter, we revisit the concept of experiential education to reflect upon the potential of museums in supporting intercultural learning for student teachers. Drawing on theory and our own experiences as teacher educators researching and teaching diversity-related topics in a master's course for student teachers at a university college in Norway, we discuss how we envision the integration of museums into teaching and learning with specific reference to the Scandinavian Romani exhibition as a case study. Furthermore, by anchoring our discussion in Paulo Freire's concept of problem-posing education, we reflect upon how an experiential engagement with this exhibition may create a learning space that awakens student teachers' critical consciousness and provides opportunities for self-reflection. We are interested in how the Romani exhibition can become a creative space for student teachers to enhance their intercultural learning by developing a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of Norway's national minorities and Indigenous community in relation to cultural and linguistic diversity.

A growing body of research has explored the possibilities for emphatic development, personal and social transformation in museums from a pedagogical perspective. In a review of research on museums as avenues for learning for children, Andre et al. (2017) found that theories of constructivism, particularly sociocultural perspectives on learning, have been highly influential when museums develop programs, exhibitions, and learning models for

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children. As noted by Andre et al. (2017), views from both within and outside the field of museology have espoused a conceptual change on the function of museums, from "places of education to places for learning" (p. 48). From viewing museums as sites for the consumption of content information and pre-produced knowledge, often immersed in entertainment, a shift toward experiential opportunities has emerged so as to facilitate an interactive and potentially transformative engagement with the exhibitions. According to Andre et al. (2017), such a shift extends Vygotsky's concept of learning as a socially mediated process that "take[s] place in a cultural context through social interactions that are mediated by language and other cultural symbol systems" (p. 54).

Although strategies and activities employed in museums tend to be well-grounded in sociocultural and interpretative approaches, we argue that an experiential-critical theoretical lens remains necessary as we reflect upon student teachers' intercultural learning in museums. In a parallel, sociocultural and experiential perspectives on learning acknowledge the significance of context, situatedness, personal experience, and social interaction for the construction of knowledge. Both within a sociocultural and experiential approach to learning, human understanding is historically and culturally mediated, produced, and closely related to social processes. Hence, they are overlapping perspectives in the sense that they not only share a common epistemology but also challenge the reductive notion that knowledge exists independently and is obtained through "objective" observations of the world. However, as we elaborate in a subsequent section, experiential learning is linked more strongly to critical processes of learning where students are encouraged to explore and identify their own biases and prejudices when interacting with people of different social and economic positions (Bryant et al., 2015; Dodman et al., 2022).

This chapter is organized as follows. First, we describe the master's course at our institution in Norway in terms of its pedagogical design, learning objectives, assessment practices, and the student body. We also propose how the museum-based experiential component fits into the course. We then present some key concepts on intercultural learning and how the co-construction of (intercultural) knowledge may be fostered in the context of teaching and learning in higher education. With a focus on neoliberalism, we subsequently discuss some of the challenges teacher educators may encounter when integrating museums into teaching and learning. Next, we juxtapose experiential learning and problem-posing education to demonstrate their combined potential for the development of critical thinking when learning about diversity. We proceed to trace the history of the Roma peoples in Norway and the ways in which the exhibition *Latjo Drom* embodies the multiple experiences and stories of this minority group in the country. We conclude the chapter by linking theory and practice.

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This chapter takes a reflective, conceptual, and interdisciplinary orientation. It is guided by the following question: How may learning about diversity in a museum contribute to the development of student teachers' critical thinking and intercultural knowledge from an experiential learning perspective? This chapter should be seen as a product of our joint and ongoing discussions about the affordances and challenges of integrating museums into teaching and learning. As we continue to reevaluate our teaching practices and course design at our institution, we approach this chapter as a space for reflection through which we may arrive at one of many possibilities for enhancing teacher education and pedagogy through knowledge of self and the other in an increasingly diverse world. We use *other* to refer to the politically minoritized—in contrast to the standard "other"—and to emphasize the centrality of identity in our discussion.

The Master's Course in Differentiated Learning

"Differentiated Learning from a Didactic Perspective" (DLDP henceforth) is our own translation for 2MIT4005 (Norwegian: *Tilpasset opplæring i et didaktisk perspektiv*). DLDP is a mandatory course offered in the first year of a two-year teacher education program at the master's level at our institution, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences (INN). The Master in Differentiated Learning aims to prepare students to teach in schools and kindergartens, and consists of coursework and a research-based thesis. The master's program focuses on diversity and the individual student, drawing on theories of critical, inclusive, and special needs education. The curriculum of the master's program takes into consideration the provisions set in the Norwegian Education Act, which states that all students have the right to differentiated instruction based on their special abilities or challenges, in addition to cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity.

The learning outcomes for DLDP are categorized broadly into three interconnected areas: knowledge, skills, and general competence. In here, we provide only a brief summary of the outcomes. In the first area, the course is designed to offer students opportunities to gain in-depth knowledge of the role and functioning of schools and to demonstrate such knowledge through decision-making and reflection upon their current and future teaching practices. Additionally, students are expected to develop theoretical and practical knowledge of differentiated instructional methods, along with analytical skills to identify and address systemic educational issues through differentiated instruction. In the area of skills, critical and analytical skills are prioritized for the improvement of school culture, teaching and learning, and the well-being of students. In the third area (i.e., general competence), the course focuses

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on equipping students to work with cultural and linguistic diversity in light of teaching ethics and to reflect on appropriate methods for planning, implementing, and leading development projects more broadly.

The course curriculum offers social, sociocultural, multicultural, and multilingual perspectives on differentiated learning. We aim to support students in the development of knowledge not only to identify the socio-academic conditions needed to help support student learning and identity enactment but also to intervene when necessary. Teaching methods include lectures, interactive seminars, and independent study, all of which are facilitated in-person and online. Throughout the course, students complete written and oral assignments (three in total) and a take-home exam for which students select a topic of interest for exploration. A typical student group includes students at different professional stages, such as first-time, preservice student teachers and those with teaching experience from a variety of contexts. As such, the age variance is significant and conducive to discussions in which experiences are shared between students, and between students and teacher educators. Lastly, the students bring important insights into the course based on their diverse profiles, as in being a first-generation Norwegian, plurilingual with Norwegian as an additional language, and/or a racial or ethnic minority.

In our view, the inclusion of a museum as a site of learning for the course would help meet different learning outcomes simultaneously. At a foundational level, conceptualizing a museum as a pedagogical space can provide students an exposure to a cultural experience that would be otherwise difficult to foster within the physical constraints of a classroom. More specifically, exhibitions meant to offer a glimpse into the lived experiences of linguistic and ethnic minorities, as is the case with *Latjo Drom*, support students to enhance their understanding of diversity from a multimodal, minority, and historical perspective. In other words, we are interested in the potential to develop students' ability to approach matters of diversity from multiple and intercultural perspectives, and their ability to reflect on—and potentially revise—their own knowledge of *the other*, through which the potential to confront cultural stereotypes and facile narratives may be explored. In short, the *Latjo Drom* provides an opportunity to contextualize topics learned in the course in relation to identity, diversity, and pedagogy.

Intercultural Learning

Intercultural learning is often referred to as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that support the ability of learners to both understand cultural complexity and interact with people from different cultures (Horst, 2006; Lane, 2012). The concept of intercultural learning can thus be

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understood in a descriptive and normative way (Lane, 2012). In a descriptive sense, intercultural learning describes the cognitive and social processes of learning when people engage in interaction with the purpose of understanding more of oneself and others. When used in a normative, or prescriptive sense, intercultural learning is a call for learners to intentionally understand and confront the mechanisms behind cultural stereotypes and personal prejudices, to improve their cultural knowledge and awareness, and to explore and value different practices, beliefs, and ways of life. Hence, through a normative lens, intercultural learning advances the need to engage with cultural and linguistic diversity in ways that enhance and cultivate a better, deepened understanding of cultural differences.

Accordingly, the concept of intercultural learning marks a critical distance toward the systematic devaluation of language and culture that many minoritized people have experienced in schools and societies across the Nordic context. Historically, in Norway, Sweden, and Finland, the Sámi population was subject to strong assimilation (Andreassen & Olsen, 2018). Moreover, as part of nation-building processes from the 1850s, other minoritized groups and communities, such as the Romani, the Kven, and the Forest Finns, were disparaged by colonial power. Not only were these groups excluded from the national narratives but also forcefully assimilated into what was idealized as a culturally and linguistically homogenous population (Moen, 2009; Niemi, 2003).

In contemporary society, the tendency to devaluate students' diverse cultures and languages is illustrated in the various neo-conservative and right-wing discourses on immigration that continues to haunt the Nordic and European countries. Within such discourses, immigrant students' heritage cultures and languages are often constructed as impediments to learning the majority language and as hindrances to integration into the new country of residence (Skrefsrud, 2018). As a result, students and their families are seen as culturally, linguistically, and socially deprived and in need of repair (Baker & Wright, 2017). To make up for immigrant students' low academic achievements, compensatory measures are then applied, often ignoring the value of the students' existing knowledge, skills, and abilities. Moreover, the responsibility for poor academic performance is placed upon the affected individuals or communities, overlooking the larger cultural and socioeconomic structures in which they are embedded that contribute to their marginalization in multiple domains (Baker & Wright, 2017). In contrast to such a deficit-informed construction of cultural differences, the concept of intercultural learning advocates a resource-oriented approach to diversity where differences are seen not as challenges to be "handled," but as assets and opportunities for the educational development of all. More specifically, engaging in processes of intercultural learning would imply developing what

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Nussbaum (1997) has framed as certain abilities of the individual, which overall also reflects an openness toward the value of differences. Nussbaum (1997) discusses different facets of intercultural learning with reference to intra-personal and interpersonal development, which we highlight below.

First, Nussbaum (1997) suggests that intercultural learning involves being an intelligent reader of another person's story: to develop an empathic, narrative imagination of what the other person's experiences, wishes, and aspirations might be. Second, engaging in intercultural learning would mean to see oneself not only as a member of a specific community but also as someone interrelated with other human beings through mutual responsibilities and concerns (Nussbaum, 1997). Intercultural learning thus implies "a call to our imaginations to venture beyond narrow group loyalties and to consider the reality of distant lives" (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 10). Third, Nussbaum (1997) emphasizes how intercultural learning implies a self-critical awareness where the learner carefully examines oneself and one's own traditions. For Nussbaum (1997), this means accepting "no belief as authoritative simply because it has been handed down by tradition or become familiar through habit" (p. 9).

Inspired by Levinas (1987), we affirm that a critical self-reflexivity toward one's own taken-for-granted practices would include the ability to refrain from reducing the cultural stranger to a mirror for self-awareness and self-development. In taking student teachers to an exhibition such as *Latjo Drom*, an important part of self-reflexivity would imply to develop a critical understanding of how such exhibitions can promote what Bhabha (1994) framed as "the colonizers' demand for narrative" (p. 98). As noted by Bhabha, the absence of marginalized voices in the mainstream may be seen as a problem since the powerful majority is excluded from hearing the voices from the margins. Without "access" to these voices, the majority is unable to gain knowledge about the minority, which becomes a missed opportunity for the majority to learn about the *other* and itself (see also Skrefsrud, 2021). Yet, the "lack of access" to diverse voices results from the very social system which the majority has put into place over decades and therefore cannot be understood as a problem with the minority per se.

As Said (2003) notes, however, the desire to appropriate the *other* for the same purpose is a replication of colonial mistakes upon the "East" in which the "West" invented and objectified the cultural stranger in order to better understand itself. Within the concept of intercultural learning, we are thus urged to keep in mind not only the familiarities but also the otherness of the people we aim to understand. Learning to understand also means avoiding reducing any other to a mirror by the learner. As such, intercultural learning implies developing a critical awareness that fosters an openness toward others, respect for differences, and active tolerance toward diversity as an integrated part of today's schools and society. Enhancing student teachers'

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intercultural learning should therefore nurture their ability to recognize the value of diversity in the classroom, to provide opportunities for all students' academic achievements, and to create spaces for participation and belonging.

Museums as Spaces for Teaching and Learning: An Evolving Challenge

Museums have been traditionally conceptualized as public spaces for the arts in ways that seek to inform and educate the population. Although "museum" is a term employed broadly, museums are categorized into genres, such as historical, arts, or scientific, among others, that are also based on a target audience (e.g., a children's museum). Considering their multifaceted and evolving ontology, museums fulfill multiple purposes. Regardless of category or genre, however, museums can be positioned essentially as educational institutions (Hein, 2005). Two central reasons support such a perspective: first, a museum has an impact on the visitor, and second, a visitor engages in meaning-making as they come into contact with an exhibition. In this sense, learning takes place in museums as visitors actively (re)construct knowledge. This perspective endorses a constructivist epistemological framework (Hein, 1998) in which knowledge is individually and collectively created, or in other words, constructed interpersonally (through interaction) and intra-personally (through reflection). Constructivism is a key component of modern theories of learning in which knowledge construction relies on social interaction, problem-based learning, and reflection (e.g., Skrefsrud, 2022).

Reflections on *what museums are for* have traversed decades of critical scholarship in arts education. Nearly 20 years ago, Rice and Yenawine (2002) had already argued that a museum could "no longer claim to be a neutral backdrop for the display of art, because it is understood instead to be a highly complex institution that participates in the social construction of culture and in the legitimization of power" (p. 290). Critical perspectives on the arts enable us to (re)ignite and affirm a political role for museums preoccupied with "offering solutions to social, economic, and cultural problems plaguing society today" (Kundu & Kalin, 2015, p. 40). For Fleming (2013), the crux of managing a museum for social justice is found in an organizational culture, or personality, "that actively nourishes the social justice agenda" (p. 77). For a museum to develop and maintain such a culture, structural and individual changes are necessary internally *in tandem* with the outside, that is, from matters of staffing to consultation with the surrounding communities and the integration of social issues that affect the locale. This may include anti-discrimination training for employees, free admission to events for community members, and the prioritization of initiatives grounded in social justice, both locally and globally (Fleming, 2013).

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Included in the idea of the surrounding community are educators affiliated with institutions of higher education. In fact, defending the role of museums as one grounded in social justice has direct implications for teacher educators whose praxis involves museums as sites of teaching and learning. However, as teacher educators work to foster a critical learning experience for students about and within museums, they must maneuver an increasingly and conflictingly neoliberal configuration of the arts. Neoliberal visions have embedded museums into a transaction market wherein visitors exercise control, often through payment, of when, what, and how to engage with the arts. As such, museums become a part of the running economy, responding to the interests of customers, whose individual investments potentially determine the survival of these very spaces. Put differently, "under the neoliberal regime, the art museum visitor is considered a consumer seeking maximum customer satisfaction in the use value of their 'free time'" (Kundu & Kalin, 2015, p. 42). This prominent issue is also entangled in current neoliberal models of higher education where students are transformed into customers (Tavares, 2022a, 2022b), which makes the work of (teacher) educators even more complex when we assert that museums are also educational institutions.

The neoliberal orientation on the arts amplifies the recreational purpose of museums at the expense of its potential for social justice. Kundu and Kalin (2015) called for a more careful attention toward "how exhibitions can be framed educationally to support modes of looking that direct thought as to one's responsibilities in relation to society and others in a sustained manner" (p. 49). This ethical call rejects the neoliberal experience of engagement characterized by consumption, demand, and selectivity by opting in or out of social issues based on personal "interest." Educators play a role in this pressing context as they undertake the intricate task of inspiring students to think beyond the expected reaction to or the easy interpretation of a particular object or exhibit. The work of (teacher) educators also entails equipping students to tend to the visceral differently, or to feeling beyond—and in some cases, against—entertainment. Encouraging critical engagement is an undertaking that depends on raising awareness in the students of the very function of museums in the first place. These are important reflections for teacher educators when we consider that museums should have a positive and transformative impact on our society today.

Experiential Learning and Problem-Posing Education: Some Insights

Experiential learning, as a systematized theory to describe and analyze how people learn, has been around for several decades. The conceptual pillars that

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support experiential learning theory originate from an eclectic collection of contemporary educational perspectives, beginning at least in the 1920s with John Dewey's works, gaining traction progressively through other notable educational philosophers such as Jean Piaget and Paulo Freire. Kolb (1984) defined learning from an experiential learning theoretical standpoint as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 41). Today, experiential learning has received growing attention in higher education as applied and critical perspectives on education continue to confront "traditional" teaching and learning models. For centuries, the university has been singularized as the locus of learning through timed and structured teaching inserted in uneven teacher-learner relations. Such a model of education reflects what Freire termed as the banking system of education, in which learners are made passive to receive encyclopedic information from an authority figure (Freire, 2018).

If learning is tied to experience, then its actualization need not be confined to a particular institution. However, the naturalistic character of learning does not necessarily result in *learning* in the sense conceived of in experiential learning theory. This is what Kolb (1984) argued when he explained that "the simple perception of experience alone is not sufficient for learning; something must be done with it" (p. 42). Experiential learning theory proposes a cycle for how learning occurs, which consists of the following components: concrete learning, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Concrete learning takes place when the individual engages in a new experience (or reinterprets a past experience) through the senses and emotions. Reflective observation entails any activity through which the experience is elaborated upon (e.g., thinking, discussing, writing). Here, the individual makes "connections across experiences . . . but without necessarily integrating theories or concepts" (Petkus, 2000, p. 64). The individual reaches this level in abstract conceptualization, when he or she forms or revises ideas as a result of observation.

The last stage, active experimentation, is viewed as the *doing* phase of experiential learning. The individual applies the knowledge acquired up until then to test, validate, or modify their understanding of the experience. Yet, because the individual encounters the experience again throughout life, the learning cycle begins again, wherein their knowledge may be revised. Since experiential learning theory focuses on learning through hands-on experiences, trial and error, and critical reflection, it has played an important role in guiding the formal training of teachers in teacher education programs. Of particular interest here is the relationship between experiential learning and learning about diversity in ways that prepare teachers to understand, build on, and integrate knowledge of diversity into their own practice. Experiential learning has been linked to helping teacher educators and student teachers to

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recognize and confront their own biases and prejudices when working with students in different social and economic positions (Bryant et al., 2015). Some teacher education programs have made it mandatory for student teachers to engage in credit-bearing, community-based experiential learning placements given the meaningful contribution that experiential learning makes to students' learning about diversity and different cultural groups through real life involvement (Harfitt & Chow, 2018).

Research in education has exemplified the experiential learning cycle of knowledge (re)construction extensively across the disciplines. Dodman et al. (2022) discussed the relevance and potential of experiential learning in a Portuguese language and literature course in Toronto, where the Lusophone community is considered a minority. The authors embedded experiential learning opportunities in the curriculum for students of a Lusophone heritage background to build upon their knowledge of their diasporic heritage in context. Part of this initiative included visits to galleries which preserved artifacts of the immigration and settlement experiences of Portuguese immigrants, some escaping Portugal's last dictatorship. Pedagogical opportunities for critical reflection, through discussion and writing, were available throughout the course. Other opportunities involved guest speakers and texts written by Portuguese immigrants. Dodman et al. (2022) drew attention to how such experiential engagements helped develop a critical consciousness in students in relation to their ethnic group as a minority in Canada. By the end of the course, students demonstrated a more contextualized, complex, and empathic understanding of the sociological issues which have impacted their community in the Greater Toronto Area.

Thinking critically and feeling empathically are core values of education for today's increasingly interconnected and diverse world. Freire was critical of how traditional (or banking) education works to numb students' abilities to reach and experience criticality and empathy not only as the outcomes but also as processes of learning in schools. Education that excludes students' lived experiences from teaching and learning reinforces what Freire saw as "a dichotomy between human beings and the world: a person is merely *in* the world, not *with* the world or with others; the individual is a spectator, not re-creator" (Freire, 2018, p. 120, italics in original). Being *with* the world meant being an active participant in the world, one who contributes to their individual sociocultural development and to the historical trajectory of the world in consequential, experiential, and conscious ways. Banking education dismisses the students' role in their own education as the student is thought to possess "an empty 'mind' passively open to the reception of deposits of reality from the world outside" (Freire, 2018, p. 120). If knowledge is considered static and readily available, then personal experience becomes dispensable and inessential for learning.

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Problem-posing education was Freire's proposed remedy to overcome the issues embedded in banking education, and consequently, banking education itself. First and foremost, Freire maintained that education is inherently political because it serves the interests of the elites by prescribing a curriculum that does not reflect the students' lived experiences. As such, students who have been disenfranchised will not experience emancipation if they learn to memorize and repeat information that has nothing politically transformative or liberatory in it. Students are made to sit and answer questions whose answers have already been formulated by the teacher (Freire, 1970). Knowledge is thus "deposited" by the teacher, rather than co-constructed by students in collaboration with other students and teachers. Indeed, the authoritarian role of the teacher is a primary mechanism through which banking education is preserved. The teacher does not empower students—rather, they contribute to silencing students and erasing their lived experience from the curriculum so as to avoid having to confront a system of education that operates on oppression.

Although problem-posing education and experiential learning diverge conceptually in some domains, they coincide in others that support active student learning. Both emphasize the context as indispensable for learning to have an impact on students. Context is multifactorial as it includes the social, cultural, and political terrains upon which education is founded, and is problematized in dialogic interactions between students and teachers (Shor & Freire, 1987; Tavares, 2023). The participatory character of problem-posing education and experiential learning challenges the traditional role played by students in their own education in which they are made passive and problematic. Furthermore, the affective dimension is central for teaching and learning within both perspectives. The hands-on experience evokes a range of emotions in the students, which are invited into teaching and learning for the purposes of (self)understanding. Lastly, problem-posing education and experiential learning depend on critical reflection at various stages of the learning process (Freire, 2018; Kolb, 1984). Reflection leads to agency which, in turn, can result in social change.

Roma Peoples in Norway

In 1999, the Norwegian government considered the Tater-Romani people an official minority in the country. This move followed from a long period, at least since the mid-1800s, of tough assimilation and control measures imposed by the Norwegian government, which Falck (2021) described as unacceptable by today's standards, since such measures included several human rights violations. Indeed, the history of the Romani people in Norway,

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who have lived in the country since the sixteenth century, is one characterized by discrimination and prejudice. The arrival and settlement of people of Romani ancestry in Norway have taken place within different migration periods. In the first migration period, roughly around the 1500s, Tater-Romani peoples travelled and established themselves in regions of northern and western Europe. In the second migration period, which began around the 1800s, the Roma peoples who fled Romania and settled in Norway arrived in the mid-1800s. The immigrants from this period are called Norwegian Roma (Pedersen, 2016). The third migration is the most recent, beginning in the 2000s and motivated by war, political changes, and growing racism and discrimination in the Balkans (Falck, 2021).

The arrival of Romani people to Norway in the first migration period was met with harsh measures. Falck (2021) explained that the measures implemented by the Norwegian authorities in 1687 declared that the "Tater/Romani people were to be arrested, their property was to be seized, their leaders were to be executed and all the rest were to leave the territory" (para. 7). Such measures remained in place until 1845 (Liégeois, 2007), but the new arrivals from the second migration period triggered the implementation of further discriminatory measures by the authorities. An investigation by a committee appointed by the Norwegian authorities reviewed the policies in place toward the Tater-Romani people from 1850 to the present day (Norges Offentlige Utredninger [NOU], 2015). The former policies allowed the Christian organization called "Norwegian Mission," established in 1897, to remove Roma children from their parents if these were considered unfit, which was often easily justified on the basis of the migratory character of the Roma people. The report indicated that about 1,500 children were taken away and placed in either orphanages or foster care. Falck (2021) added that "many of the children were neglected and exposed to physical and psychological abuse" (para. 9).

Another policy targeting the Roma people stemmed from the Vagrant Act of 1900. Falck (2021) explained that "Tater/Romani families were prohibited from speaking their language, wearing traditional clothes, and practicing traditional handicrafts" (para. 10). For a long time, the authorities threatened to take the children away, which therefore ensured compliancy from the families, who were also "not permitted to receive visits from relatives" (para. 10). The "Norwegian Mission" operated the Svanviken labor colony, where 990 Tater-Romani people were kept under close monitoring. This colony ran from 1908 to 1989 (NOU, 2015). Among other measures, The Sterilization Act, implemented in 1934, granted the authorities the decision to forcibly sterilize those considered "unfit" for parenthood or those with "defect genes" (NOU, 2015). Drawing on the report by NOU (2015), Falck (2021) specified that about 40% of the women were sterilized at Svanviken during 1950–1970. "The

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youngest Tater/Romani girl was only 14 years old when she was sterilized at the end of the 1940s," pointed Falck (2021). These were not the only measures in place. The strict regulation of trading goods was another one (Kaveh, 2016).

Today, the number of Romani people in Norway is poorly documented. Statistics estimate about 10,000 based on a report prepared by the European Council for Human Rights (NOU, 2015). Some organizations have been established specifically by and for the Tarter-Romani people in Norway, which reflects some of the change in the relationship between this minority group and the Norwegian government over the years, particularly since the official apology given by the Norwegian government in the late 1990s and the implementation of socioeconomic initiatives for the Tarter-Romani people. Despite this progress, discrimination toward Tarter-Romani people in Norwegian society is still significant (Lauritzen, 2022). Pedersen (2016) argued "that stereotypization and objectification of Roma is widespread and deep-rooted among Norwegians, and that Roma in Norway are not only a muted group . . . but are in fact excluded from the Norwegian imagined community and national narrative" (p. v). A survey from 2017 indicated that the Norwegian respondents would opt to maintain the most social distance to Roma people, broadly speaking, which was significant in comparison to other ethnic groups, in matters such as having an ethnic other as a neighbor (Hoffman & Moe, 2017).

Recent studies have confirmed similar attitudes. Falck (2021) reported that "it is safe to conclude that the treatment of the Roma minority in Norway today falls short of the non-discrimination ideals" given her findings (p. 378). As Falck (2021) has rightly stated, social attitudes can take a long time to change, despite the interventions made by the government in terms of policy related to anti-discrimination. Indeed, social attitudes toward minorities are difficult to change, especially with the prevalence of stereotypes in the media, which other research has also found to be the case for Roma peoples in Norway (e.g., Adolfsson, 2014). Considering this historical context and the political work that lays ahead, teacher education programs are also arenas where such social attitudes may be challenged through critical perspectives.

Latjo Drom: Telling Multiple Stories

The exhibition *Latjo Drom—The Romani/Travellers' Culture and History* is located at the Glomdal Museum in Elverum, Norway, which is frequently used as a site for teaching and learning by teacher educators and student teachers at INN University. The Glomdal Museum was founded in 1911 as a folk museum for the purpose of exhibiting the rural cultures of the local region of Østerdalen and Solør. Since the 1990s, the museum has been a

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pioneer in including local minority cultures in the exhibitions, such as the life and history of Forrest Finns and Southern Sámi people, thereby displaying some of the multicultural history of the region (Kalsås, 2015). On the background of these experiences, the Glomdal Museum was asked by the Norwegian Government to take on special responsibility in preserving fundamental components of the language, traditions, and cultural heritage of the Romani people, resulting in the exhibition *Latjo Drom*, which opened in 2006 and remains on display in the museum.

Latjo Drom—meaning to wish someone a safe and enjoyable journey in the Romani language—was produced in close cooperation between Glomdal and representatives from the two largest Romani organizations in Norway: *Taternes Landsforening* and *Landsorganisasjonen for Romanifolket* (Glomdalsmuseet, 2022). As such, the exhibition is an example of what Fouseki (2010) framed as a "shared ownership" (p. 180) between museum professionals and community members. According to Fouseki (2010), the ideal of shared ownership stands in contrast to a praxis of consultation which often has been approached as a "tick-box" exercise by curators aiming to justify requirements for funding and participant involvement. Because museums are encouraged to be agents of social inclusion, Fouseki (2010) argued that community consultancy should be replaced with "active negotiation and engagement that is aimed at shared power and ownership" (p. 180). However, although *Latjo Drom* was developed through a collaborative relationship between the museum and the Romani organizations, the exhibition still raised several controversial issues (Kalsås, 2015). The controversies had to do with content, representativity, and ownership to the exhibition. One controversy revolved around who should be the formal owners of the exhibition: the Romani community or the museum. Nevertheless, the controversies around the exhibition seem to have declined in recent years, not least due to the broad engagement and involvement by members of the Romani community itself.

The exhibition is divided into several sections, displaying the rich diversity of Romani people's culture and history. Visitors to *Latjo Drom* can see artifacts such as handicraft, clothing, and even larger items such as a boat, a caravan, and a car, reflecting various experiences of the different Norwegian Romani communities in the period between 1950 and the 1970s. Moreover, the exhibition comes together through different modalities: pictures, texts, films, and examples of Romani music, both traditional Romani folk songs and contemporary examples of artists building upon their Romani background in compositions and performances.

The first section of the exhibition—"Origin"—tells stories of the Romani people's language and mixed backgrounds within the context of their migration and travelling. In other sections, artifacts that help present the travelling way of life are displayed, portraying possibilities for how mobility has

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been adapted and integrated through generations by Romani communities. Here, the visitor can learn about the ways in which the culture of "being on the move" is incorporated into Romani language, handicraft, artifacts, and knowledge. The final part of the exhibition tells a darker story by presenting sad and horrific examples of how Romani people were treated by the majority society, including lobotomy, forced sterilization, and forced relocations of Romani children into foster homes. Pictures and films from Svanviken labor colony depict the severe measures implemented by the Norwegian Government which sought to pursue the Romani people to abandon their travelling way of life and resign instead to a permanent residence, one aligned with the ideal of the Norwegian independent farmer. This section also consists of personal narratives illustrating what it meant for individuals to have their cultural traditions and lifestyles eradicated by authorities. "Johan," who fell victim to the national regulation of travelling people's use of horses introduced by the Norwegian authorities in 1951 to prevent the Romani people from traveling, shared his experiences of exclusion and outsideness:

> Instead of using the beautiful horse, we had to pull the carriage ourselves or use bicycles. It felt like a humiliation, as if we were no longer worth anything. Taking away the horse was the same as asking you farmers to become fishermen. Most of what I had learned from my father was related to the horse. After all, we were primarily horsemen. (Glomdalsmuseet, 2022)

Although the assimilation was harsh and the authorities were rather "successful" in their measures of having the Romani adapt to the majority society and renounce their culture, the exhibition ends by restoring hope for the Romani to survive as a minority group today. The Romani organizations have opportunities to inform visitors about their activities. Additionally, four persons of a Romani background are portrayed in the exhibition. They share their perspectives on how Romani traditions, cultures, and languages can be transferred to and revitalized in younger generations. In this section, the visitor is invited to reflect together with the four persons, or in other words, to attempt to think from the *other's* perspective, by drawing on their experiences and impressions from the exhibition. By the end of the exhibition, visitors have the chance to rethink a contemporary Romani identity and understand what it means to live as a national minority within the Norwegian majority society.

Our Reflections: Linking Theory to Practice

In this section, we revisit the guiding question of the chapter as we attempt to draw links between theory and practice specifically for the course in focus.

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Museums have been a part of school-based teaching and learning for some decades. The inclusion of museums into teaching and learning has typically consisted of site visits led by the instructor. However, we have reflected on the growing challenges surrounding the inclusion of museums in formal education against neoliberal forces that commodify diversity and undermine the social justice purpose of the arts. In appropriating diversity for entertainment and revenue, neoliberalism obstructs educational efforts to promote intercultural learning in museums. This issue is important for the Norwegian context when we consider that primary and secondary school curricula have traditionally offered superficial and stereotyped content on Norway's minoritized communities (e.g., Eriksen, 2018). As such, opportunities for intercultural learning, both within and outside the classroom, become essential given their potential to support learners to critically understand cultural complexity (Lane, 2012).

Within this context, we have proposed that experiential education emerges to help improve and strengthen students' understandings of cultural diversity within their repertoire of knowledge and experience. Before we can draw on experiential education to promote the construction of knowledge about the *other*, we must first avoid "depositing" knowledge in the students. As Freire (2018) argued, teaching within the banking system of education would mean creating a false sense of discovery in the students by leading them to information that would have been pre-selected by us, educators, based on our own experiences with and objectives for the subject matter. Such a pedagogy defeats not only the essence of experiential education but also the goals of the course—a point which we return to shortly. Indeed, the first cycle of experiential learning entails engaging in a new experience through the senses and emotions. In the banking system of education, the senses and emotions students experience are numbed and delegitimized because students' roles are dehumanized to that of passive recipients of (irrelevant) information.

Latjo Drom is constructed in a manner that can evoke a number of emotions in the visitor. Through imagery, text, sound, and artifacts, the visitor engages with the exhibition through the senses, not discretely but rather simultaneously. Of course, we cannot anticipate how students might emotionally respond to the content presented in the exhibition. Still, we argue that the exhibition offers plenty of *opportunities* which, at least in theory, facilitate concrete learning, the initial phase of learning that involves the senses and emotions (Kolb, 1984). The next phase of learning is reflective observation, wherein students expand on the experience through activities that require reflection. The course design of DLDP affords us, teacher educators, diverse possibilities for how to foster reflection in the students. Group discussions are one example as they remain a prominent avenue for meaning-making in the course given their collaborative and engaging nature. We could contextualize

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group discussion by posing the following questions: What did you learn from the exhibition? How did you respond to the exhibition—what did you feel? How does your experience compare to that of your peers?

In a similar vein, DLDP offers formal opportunities within which students' reflections on their experiences can intersect with the theories and concepts learned in the course. It is particularly important that students be able to critically engage with the multiple perspectives presented in the course. For instance, in one of the written assignments, students may be asked: In what ways may *Latjo Drom* reflect key concepts learned in the course with respect to diversity, multiculturalism, or minoritization? In what ways may *Latjo Drom* challenge theories and concepts introduced in the course? Can you propose any gaps in the theories and concepts? It is at this point when we aim to promote abstract conceptualization: the phase in which students formulate new understandings or revise their previously held ideas in consideration of their academic training. Given the broad scope of DLDP, both general concepts in the literature (e.g., multiculturalism, diversity, immigration) and context-specific points (e.g., the Romani peoples of Norway, Norwegian society, intergroup relations) may be emphasized.

Active experimentation is the last phase of the learning cycle, though the learning cycle may occur again when students come across the same experience in the future. As the name suggests, this phase involves an activity through which the knowledge acquired is applied through some kind of engagement that can (dis)confirm what students have learned. While in this reflection we are not interested in "measuring" how much students would have learned, we recognize the importance of contextualized forms of what Freire (2018) called critical awareness or critical consciousness. This would include a (better) understanding of historical processes and their impact on the social realities of oppressed groups as well as an understanding of human agency as something natural of the individual, but that can be suppressed in the individual by majority groups. One of the goals of critical pedagogy is to restore, activate, and nurture this sense of agency in the individual. Departing from this understanding, it is important that students come to see the *other* as a cultural agent in context rather than a passive cultural figure.

We also hope that learning in the Glomdal Museum would contribute to strengthening students' intercultural knowledge in meaningful ways. Intercultural knowledge within the active experimentation phase would possibly entail a critical understanding of how and why the *other* is socially constructed as such by the majority group. In this case, we are interested in students' development of (inter)cultural knowledge of the Roma peoples of Norway in a manner that can challenge their preconceptions of that same group and help them identify where such preconceptions originate from, which includes stereotypes and narratives that have unfavorably informed

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the social construction of this group in Norway (Falck, 2021; Pedersen, 2016). Equally, or perhaps more important, would be students' abilities to act upon their own knowledge to not only identify but also confront mechanisms that maintain the social and cultural inferiorization of minoritized groups within schools. This is a goal of the DLDP course in itself: to equip students with critical and analytical skills for the betterment of the school culture and pedagogy.

Yet, intercultural knowledge cannot be only about better understanding the *other* but also about the self, and the relationship between the two. On the individual level, intercultural knowledge should call into question the dichotomy of "us/them" by reconceptualizing the students' view of self as a member of a broader, interconnected society—one that has always been characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity. Intercultural knowledge has the potential to ignite and cultivate empathy toward the *other* (Dodman et al., 2022). It is our hope that students should be able to put themselves in the place of others, to imagine the life experiences of other people, and to learn from the other as a result of their intercultural learning experiences at the Glomdal Museum. A focus on the shared humanity, rather than on the differences for a superficial comparison of cultural practices, is a characteristic of intercultural knowledge. Finally, it is essential that this intercultural learning experience can lead students to critically examine their own cultures (Nussbaum, 1997).

To conclude, we have reflected on the relevance of museums for teaching and learning about diversity in a Norwegian teacher education program. We have underscored the importance that experiential education with a critical orientation would hold within a course on differentiated instruction for potentially supporting students in their development of intercultural knowledge. We have adopted a view of museums as educational spaces wherein visitors—in our case, students—can learn about themselves and the *other* in emotionally engaging, thought-provoking, and creative ways from multiple perspectives. Against the neoliberal capture of the arts, we insist on the centrality of promoting opportunities for critical reflection so that we, student teachers and teacher educators, can come to revisit our understanding of diversity by re- and co-constructing knowledge following an (envisioned) visit to *Latjo Drom*. It is through experiential and critical opportunities such as this one that we hope to continue to better prepare future teachers in not only an increasingly diverse but also polarized world.

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4

Finnish Teacher-students' Mindsets and Intercultural Competences

Meri Häärä, Inkeri Rissanen, and Elina Kuusisto

Through the past few decades Finland has undergone a significant shift into a more culturally and ethnically diverse society, with this diversity becoming more wholly recognized across various public spheres and institutions (Kuusisto et al., 2015). Migration of recent years has also further increased the diversity present in Finnish classrooms, with expected increases occurring in the future due to natural crises brought about by climate change (Wennersten & Robbins, 2017). However, Finnish first- and second-generation immigrant students continue to academically lag behind their native peers, indicating that further attention needs to be paid toward the intercultural competences of Finnish teachers (Harju-Luukkainen et al., 2014). While prone to ambiguity, in an educational context, intercultural competences are often defined as having the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that allow a teacher to "effectively and appropriately interact in an intercultural situation or context" (Perry & Southwell, 2011, p. 453). A teacher's courage to promote equity and social justice in the context of diversity have been defined as objectives of teacher education. Early approaches in intercultural education were related to improving the teaching of marginalized groups, but educational trends that emphasize the teaching of social justice also focus on the learning of the majority group and the need to identify and remedy structural problems, both in education and in the wider world (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016).

However, while teacher beliefs significantly influence how teachers implement lessons and how responsive teachers are to students (Hachfeld et al., 2011), there remains a scarcity in knowledge about the kinds of beliefs

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teachers hold about cultural diversity, which are a core component of teachers' intercultural competence (Vedder et al., 2006). Simultaneously, research on implicit beliefs of malleability, that is, fixed and growth mindsets, have begun to shed light on how belief in the malleability of the qualities of individuals and groups can affect teachers' pedagogical thinking and practices (Georgiou et al., 2002; Schmidt et al., 2015). Furthermore, qualitative research has brought preliminary evidence of the association between teachers' growth mindsets and their social justice beliefs (Rissanen & Kuusisto, 2023).

While extensive research has been undertaken in teacher education exploring models of teaching intercultural competences (Dervin et al., 2020; Jokikokko, 2005; Phillion & He, 2004) as well as the effects of field experiences in multicultural settings on the development of intercultural competences (Jones & Hill, 2001), there is a lack of research exploring how mindsets may initially influence the development of these competences. Furthermore, mindsets about groups indicate whether individuals view groups as unalterable or not, which impacts intergroup interactions, influence attitudes, openness, prejudice, and stereotyping (Carr et al., 2012; Halperin et al., 2011; Rattan & Georgeac, 2017). In this chapter, we review this earlier research and demonstrate how mindsets should be seen as a relevant and useful construct for examining intercultural competences.

Focusing on the mindsets that students maintain as they begin their studies and exploring the effects these beliefs may have on the acquisition of intercultural competences can provide useful insight for teacher training programs, as currently the territory of how mindsets may shape the development of these competences, remains uncharted. Additionally, there continues to be scarce scientific consensus regarding the types of beliefs that are central to the development of intercultural competences. A mixed methods Project CORE (Implicit Beliefs of Malleability as the Core of Teachers' Intercultural Competences) explored Finnish teachers' mindsets and their association with teachers' orientation to diversity and social justice. Findings from the project show that teachers with a stronger orientation toward growth mindset demonstrate a stronger orientation toward social justice and equity and view social justice and equity as an intrinsic part of a teachers' practice (Rissanen et al., 2023; Rissanen & Kuusisto, 2023). The present study builds on the findings of the CORE project and sets out to explore the role of mindset in the development of student teachers' intercultural competences. It is a part of a longitudinal approach exploring the role of mindsets in the development of student teachers' intercultural competences, and sets out to explore the following research questions:

- RQ1: What are Finnish student teachers' self-reported mindsets, experiences of cultural diversity and orientation to teaching for social justice and diversity?

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- RQ2: How do mindsets and experiences of cultural diversity explain orientations to teaching for social justice and diversity?

The following theoretical framework introduces the concepts of mindsets, intercultural competences in teacher education, social justice beliefs, and enthusiasm for teaching culturally diverse groups.

Theoretical Framework

Teachers' Mindsets as a Part of Intercultural Competence

A teacher's behaviors and practices in multicultural environments are heavily influenced by implicit and explicit beliefs (Hachfeld et al., 2011). Mindsets refer to the beliefs individuals have about the malleability of characteristics, traits, or ability (Haukås & Mercer, 2022). Individuals who are oriented toward more of a growth mindset tend to believe that a person's abilities, intelligence, and personality can be altered, while individuals oriented toward a fixed mindset tend to believe that these qualities remain stagnant and unchangeable (Dweck, 2000). Mindset beliefs are connected to a network of various beliefs that make up our individual meaning systems, which in turn directs the way in which we make sense of our social world (Molden et al., 2006).

While students with growth mindsets have been found to value effort and view challenges as opportunities to grow, students with fixed mindsets tend to avoid challenges and respond poorly to setbacks, relying heavily on natural ability, as opposed to effort (Dweck, 2010). It is important to note that mindsets are a continuum as opposed to a stark dichotomy, with individuals having the capacity to maintain a mixture of beliefs (Haukås & Mercer, 2022; Lou & Noels, 2019). Individuals can have tendencies toward both mindsets and be on different ends of this spectrum depending on contextual or time related factors as well (Yeager & Dweck, 2020).

Mindsets can also vary within individuals across different domains; however, they can also be significantly influenced by educational interventions, with teachers playing a critical role (Rissanen et al., 2019). Teachers play a crucial role in student learning, and a teacher's own mindset regarding, for example, intelligence can shape their behaviors with students and leave lasting impressions on student achievements and motivation. Schmidt et al. (2015) found that student beliefs about science ability being either fixed or malleable were strongly connected to whether their teacher placed an emphasis on growth mindset. Additionally, gender stereotypes relating to math ability have been found to influence a teacher's

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interpretations of student success and failure, which in turn can impact student achievement (Rissanen et al., 2018). Teachers oriented toward more of a fixed mindset have been found to be more prone to stereotyping students (Molden et al., 2006), letting the assumptions they have about students' ability guide their pedagogical practice. This can be especially harmful for students from non-dominant groups, as teacher expectations that are influenced by stereotypes can even become self-fulfilling prophecies (Jussim & Harber, 2005).

Findings from social psychological research concerning mindsets have begun to be viewed as a relevant construct for examining intercultural relations as well. For example, Carr et al. (2012) demonstrated that individuals with a fixed mindset were more likely to act on stereotypes' and more likely to engage in problematic intergroup relations. In a series of studies, Halperin et al. (2011) found that beliefs about whether groups have fixed or malleable nature led to more positive attitudes and affected an individual's willingness to compromise for peace. Furthermore, Rydell et al. (2007) found that individuals that were taught that group characteristics are fixed or static also viewed groups as increasingly "entitative," that is, having strong internal consistency among group members, which also led to stronger endorsement of group stereotypes.

Rattan and Georgeac (2017) write that mindsets about malleability are at the very core of people's meaning making systems, which help them understand and interact with the world around them. The belief that human attributes are fixed can orient people toward diagnosing and determining other people's traits or characteristics, explaining these as unchangeable determinants of behavior and "maintaining perceptions" (Rattan & Georgeac, 2017, p. 4). It can be reasoned that an individual with an orientation toward fixed mindset, who views differences in humans as biologically decided, would also attribute inequity as an inevitable result not influenced by systemic factors but rather hereditary differences.

Findings from the CORE project show that teachers with a stronger orientation toward growth mindset demonstrate a stronger orientation toward social justice and equity and view social justice and equity as an intrinsic part of a teachers' practice (Rissanen et al., 2023; Rissanen & Kuusisto, 2023). In the present study, we assume that development of mindset beliefs could be a crucial part of developing intercultural competences, as they describe a conception of humanity that hold the possibility for constant change, supporting the idea that groups, traits, and characteristics are not fixed, and are in fact alterable. However, more exploration of this connection is needed. The following section examines the concept of intercultural competences in the context of teacher education.

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Intercultural Competences in Teacher Education

Intercultural competences are often seen as being grounded on intercultural sensitivity, which includes an ability to shift one's cultural perspective and adapt behavior to tackle cultural differences (Álvarez Valdivia & González Montoto, 2018). Teacher education is imperative to supporting equitable educational outcomes and counter the ethnocentric attitudes that are still prevalent in various national contexts (Dervin et al., 2020). Teacher education often fails to provide students with deeper knowledge of societal and global issues, as well as the institutional structures that promote both marginalization and inequality (Jokikokko, 2005). Intercultural education must include more than merely learning about other cultures, and instead be embedded in the interactions between parties, with communication and mutual understanding at its core (Dervin, 2017).

Criticism of intercultural education has pushed the notion toward what Dervin (2015) refers to as "post-intercultural education." Sen (2006) also critiques the term as squeezing the concepts of "culture" and "cultural identity" into "little boxes" (p. 24). Simultaneously it ignores that individuals may have the capability to feel a sense of belonging to several cultural realities (Holliday, 2010). This creates further challenges for teacher education programs, as the need for student teachers to develop critical literacy skills to oppose these ideas in their future classrooms becomes increasingly prevalent (Dervin, 2015). Sen (2006) brings our attention to the multitude of conflicts and acts of brutality around the world that are maintained through the illusion of a particular and unique, choiceless identity. Therefore, the alternate idea that individuals can hold a plethora of identities that interplay and transform across various social spheres can work toward undoing this illusion, with teacher education having the potential to play a crucial role.

An individual's experiences with diversity can influence their beliefs about diversity. Experience with culturally diverse "Others" can broaden preservice teachers' awareness and appreciation of diversity (Santoro, 2014) and challenges them to reflect on the self. As many ethnic majority teachers begin their careers without having extensive experience with cultural diversity, they can be likely to maintain negative beliefs about ethnic minority students (Glock et al., 2019). International experiences have been incorporated into teacher education to expand preservice teachers' understandings of different cultures (Santoro, 2014). Petrović and Zlatković (2009) discuss how exposure to multicultural communities is an essential prerequisite for preservice teachers' development of intercultural sensitivity. A study exploring the effects of service-learning experiences in diverse contexts found that students gained a more complex understanding of diversity, became more aware of stereotypes

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and enhanced their appreciation for diverse perspectives (Jones & Hill, 2001). In Finland, experience of cultural diversity has been found to impact preservice teachers' social justice beliefs and enthusiasm for teaching diverse students, as well as self-efficacy (Mo et al., 2021; Rissanen & Kuusisto, 2022).

However, mere exposure to diverse contexts does not mean that students are interculturally competent. Einfeld and Collins (2008) found that university students engaged in long-term service learning expressed an increased awareness of inequality; however, most did not develop a commitment to pursuing social justice. Quality of cross-cultural encounters is key, and it is through long-term significant experiences in diverse settings that allow students to develop intercultural skills (Mahon & Cushner, 2002). More research is needed on the factors that may influence a teacher's beliefs and attitudes regarding cultural diversity, as merely increasing exposure to diverse peoples or contexts is seemingly not always enough. The following section explores two concepts of intercultural competence that are the focal interests of this study: orientation to teaching for social justice and diversity.

Orientation to Teaching for Social Justice and Diversity

Social justice as a theme has made its way into teacher education, however, as Cochran-Smith (2010) points out, it is conceptually ambiguous, with some programs emphasizing teacher's beliefs and identity and others focusing on multicultural issues or democratic education. Education for social justice draws upon the ideas that it is inadequate to merely learn about others without also assessing one's own group, position, as well as the power relations in society that ultimately are reflected in education systems.

The aim of social justice education is not to simply understand what is "wrong" with those who do not fit existing systems but to transform systems for differences to become acceptable and practices equitable. However, within teacher education, education for diversity can be difficult as teachers and their educators all typically belong to the same systems of ideology and truth (Vranjesevic, 2014). Cochran-Smith (2010) emphasizes that teacher education for social justice should include "a coherent and intellectual approach to the preparation of teachers that acknowledges the social and political contexts in which teaching, learning, schooling, and ideas about justice have been located historically" (p. 447).

Research that explores student teachers' social justice beliefs has found that students do not always see themselves as agents of change on a global or societal level (Moore, 2008) but view teaching for social justice as uniquely personal (Ahmed, 2020), and do not necessarily view social injustice as part of the challenges within their home country (Newton et al., 2020). Teachers as a profession generally hold favorable attitudes toward equality and

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multiculturalism. However, teacher actions and actual teaching practices may be deficient in this respect (Abacioglu et al., 2019; Reupert et al., 2010). Only by being aware of their own potential prejudices and taking action to reduce them will it be possible to adapt their actions to become increasingly more inclusive and equitable (Abacioglu et al., 2019).

Motivation renders itself as a key element in whether teachers can successfully function in their professional roles (Petrović et al., 2016). Enthusiasm for teaching and interacting with students from diverse backgrounds is a key component of a teacher's motivational orientation within their intercultural competences and is defined as a "teachers' inclination to enjoy, deal with and act in favour of the cultural diversity in the classroom" as well as a "enjoyment in interacting with minority students and parents" (Petrović et al., 2016, pp. 397–398). The following section briefly explored the Finnish context.

The Finnish Context

In Finland, teacher education takes place in higher education (Tirri, 2014). Teacher education programs in Finland are research-based with students being encouraged to view their own professional work through an academic and research-based lens. Values of equality and inclusiveness are at the core of Finland's educational policy, with education being considered a means for minimizing inequality (Arnesen et al., 2007). Teachers in Finland are highly trusted as professionals and teacher autonomy is high (Tirri, 2014). Finnish educational policy has focused on supporting educational equity of students with special needs as well as students coming from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, leaning on the values of equality and inclusion (Tirri & Kuusisto, 2022).

However, despite its reputation for equality, the Finnish education system still fails to adequately meet the needs of minority students, with the underachievement of second-generation immigrants being particularly acute in Nordic countries in general (OECD, 2019). Increased immigration in the 1990s challenged educational practices and discourse when the need for multi- and intercultural education became a crucial factor within educational practices, and in teacher education (Layne & Dervin, 2016). The number of students with an immigrant background in 2015 was 6% in basic education (Jahnukainen et al., 2019), but has been steadily increasing, dramatically so in 2016 due to the immigrant crisis (Harju-Luukainen & McElvany, 2018).

Layne and Dervin (2016) discuss how especially kindergartens represent the "first contact zone" of many families when entering Finnish society, and a prominent need for kindergarten teacher education to prepare teachers for

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multicultural contexts has been felt (Layne & Dervin, 2016). Intercultural education in Finland is often seen as, and constrained to, the pedagogy of integrating immigrant children into the school system (Riitaoja, 2013).

Layne and Dervin (2016) further argue that Finnish intercultural education, especially within kindergarten teacher education, fails to identify multiple identities or social hierarchies, focusing instead on specific identity markers such as religion, ethnicity, and cultural identity. This narrow understanding of diversity additionally ignores the diversities that have invariably existed in Finnish society including different ethnic, social, and family backgrounds, different ethnicities, languages, sexualities, and more. However, it was increased immigration of the 1990s that put into motion the more substantial intercultural teacher education projects, which mainly focused on ethnicity and cultural differences, which Layne and Dervin (2016) argue, have led to essentialist perspectives, and tend to ignore the intersections of various identities.

Other studies have also drawn attention to the monoculturalism and ethnocentric attitudes in the Finnish education system and teacher education (Hummelstedt et al., 2021; Rissanen et al., 2016). The university student population in Finland is relatively homogeneous and some faculties have recognized the limited exposure that teacher graduates have of cultural diversity or actual intercultural encounters, ultimately presenting challenges to new teachers (Anttila et al., 2018). Finnish teachers and students often rate their intercultural sensitivity as high (Kuusisto et al., 2015), but often focus on supporting commonality and are not always willing to recognize or address diversity (Rissanen et al., 2015).

Finnish student teachers' perceptions of multiculturalism are also formed primarily from personal experience such as multicultural encounters or exchange studies, as opposed to university courses or lectures on the topic (Al Nassar, 2020; Dervin, 2017). Finnish teacher education should therefore consider student prior experiences along with supporting the development of their intercultural understandings through different methods and tools (Räsänen et al., 2018).

Data and Methods

Participants

Finnish student teachers from the Tampere University (*N* = 232) answered an online survey in the beginning of their studies during the academic year of 2021–2022. Participants were student teachers of early childhood education (*n* = 137, 59%) (See table 4.1), elementary school student teachers (*n* = 53,

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TABLE 4.1
Participants

	N = 232
Age	M = 28.03 (SD = 10.26) min 19, max 53
Teaching experience (years)	M = 2.21 (SD = 4.76) min 0, max 31
Study program	
Early childhood education	n = 137 (59%)
Classroom teacher (grades 1–6)	n = 53 (23%)
Adult education	n = 41 (18%)

Source: Created by the chapter author.

23%) and students of adult education in life-long learning and education program (n = 1, 18%). Participants also recounted their teaching experience in years (M = 2.21, SD = 4.76).

Instruments

This study used measures that have been validated in several countries, translated into Finnish and their validity in researching Finnish teachers has been tested in earlier studies (Rissanen & Kuusisto, 2022; Rissanen et al., 2023). Table 4.2 shows items of the scales.

Student teachers' mindsets were measured using a four-item implicit beliefs of intelligence scale (ITI) (Dweck, 2000), four-item implicit beliefs of persons scale (ITP) (Levy et al., 1998), and four-item implicit beliefs of groups scale (ITG) (Halperin et al., 2011). Table 4.2 presents items of scales. ITI, ITP and ITG instruments utilized a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. Participants self-evaluated their experience of cultural diversity on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, responding to: "I think I have a lot of experience of cultural diversity". Orientation to social justice was measured with six-item version of "Learning to Teach for Social Justice—Beliefs Scale" (SJB) (Ludlow et al., 2008) and enthusiasm with six-item scale "Teacher Cultural Diversity Enthusiasm Scale" (ENT) (Petrović et al., 2016). SJB and ENT instruments used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree (see Rissanen & Kuusisto, 2022; Rissanen et al., 2023).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and psychometric properties of the instruments were investigated in SPSS. Alpha values of the scales (see table 4.2) indicated satisfactory and excellent reliability (Nunnally, 1978). Comparisons between the groups (study programme and mindsets) were calculated with one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test. Associations between sum variables

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TABLE 4.2
Descriptive Statistics of Scales

Code	*Variable*	*α*	*M*	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*	*S*	*K*
	Implicit beliefs of intelligence (ITI)*	0.92	5.01	0.86	2	6		
ITI1r	1. You have a certain amount of intelligence, and you really cannot do much to change it.		5.10	0.89	2	6	−0.96	0.73
ITI2r	2. Your intelligence is something about you that you cannot change very much.		4.98	0.89	2	6	−0.79	0.35
ITI3r	3. To be honest, you cannot really change how intelligent you are.		5.11	0.93	2	6	−1.14	1.2
ITI4r	4. You can learn new things, but you cannot really change your basic intelligence.		4.84	1.08	1	6	−1.14	1.05
	Implicit beliefs of persons (ITP)*	0.83	4.34	0.85	2	6		
ITP1r	1. The kind of person someone is, is something basic about them, and it can't be changed very much.		4.26	0.96	1	6	−0.34	−0.25
ITP2r	2. People can do things differently, but the important parts of who they are can't really be changed.		3.92	1.17	1	6	−0.38	−0.60
ITP3r	3. Everyone is a certain kind of person, and there is not much that they can do to really change that.		4.48	0.95	2	6	−0.67	0.02
ITP4r	4. As much as I hate to admit it, you can't teach an old dog new tricks. People can't really change their deepest attributes.		4.68	0.97	2	6	−0.71	0.07
	Implicit beliefs of groups (ITG)*	0.85	4.53	0.91	1	6		
ITG1r	1. As much as I hate to admit it, you can't teach an old dog new tricks—groups can't really change their basic characteristics.		4.72	1.00	1	6	−0.72	−0.36
ITG2r	2. Groups can do things differently, but the important parts of who they are can't really be changed.		4.56	1.02	1	6	−0.47	−0.24
ITG3r	3. Groups that are characterized by violent tendencies will never change their ways.		4.75	1.10	1	6	−0.94	0.64
ITG4r	4. Every group or nation has basic moral values and beliefs that can't be changed significantly.		4.10	1.24	1	6	−0.38	−0.39

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ECD	Self-reported experience of cultural diversity (ECD)		3	0.90	1	5	0.20	–.15
	Learning to Teach for Social Justice -Beliefs Scale (SJB)	0.67	4.35	0.47	3	5		
SJB_1	1. An important part of learning to be a teacher is examining one's own attitudes and beliefs about race, class, gender, disabilities, and sexual orientation.		4.61	0.66	2	5	–1.71	2.6
SJB_2	2. Issues related to racism and inequity should be openly discussed in the classroom.		4.53	0.68	3	5	–1.15	0.03
SJB_3r*	3. For the most part, covering multicultural topics is only relevant to certain subject areas, such as social studies and literature.		4.11	0.96	1	5	–1.26	1.67
SJB_4	4. Good teaching incorporates diverse cultures and experiences into classroom lessons and discussions.		4.36	0.72	1	5	–1.08	1.64
SJB_5	5. Part of the responsibilities of the teacher is to challenge school arrangements that maintain societal inequities.		4.46	0.73	2	5	–1.24	0.95
SJB_6	6. Teachers should teach students to think critically about government positions and actions.		4.03	0.83	1	5	–0.43	–0.37
	Teacher Cultural Diversity Enthusiasm Scale (ENT)	0.948	3.79	0.84	1	5		
ENT_1	1. I would like to teach students from different cultural backgrounds.		3.91	0.95			–0.61	–0.12
ENT_2	2. For me, teaching in multicultural classes is a challenge, not an obstacle.		3.80	0.96	1	5	–0.54	0.13
ENT_3	3. I enjoy interacting with parents from different cultures.		3.71	0.91	1	5	–0.18	–0.63
ENT_4	4. It's a pleasure to work in a culturally diverse classroom, although it's not always easy.		3.94	0.89	1	5	–0.44	–0.46
ENT_5	5. I enjoy the teachers' privilege to deal with a great variety of culturally diverse students.		3.77	0.94	1	5	–0.33	–0.50
ENT_6	6. I'm looking forward to taking over a class with great cultural variety.		3.63	1.00	1	5	–0.14	–0.84

*Mindset scales were reversed, 6 indicates growth mindset, 1 fixed mindset. Item SJB_3 was also reversed.
Source: Created by the chapter author.

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TABLE 4.3
Correlation Matrix of Variables using Kendall's Tau

Variables	*ITI*	*ITP*	*ITG*	*ECD*	*SJB*	*ENT*
ITI	-					
ITP	0.32**	-				
ITG	0.33**	0.40**	-			
ECD	0.003	.04	0	-		
SJB	0.23**	0.10*	0.17**	−0.07	-	
ENT	0.10*	0.05	0.16**	0.21**	0.25**	–

**$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$
Source: Created by the chapter author.

were studied with correlations and linear regression. From table 4.2 it can be observed that skewness and kurtosis did not violate assumptions of normality severely (Fabrigar et al., 1999) and hence, ANOVA and linear regression was run, yet correlations were inspected with Kendall's tau (Table 4.3).

Results

RQ1: What are Finnish Student Teachers' Self-Reported Mindsets, Experiences of Cultural Diversity and Orientation to Teaching for Social Justice and Diversity?

Student teacher's implicit beliefs of intelligence (ITI) indicate tendencies toward growth mindset (M = 5.01, SD = 0.86). Similarly, beliefs relating to persons (ITP) and groups (ITG) show inclinations toward growth mindset (ITP: M = 4.34, SD = 0.85; ITG: M = 4.53, SD = 0.91). One way analysis of variances (ANOVA) found no statistically significant differences in mindsets between students of different study programs. Responses indicated moderate level experience of cultural diversity (ECD, M = 3.00, SD = 0.90) and their social justice beliefs (SJB) were relatively high (M = 4.35, SD = 0.47) in all study programs. However, students were not as enthusiastic (ENT) for teaching culturally diverse students (M = 3.79, SD = 0.47) and in this domain adult education students (M = 3.49 SD = 0.83) scored statistically significantly ($F(2) = 3.314$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$) lower that early childhood education student teachers (M = 3.84, SD = 0.86) and future classroom teachers (M = 3.89, SD = 0.77).

RQ2: How do Mindsets and Experiences of Cultural Diversity Explain Orientations to Teaching for Social Justice and Diversity?

Mindset scales correlated statistically significantly with one another. All three mindset scales correlated statistically significantly with social justice beliefs (SJB) while ITI and ITG, but not ITP correlated with enthusiasm for teaching culturally diverse students (ENT).

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TABLE 4.4
Regression Analysis for Predictors of Social Justice Beliefs and Enthusiasm for Teaching Culturally Diverse Students

	SJB			*ENT*		
	B	*β*	R^2 0.078**	*B*	*β*	R^2 0.129***
ITI	0.118	0.214**				
ITP	−0.021	−0.038				
ITG	0.067	0.130		0.220	0.238***	
ECD				0.255	0.273***	

ECD = Experience of cultural diversity, ***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$
Source: Created by the chapter author.

Analysis of correlations (see table 4.3) indicated that experience of cultural diversity (ECD) correlated with enthusiasm for teaching culturally diverse groups (ENT) but not with social justice beliefs (SJB).

Students were also split into two groups based on self-reported experience of cultural diversity (little experience [$n = 66$], $M < 2.00$, more experience ($n = 166$, $M > 3.00$). Students who had more self-reported experience of cultural diversity were statistically significantly ($t(230) = 3.11$, $p < 0.01$, $d = 0.83$) more enthusiastic (*M*more experience = 3.89, *SD* = 0.089) for teaching culturally diverse students than those who had lower self-reported experience of cultural diversity (*M*less experience = 3.53, *SD* = 0.87). SJB and ENT also correlated positively with one another.

To study associations further, two linear regression analyses with enter method was conducted to analyze whether mindsets and experience of cultural diversity (ECD) predicted social justice beliefs (SJB) or enthusiasm for teaching culturally diverse students (ENT).

However, due to lack of correlation between SJB and ECD, ECD was removed from the SJB-model, and due to lack of correlation between ENT and ITI and ITP, they were removed from ENT-model. As shown in table 4.4, regarding social justice beliefs, ITI was the only predictor ($R^2 = .078$, $p < .01$). Instead, ENT was predicted by both ITG and ECD ($R^2 = .129$, $p < .001$).

Conclusion

This study sought to explore how mindsets and experience of cultural diversity were related to student teachers' intercultural competence in the beginning of their studies. Overall student teachers' ($N = 232$) implicit beliefs about malleability showed strong inclinations toward a growth mindset, and this tendency was true regardless of student study program or self-reported

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experience of cultural diversity. This tendency was observed across the three mindset scales: implicit beliefs of intelligence (ITI), implicit beliefs of persons (ITP), and implicit beliefs of groups (ITP). Findings align with past research that has found that generally Finnish teachers are more oriented toward growth mindset as opposed to fixed mindset (Laine et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2020).

Student teachers' social justice beliefs were relatively high across all the study programs and on the same level regardless of self-reported experience of cultural diversity. Additionally, self-reported experience of cultural diversity did not have an association with student teachers' social justice beliefs. Some parallels can be draw here to studies that have examined student teachers' social justice orientations after study abroad or service-learning experiences: being exposed to diverse contexts does not automatically lead to increased commitment to social justice (Einfeld & Collins, 2008). Therefore, while more experience of cultural diversity can expand student teachers' ideas about diversity reduce stereotypes or make student teachers' more enthusiastic for teaching culturally diverse groups (Cushner & Brennan, 2007; Rissanen & Kuusisto, 2022), it can be inferred that social justice is not an automatic by-product of such experiences, and further interventions are required in order for such changes to occur.

However, social justice beliefs correlated significantly with all mindset scales and Implicit beliefs of intelligence (ITI) was a predictor of student teachers' social justice beliefs. Previous studies have found that stronger orientation toward a growth mindset also aligns with a stronger orientation to social justice (Rissanen & Kuusisto, 2023; Rissanen et al., 2023), as well as openness, positive attitudes and less stereotyping and prejudice (Carr et al., 2012; Halperin et al., 2011; Rattan & Georgeac, 2017). Based on this result, it could be argued that believing that intelligence is malleable, and can be developed, may orient an individual into believing that differences in opportunities and success are therefore related to social or structural issues, as opposed to fixed traits or qualities. While further exploration of this connection is required, teacher education programs may wish to consider the impact that mindsets may have on the development of student teachers' social justice beliefs as well as how potentially impacting an individual's mindset can in turn help develop an orientation toward issues of social justice.

Compared to social justice beliefs, enthusiasm for teaching culturally diverse groups was not as high, and notably students who reported higher levels of experience of cultural diversity were significantly more enthusiastic about teaching culturally diverse groups than students who reported lower levels of experience of cultural diversity. Enthusiasm for teaching culturally diverse groups indicates that an individual finds the prospect of working in a culturally diverse context rewarding (Petrović et al., 2016). This finding is

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in alignment with research that has explored how encountering different cultures or engaging in cross-cultural experiences in some form has the potential to impact people's intercultural competences or attitudes toward diversity (Mahon & Cushner, 2002; Mo et al., 2021), as well as how levels of intercultural sensitivity can be impacted by experience and contact with people from other cultures (Petrović & Zlatković, 2009). Students of the adult education study program scored significantly lower in enthusiasm when compared to other study programs.

All measures in this study were self-reported which limits the conclusion that can be drawn from the data. Qualitative analysis that can dive deeper into the beliefs and attitudes of student teachers is paramount, to gain a more nuanced view of student teachers' mindsets in the beginning of their studies as well their social justice beliefs and enthusiasm for teaching culturally diverse groups. Student teachers displayed strong orientations toward growth mindset, which is a positive finding; however, previous studies have found that qualitative exploration can uncover that mindset orientation does not appear as strongly as when investigated using quantitative measures (Haukås & Mercer, 2022; Laine et al., 2016).

It is also crucial to consider social desirability response bias, which is the tendency of participants to present a more favorable image of themselves or conform to socially acceptable values when responding to sensitive questions to gain social approval or avoid criticism (van de Mortel, 2008). It would be important for further research to allow respondents time and space to reflect deeply on their beliefs due to the implicit and deep-rooted nature of mindset beliefs. Additionally, overseeing how student teachers' mindsets and beliefs develop over time and change in response to the teacher education they receive would provide valuable information regarding the types of interventions in teacher education that have the potential to significantly impact student teachers' mindsets, and through that, their intercultural competences.

This study contributes further perspectives on Finnish student teachers' mindsets and orientations toward teaching for diversity and social justice. Coupled with the academic achievement gaps still prevalent in Finland (OECD, 2019) as well as the ethnocentric attitudes that persist in Finnish teacher education (Hummelstedt et al., 2021; Rissanen et al., 2016), exploring the significance of implicit core beliefs that can potentially impact student teachers' intercultural competences and particularly their orientation to social justice and equity is crucial. As new research has begun to shed light on how teachers' orientations toward fixed and growth mindsets impact their attitudes and classroom practiced toward diverse students, understanding more about how these implicit core beliefs are shaped and constructed as well as to how to possibly intervene, can provide new understandings for how teacher education can be shaped to sufficiently meet the needs of all students.

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5

Teacher Education for Inclusion

Preparing Student Teachers at the School of Education in Iceland to Work in Inclusive Multicultural Classrooms

Hafdís Guðjónsdóttir, Jónína Vala Kristinsdóttir, Samúel Lefever, and Gunnhildur Óskarsdóttir

One of the major challenges for teachers in modern times is the continuous search for adequate pedagogy to meet the growing diversity within schools. The increase of immigration in Iceland is leading to a growing population of students with different cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds, but this diversity in Icelandic schools is a relatively new phenomenon. During the last two decades, the proportion of the students in comprehensive schools who have a language other than Icelandic as their mother tongue has increased from 0.8% to 14% of the students (Statistics Iceland, 2023). Due to this relatively new situation, professionals at all school levels are striving to respond to the challenges of ever-increasingly diverse classrooms (Jónsdóttir & Ragnarsdóttir, 2010).

To face these challenges and the opportunities they bring with them, school leaders and teachers must consider how they can create effective learning environments for diverse groups of students (Ainscow, 2020; Day & Gu, 2010; Meijer, 2003). To meet the demands of increasingly diverse society and schools, teacher education must place emphasis on inclusive and multicultural education (Banks, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995; 2021). This chapter will discuss the findings of a research study conducted at the University of Iceland

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School of Education whose purpose was to explore teacher educators' perceptions of preparing student teachers for working with students with multicultural backgrounds. The aim of the study was to develop an understanding and knowledge of teacher educators' experience of preparing student teachers for teaching in diverse classrooms.

Theoretical Framework: Inclusive and Multicultural Education within Teacher Education

The research is situated within inclusive education, multicultural education, and pedagogy of teacher education. The underpinning framework for educating diverse groups of students is inclusive education which is grounded in equity for all. In this section we introduce conceptional frameworks with respect to inclusive teacher education and conclude with a discussion of the pedagogy of teacher education.

Inclusive education is a public education agreement for all children and adolescents to meet their educational and social needs in general schooling. It is fundamentally grounded in the ideologies of social justice, democracy, human rights, and full participation of all (UNESCO, 2020). As such, inclusion is defined along the notion of diversity rather than disability, and how schools respond to and value diverse groups of students (Florian, 2021). These ideas of inclusion assume that every learner has equitable access to education and that schools organize learning spaces that accommodate everyone in the spirit of universal design (Hall et al., 2012). The focus of inclusion is to work against segregation, to remove barriers to participation, and to develop respect for diversity (Loreman, 2017).

In inclusive practices, the understanding of the term "diversity" is expanded beyond disability or ethnic difference to focus on the value of differences in gender, socioeconomic status, cultural group, abilities, learning styles, and interests (Ainscow, 2020; Loreman, 2017). Globally, the issue of inclusion in teacher education is high on the policy agenda and is moving toward a more inclusive education system (UNESCO, 2020). According to an external audit of the inclusive education system in Iceland, educational legislation and policies support the goals and aims of inclusive education, but teachers, parents, and school leaders differ in their ways of understanding the policy and how it can be implemented (European Agency, 2017). Teacher educators have different views on how to prepare student teachers for inclusive practices and there is little consensus on the emphasis in teacher education programs. A space for dialogue and collaboration between and across disciplines is therefore needed (Gale et al., 2017; Guðjónsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir, 2020).

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Pedagogy is the act of teaching, constructed by the ideas, values, and beliefs that inform, sustain, and justify the act (Alexander, 2013). It can be explained as the relational and ethical dimension of education, and it reflects our practice, the way we teach and our thoughtfulness. As teachers we do not only teach knowledge and skills, but we also educate students about who and what they are. From this pedagogical point of view, teaching is not like storing information on a digital storage device, learning means that whatever is learned becomes part of the personal being of the student (van Manen, 2012). The three main principles of inclusive pedagogy are that the teacher is responsible for and committed to the education of all students, that students are seen as active agents of their education and that teachers trust that students want to learn (Hart et al., 2007).

Inclusive pedagogy calls for learning spaces that include social contexts, networks, and resources to encourage, develop and nurture learning, support students to become agents of their lifelong learning and active participants in society (Banks, 2016; Gee, 2004). Learning spaces are developed within schools by both teachers and students. Inclusive pedagogy encourages teachers to use their agency to increase students' participation and sense of belonging in school and society (Banks, 2016; Booth, 2010; Gee, 2004). Learning Design (LD) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are frameworks for teaching and learning that can be helpful for inclusive pedagogy. LD is a framework that supports learning experiences and refers to deliberate choices about what, when, where, and how to teach (Schwartz, 2014). UDL is a powerful framework for the design and enactment of learning; it recognizes that students learn in a variety of ways and therefore teaching methods are flexible, formative assessment is used, and support is personal (Rose, & Meyer, 2002). UDL supports the redesign of curricula and assessments to challenge and engage a diverse range of students.

Diverse groups of students, including students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, call for changes in classroom practices and teacher development (Day & Gu, 2010). Cultural relevant pedagogy is an approach to teaching that relies on three primary components: the students' learning, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness. To become culturally competent and be able to operate in a globally diverse world, students need to know more than just about their own culture; they also need to understand the history, culture, customs, and languages of others (Benediktsson, et al. 2019; Ladson-Billings, 2021).

Culturally responsive pedagogy that mostly focuses on cultural celebration often puts the attention on the culture but not academic instruction. In so doing, it tends to neglect academic expectations and ignore issues of power and equity (Sleeter, 2011). On the other hand, multicultural education that places emphasis on equity and diversity as the two fundamental elements

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and takes into account the cultural and language background of students in the planning of teaching and learning can hope to achieve real success (Ragnarsdóttir, 2004, 2016). As with inclusive education, the aim of multicultural education is to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups. Multicultural education theory emphasizes that teachers value students' experiences and knowledge, build on their strengths and support them (Gay, 2018; Nieto, 2010). Dialogue and positive interaction between students and teachers are particularly important in the language learning environment, where students must learn to communicate in an additional language (Benediktsson & Ragnarsdóttir, 2020).

Educational scholars point out that the practice of multicultural education has fallen short in creating the desired outcomes. This calls for a move to improve education for students from all kinds of diversity, to increase cross-cultural understanding and to achieve equity and justice for minority groups in global contexts (Chang, Pak, & Sleeter, 2018). Sleeter maintains that teaching for social justice in multicultural classrooms is grounded in four elements (Sleeter, 2011, 2013). Teachers must recognize that culture is a foundation for learning and should be viewed as an asset rather than a deficit. Secondly, it is important to teach key concepts from multiple cultural perspectives rather than solely that of the dominant group. Involving students in a dialogue across their differences helps raise awareness of social justice issues, and finally, the classroom should be viewed as a space where young people can learn to analyze and act together on social justice problems (Sleeter, 2013).

Critical multicultural studies deal in a critical way with the situation and experience of individuals and groups in the education system. The key concepts are equality, social justice, and empowerment of individuals (May & Sleeter, 2010). Education that builds on critical multiculturalism focuses on the situations of minority groups and strives to create conditions for equity, active participation, and empowerment of all students (Banks, 2013; Nieto, 2010). The school community focuses on key elements of empowering the school culture, creating a pedagogy of equity, connecting the content of learning to a variety of cultures, promoting non-prejudiced schooling and helping students to understand how knowledge is shaped and never neutral (Banks, 2013).

Teacher education must find ways to transform school practices and promote inclusion. There is a need for teachers who are able to foster inclusion and not only talk about it. It is therefore necessary that the goal of teacher education is to provide student teachers with knowledge and training in inclusive pedagogy and multicultural education.

The pedagogy of teacher education considers the process and practice of teaching and learning and what it means to teach. It is about the interplay

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between teaching and learning and learning and teaching (Loughran, 2010). Teacher educators need to be constantly looking for effective ways of incorporating inclusive practices as an integral part of teacher education (Guðjónsdóttir et. al., 2007). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) assert that teachers are not only recipients and implementers of knowledge generated by professional researchers but also capable of reflecting critically on their theoretical and practical knowledge, and thus able to contribute to teaching and learning in schools. Their model of *knowledge-for,-in,* and *-of practice* is helpful in analyzing teacher educators' way of teaching. Teacher educators have gained their *knowledge-for-practice* during their studies, a formal knowledge related to teaching and teacher education. The *knowledge-in-practice* refers to the knowledge that they as teacher educators develop in their practices, through reflections and inquiries about practice. *Knowledge-of-practice* involves the generation of knowledge gained through purposeful inquiry of the teacher educator's classroom or course, connected to larger schooling issues, and interpreted through general educational theories and research-based findings.

Meaningful learning is influenced by the interactive and contextual details of the situation in which the learning takes place. Reflecting on the nature and kinds of contact established with students is important to understand the pedagogical ethics, sensibility, and pragmatics of teaching (Russell & Martin, 2017; van Manen, 2012). Korthagen (2004, 2017) maintains that beginning with student teachers' actual concerns and real experiences instead of introducing theories might have a more positive impact on student teachers' learning.

Methodology

This qualitative study of teacher educators was carried out at the University of Iceland School of Education. The aim of the study was to investigate how teacher educators at our institution prepare their student teachers to work in schools with growing diversity. It was important to us to collect information from the perspective of the teacher educators, to learn from them how they view inclusive and multicultural education. Thus, our main research question guiding the study was, What are teacher educators' perceptions of preparing student teachers for teaching in multicultural classrooms? The researchers were teacher educators at the University of Iceland where the study was conducted and therefore a part of the teacher educator community within the institution. They have a long experience of teaching pedagogy courses, both subject specific and general pedagogy with emphasis on inclusion, multicultural education, and pedagogical content knowledge.

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The participants were 28 teacher educators at the School of Education who teach courses in general pedagogy and subject teaching at three school levels (pre, primary, and secondary). There are four faculties in the School of Education at the University of Iceland that educate teachers: the Faculty of Education and Pedagogy, the Faculty of Health Promotion, Sport and Leisure Studies, the Faculty of Subject Teacher Education, and the Faculty of Education and Diversity. The participants were invited to participate because of their experience of preparing students to become teachers. Additionally, most of the participants had experienced living and studying abroad and had children who had attended school in another culture and used another language.

Data was collected through 13 focus group discussions with two to four participants in each group. The focus group discussions took place from spring 2019 to spring 2021. The participants were grouped into focus groups according to the school level their students were preparing to teach. The focus group approach was selected for this study in order to create a space for the participants to dialogue about their teaching. The participants were asked to talk about how they prepare their student teachers for teaching diverse groups of students. Special notice was given to indicators of inclusion, teaching diverse groups of students and how the teacher educators took note of student teachers' interests and needs in their planning and teaching. The interaction within the focus group was of importance because it contributed to the development of ideas and responses within the group (Bryman, 2004). The focus interviews took 30–45 minutes each and were recorded and transcribed.

The data was analyzed through a thematic approach with regard to the research question and theoretical framework. During the process, the transcribed interviews were read, analyzed, and themes identified (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In analyzing the data, we applied an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach, beginning by identifying essential elements and relationships transforming the data through interpretation (Eatough & Smith, 2017). The main focus was on teacher educators' descriptions of pedagogical approaches and practices. As the analysis developed, we catalogued the generated codes, identified patterns, and grouped them into the following themes: teacher education pedagogy, theoretical stance, multicultural education, and inclusive education.

The next step was to go through each theme and summarize them. We then structured and supported the themes by bringing in evidence from the data in the form of participant quotes (Creswell, 2008; Wolcott, 2008). The focus interviews were all conducted in Icelandic and therefore the transcripts were also in Icelandic. We, the researchers, translated the chosen quotes that are presented in the findings.

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It must be recognized that our role in this research was twofold. We were not only the researchers but also colleagues and participants. However, the results are based on our interpretation and understanding of the data. In the research project, we followed ethical standards for research, the Act on Personal Data Protection and the Processing of Personal Data (No. 90/2018) and the University of Iceland's Code of Ethics (University of Iceland, 2014). Informed consent was obtained from all parties involved. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the participants.

Findings: Preparing Student Teachers to Work in Inclusive Multicultural Schools

The teacher educators participating in the research were all interested in discussing how they prepare student teachers to work in schools with diverse groups of learners. There was a strong focus on teacher education pedagogy and what the teacher educators emphasize in courses about general pedagogy and subject teaching. The population of student teachers of multicultural background has expanded over the last 10 years, and the teacher educators are constantly looking for ways to develop their teaching according to this new reality. Their theoretical stance was reflected in their discussions and also their didactical approach in teaching about multicultural education and inclusive practices. We have grouped the findings into four major themes: teacher education pedagogy, theoretical stance, multicultural education, and inclusive education. The participant quotes are representative of the teacher educators' views and perceptions of how they prepare student teachers for teaching in multicultural schools.

Teacher Education Pedagogy

Emphasis on being a role model in teaching methods was dominant in the discussions. Many teacher educators highlighted that they tried to be a model for teaching diverse students in inclusive schools, in other words to "practice what they preach" or "walk the talk." Björk who team-teaches a course about inclusive pedagogy said:

> We are preparing people to work in inclusive schools. What is reflected in our teaching is a diverse approach to teaching . . . in assignments and in communicating with our students . . . collaboration and creative approach, not only lecturing about inclusive practices. . . . I believe that in that [flexible] way we are modelling what we want them to master, a particular approach and attitude to teaching. We are all different and we need different things to be able to succeed.

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Nanna, Björk's co-teacher, emphasized that the teacher educators and their students are learning together:

> And it took us some time to create this spirit in the group. Look, we're building a learning community here to try and figure this out together. We are not saying that there is only one way or that we have the answers and we are going to give you the answers. This is a collaboration; we are creating an inclusive school pedagogy and we have to be open and solution-oriented and talk to each other.

The teacher educators often discussed the importance of learning from experience. Some of the teacher educators gave examples of activities or projects that they implemented in their teaching as a means of enriching students' own learning experiences. Nanna emphasized that student teachers need to have the opportunity to reflect on their values and development as professionals:

> We think it is important that student teachers become aware of who they are and who they want to be as professionals. As a professional, you need to be able to analyze the context or circumstances you are working with, what issues or challenges you are faced with. You need to be ready to go as far as needed to face those challenges. So, we try to work with this and put emphasis on student discussion.

Reflection on own learning is an integral part of many teacher education courses, for example, in a course for preschool teachers. Auður said:

> In the first session I ask students to reflect on their memories about play, their own childhood. . . . We have students with diverse backgrounds and some of them are critical of their childhood experiences. . . . So we begin in this way, students talk about their own experiences of diverse groups of children, either in their work or personal lives. Then we discuss "what are minority groups? who belongs to minority groups?" and talk about people's rights and things.

The reflection becomes a part of how learning is interpreted in different settings and a source for the student teachers to develop their own beliefs and understanding of teaching and learning. That they as professionals of diverse cultural background can identify the situations they are working in, and the issues or challenges they face.

Theoretical Stance

Theoretical stance was recurrent in the teacher educators' discussions. They teach courses based on different content such as pedagogy, language, science,

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social sciences, mathematics, arts and crafts, sports, and preschool education. Sociocultural theories were often mentioned, and the teacher educators recognize the importance of providing student teachers with opportunities to experience first-hand what they are being taught. Rúna, who teaches about didactics at secondary school level, described her teaching goals:

> Everything that is aimed at getting students to increase their understanding of how to approach diverse groups of students, it is the main goal, and also helping our students put themselves in other people's shoes . . . and finding the best way to connect with students and realizing how important it is to connect with all individuals.

Birna, who teaches within the preschool teacher education program, stressed that student teachers need to be aware that learning is a social construction:

> [Building on] these ideas of learning through play, [teachers] are working towards supporting children who are marginalized through play. This is a fundamental idea that learning occurs in a social context, postmodernism or social constructivism or whatever you want to call it.

Innovation education is Gyða's area of specialization, and she reflected on how the inquiry approach she builds on is in line with the ideology of inclusion:

> It became clear that this rhymed so well with the theory of inclusive education, that is to say that the needs that are identified in innovation education sprout from the children, students or teachers on site. . . . this is exactly the type of upbringing that we are teaching . . . that they loosen up their way of thinking and are able to use creative work habits and innovative thinking; for working with needs, solutions, and outcomes.

Dóra teaches courses about primary education and builds on the Story-Line approach in one of her courses. She explained how the approach is based on socio-constructivist theories and builds on students' knowledge and experiences. Collaboration and creativity are at the core of this approach.

These pedagogical practices that are the core of teacher education are based on teachers' valuing their students' experiences and knowledge and building on their strengths. Even though sociocultural theories were dominant in the discussions, behavioristic views were also expressed. Unnur, who teaches reading instruction, described her approach and said: "Teachers need to use tried and tested [evidence-based] teaching methods, which is very important when teaching reading. We have seen that some methods are not effective with students with special needs such as dyslexia." Unnur emphasized that the reading

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instruction methods she teaches are evidence-based and early intervention for learning difficulties is necessary. Even though some of the teacher educators did not use scholarly words when discussing their approach to teaching it is evident that they build on a theoretical approach that is at the core of their instruction.

Multicultural Education

The interview findings did not show a strong emphasis on explicit teaching of multicultural education theory, but it did emerge that the teacher educators were aware of the necessity of preparing student teachers to teach students with diverse backgrounds and needs. With regard to preschool teacher education Auður said:

> Our goal as teacher educators must be to do everything we can that will help students to increase their awareness of diversity of all kinds—to ensure that our students become better capable of putting themselves in other's shoes and understand the impact of language and communication. We can't allow that children who have difficulty in communicating are left out.

The teacher educators emphasized that the student teachers need to understand how important it is to connect with all students, no matter their background. In a course taught in the Faculty of Subject Teacher Education, multiculturalism is explored from several angles and particular attention is given to the needs and abilities of students with diverse backgrounds with regard to language learning. Árni, a language teacher educator, said:

> Language teaching is always so closely linked with culture, so we look at a variety of cultural backgrounds and the importance of acknowledging the cultural and linguistic knowledge that students bring with them when they enter school. Although immigrant students may not speak Icelandic, they speak other languages, which is a valuable resource. . . . In one assignment in the course students are asked to interview someone who has had to learn Icelandic as a second language, this is done to help them step into the footsteps of a foreigner. . . . We use a variety of teaching methods and explore what it is like to work with students with diverse backgrounds.

When the student teachers do teaching practice in schools, they experience the diversity within the schools firsthand. This is a new experience for many

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of them and they must find new ways to work with diverse student groups. Árni noticed this when he observed students during teaching practice.

> In the school were people with immigrant backgrounds, both teachers as well as students, and also refugees who had recently arrived in the country. I observed how the student teachers dealt with the situation, what techniques and tools they used to interact with these students. It was really interesting, for example I-pads and Google Translate were used a lot.

Within the Faculty of Health Promotion, Sport and Leisure Studies emphasis is placed on meeting diverse needs of students, as expressed by Hulda:

> In Health studies we put continuous emphasis on teaching [students] how to meet the needs of diverse groups. We are trying to focus on multiculturalism. Sports are by nature peace-oriented. Children who don't understand each other are all of a sudden beginning to play with each other, laugh together; peace negotiations through football.

Ösp, a teacher educator in Visual Arts, discussed how she encouraged students to integrate multiculturalism into teaching practice.

> Sports and visual arts have that in common, everyone can participate. I work a lot with multiculturism, and I can easily tell [students] about artists that work with multiculturism in their art. I also have students do projects that connect multiculturism with teaching practice.

The findings of the study show that the teacher educators do not always place specific emphasis on multicultural education but attempt to prepare student teachers for teaching in multicultural classrooms by organizing their courses in ways which consider students' diverse backgrounds and needs. They utilize a variety of approaches and practices in their teaching which are learner-centered and inclusive. They model effective teaching practices and provide students with opportunities to broaden their experience and understanding of working with diverse groups of students.

Inclusive Education

Inclusive practices were at the heart of most of the teacher educators' beliefs. Their vision is to create learning spaces where all students feel welcome, and that the resources they bring with them are respected. Rúna explained how

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she and her colleague, Jóhannes, organized a course on teaching at secondary level which uses a variety of teaching techniques built on cooperative learning.

> We organize our teaching along the lines of cooperative learning. We need to give everyone a voice and listen to everyone. We use project-based learning and use teaching practices that we want our students to reproduce and use when they are teaching, and in teaching practice.

Many teacher educators discussed the importance of using a variety of assignments and assessment methods to accommodate different student needs, as expressed by Eydís:

> I have been working a lot with varied types of assignments like videos and podcasts. [This helps] students to use their own strengths. Students are so different, it's important to let them use different ways of turning in their work.

Another teacher educator, Dísa, put emphasis on teaching students to use audio tools:

> I put special emphasis on teaching students about audio methods, podcasts and other language tools that can be used with dyslexic students. I had them do assignments where they practiced using a variety of tools, for example, audio books. Many of them were using these tools for the first time. I think it is important that students know about and have tried out different types of learning tools. It's an important part of their professional development knowing what tools are suitable for these students.

These teacher educators' vision for building a learning community with their student teachers and modeling a pedagogical approach where multiple ways of engaging in course activities was apparent. They listened to student teachers' concerns and experiences and introduced them to creative projects such as making websites, videotapes, and podcasts. Giving the student teachers the chance to build on their strengths helps them to respond to the diversity they encounter in teaching practice or their own teaching.

Discussion

The purpose of the research study was to gain an overview of how teacher educators at the School of Education at the University of Iceland perceive

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the preparation of student teachers for working with students with diverse backgrounds in multicultural classrooms.

Developing a pedagogy of teacher education is more than simply delivering information about teaching and subject content (Loughran, 2005); it also involves an understanding of the complex interplay between human, material, and non-tangible elements (Hordvik et al., 2020). The pedagogy of teacher education stresses that it is important for teacher educators to serve as models for teaching diverse students. Another important factor of teacher education is the ability to critically reflect on one's own practice (Korthagen, 2004; 2017; Loughran, 2002; Watts & Lawson, 2009). Reflection on learning is an integral part of many courses taught by the teacher educators, and they emphasized providing student teachers with opportunities to reflect on their own learning. They appreciate that students' culture is a foundation for learning. Involving student teachers in a dialogue across their differences and related to their learning about early childhood teaching helps them analyze and act together on social justice problems (Sleeter, 2013). The teacher educators reported that these reflections enabled the student teachers to develop their own beliefs and understanding of teaching in multicultural classrooms. Being able to analyze and make meaning from own experience is crucial for the development of professional knowledge (Korthagen, 2004, 2017; Russell & Martin, 2017).

Theoretical stance was present in the teacher educators' discussions. Many of the teacher educators emphasized socio-constructivist theories while others built on behavioral learning theories. The findings also indicate that the teacher educators are conscious of the diverse student population in the Icelandic schools at all levels and admit that they need to consider that in their teaching at the School of Education. They are aware that the increase in diverse students calls for changes in classroom practices and teacher education (Day & Gu, 2010), but they are unclear on how to do so from the perspective multicultural education (Ragnarsdóttir, 2004, 2016). The teacher educators found it important that student teachers understand how valuable it is to connect with all students, no matter their background, abilities or needs and this is in line with inclusive education (Ainscow, 2020; Loreman, 2017). Many of them believe that by offering a variety of teaching methods, tasks and assessment methods they can make learning appropriate for diverse learners, build on their resources and recognize their cultural backgrounds (Ainscow, 2020; Hart et al., 2007; Loreman, 2017).

The findings suggest that the focus on multicultural education in the teacher education program at the School of Education has been inconsistent and inadequate. The theory of multicultural education was not strongly represented among the participants and the focus on social justice in multicultural classrooms was unbalanced. It was built more on good will and

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own experience than theoretical knowledge (Sleeter, 2011, 2013). However, the teacher educators found it important that student teachers understand the importance of ensuring equal educational opportunities for all students, irrespective of cultural or linguistic background. They attempted to illustrate this through their teaching practices, and the four elements that Sleeter (2011, 2013) finds important are visible in some of the teacher educators discussions. Most of the teacher educators have studied abroad and have experienced being newcomers in a foreign country. This has helped them reflect on the challenges and opportunities people of diverse background face and use it in their own teaching (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Guðjónsdóttir, et al., 2007; Loughran, 2010).

Inclusion is defined along the notion of diversity rather than disability, and calls for learning spaces that support students to become agents of their life-long learning and active participants in society (Banks, 2016; Florian, 2021; Gee, 2004). To build inclusive learning spaces the teacher educators used co-operative learning methods in their teaching and emphasized assessment for learning. Building a learning community was important to the teacher educators and they encouraged the student teachers to use their agency to develop a sense of belonging in school and society (Banks, 2016; Booth, 2010; Gee, 2004).

The findings of this research can help teacher educators understand how diversity in student population impacts initial teacher education. The rapid increase in students with diverse multicultural and linguistic backgrounds in Icelandic schools has brought with it many challenges for teachers and school leaders. The educational system as a whole is struggling to keep abreast of these recent changes. But along with challenges, new opportunities arise.

For equitable education to succeed, emphasis must be on how learning and teaching can be effectively organized for all, and no less on preparing prospective teachers to teach in this changed landscape. Inclusive school pedagogy, reflective practice, and multicultural education can support teachers and student teachers to achieve this goal.

In recognition of the need to focus more on multicultural education, the School of Education brought in a Fulbright Scholar, Professor Mariana Souto-Manning, to assist the teacher education faculties in strengthening the multicultural focus of the teacher education programs for pre-, primary- and secondary school teaching. Souto-Manning's research examines inequities and injustices in early childhood teaching and teacher education with focus on language and literacy practices in pluralistic settings (Souto-Manning, 2018). She worked with the teacher educators over a period of three years (2017–2020) and facilitated them in exploring issues of multicultural and multilingual diversity. This resulted in greater awareness among the teacher educators and development of multicultural education practices at the School

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of Education. There has also been an increase in educational research in the areas of social justice, equity and school participation of students with diverse backgrounds (Benediktsson & Ragnarsdóttir, 2020; Benediktsson et al., 2019; Guðjónsdóttir et al., 2018; Gunnþórsdóttir et al,. 2018; Lefever et al., 2018; Tran & Lefever, 2018; Wozniczka & Guðjónsdóttir, 2020). These are positive developments for the field of multicultural education in Iceland.

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II

MULTILINGUAL LEARNING IN DIVERSE CLASSROOMS

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6

Finnish Teachers' Perspectives on Creating Multilingual Learning Opportunities in Diverse Classrooms

Jenni Alisaari, Mari Bergroth, Raisa Harju-Autti, Leena Maria Heikkola, and Salla Sissonen

Classrooms all over the world are increasingly multilingual. Accordingly, a multilingual turn (Aronin & Singleton, 2019) has occurred in educational discourse: languages should be seen as resources for learning, not as obstacles. In some countries, educational policies have been adjusted to respond to this approach. In Finland, for example, the core curriculum for basic education supports multilingual pedagogies in which each student's entire linguistic repertoire is acknowledged as a resource for learning (National Agency for Education, 2014).

Teachers play a key role in putting multilingual pedagogies outlined in policy documents into action. However, research indicates that a shift toward multilingual pedagogies has not yet happened. Data gathered in Finland just before the educational reform shows that even though teachers have mainly positive attitudes toward multilingualism, they lack knowledge of how to put multilingual pedagogies into practice (Alisaari et al., 2019a; Harju-Autti & Sinkkonen, 2020; Heikkola et al., 2022; Dražnik et al., 2022); their multilingual expertise seems to develop slowly (Repo, 2020; Tarnanen & Palviainen, 2018), and awareness is not always automatically implemented in teaching practices (Harju-Autti & Sinkkonen, 2020). Thus, top-down education policies, even progressive ones, are not always implemented (Bergroth et al., 2022; Hornberger & Johnson, 2007).

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Ongoing work to support linguistically and culturally aware school cultures is needed. Recently, teachers' professional development related to language awareness (Bergroth et al., 2022) and linguistically responsive pedagogy (see, e.g., Lucas & Villegas, 2013) have been emphasized at the national level in Finland (Vaarala et al., 2021). Studies have shown that possibilities for professional development have led to improvements in teachers' knowledge (Alisaari et al., 2023b). With multilingual practices being systematized in Finnish classrooms, it is essential to understand teachers' stances toward the use of languages other than the language of schooling in the classroom. Since previous studies have raised concerns regarding the implementation of multilingual pedagogies in Finland (Alisaari et al., 2019a; Heikkola et al., 2022; Dražnik et al., 2022), there is a need to better understand teachers' beliefs about using different languages for learning.

The aim of the study was to examine Finnish teachers' perspectives on multilingual pedagogies and their use of students' linguistic resources. The topic was investigated with the help of the following research questions:

1. What is the current state of the implementation of multilingual pedagogies in Finnish basic education?
2. What kinds of good established practices related to multilingual pedagogies do teachers report?
3. What kinds of obstacles do teachers report as preventing them from implementing multilingual pedagogies?

Background

The Finnish national core curriculum for basic education (National Agency for Education, 2014) reflects the Constitution of Finland, Finnish Non-discrimination Act 21/201 and, human rights, especially linguistic human rights (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2017) by emphasizing everyone's right to their language (Alisaari et al., 2019b). The curriculum sees languages valuable per se, considers every student as multilingual and requires that students are enabled to learn through the language of schooling but with the support of their linguistic resources (National Agency for Education, 2014). Thus, multilingual teaching practices are expected to be implemented in classrooms, meaning that both students and teachers should use their entire linguistic repertoires.

The Finnish core curriculum requires that both teachers and students understand the role that languages play in students' growth, learning, collaboration, identity building, and socialization into society (National Agency for Education, 2014). The Finnish curriculum refers to this kind of pedagogy as language awareness or the combined use of different languages (National

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Agency of Education, 2014), also referred to as *translanguaging* (García & Hesson, 2015), *pedagogical translanguaging* (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022), or *multilingual pedagogies*, the term used in this chapter. For multilingual pedagogies to function optimally, students' first languages need to be academically sufficient (Schleppegrell et al., 2022): Students' first language skills benefit all learning, including learning the language of instruction (see, e.g., Agirdag & Vanlaar, 2018; Ganuza & Hedman, 2018; Goldenberg, 2008).

Multilingual pedagogies are learner-centered and support the development of all of the learners' languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022). According to Symons (2021), multilingual pedagogies can be preplanned, as well as spontaneously implemented (see also Walqui, 2006). Preplanned pedagogies are intentionally designed and executed by teachers, and they should be based on students' skills, knowledge, and experiences (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005; Walqui, 2006). Spontaneous multilingual pedagogies occur in real-time instruction as concrete practices, such as explaining key concepts and highlighting texts, or when a student asks their peers for clarification in their first language (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005; see also Walqui, 2006). However, purposefully planned multilingual pedagogies might allow students to co-construct knowledge through social interaction with peers who speak the same language (Teemant & Hausman, 2013).

In a simple form, multilingual pedagogies may include using dictionaries and web-based translation tools, asking students to use expressions in other languages, or learning greetings in the different languages that the students in a classroom know. In a deeper form of multilingual pedagogies, in which teachers are required to make conscious decisions (Nikula & Moore, 2019), students are asked to produce texts in their first or other languages, or they are guided to negotiate the meanings of different topics with peers in their strongest language, which supports their understanding of the topics being taught at a deeper level compared with situations in which they are restricted to using only the language of instruction (Tharp et al., 2000). It is crucial to consider various ways of using students' linguistic resources for learning and not to simplify or overgeneralize strategies since contexts and learners' needs differ (see also David et al., 2021; Nikula & Moore, 2019). Importantly, valuing students' previous knowledge, including their language skills, supports their identity (Cummins, 2021; Li & Qin, 2022); thus, it is essential that teachers' practices reflect that their students' linguistic resources are valuable per se (Slaughter & Cross, 2021).

Multilingual pedagogies may require recommendations from policy makers (García & Hesson, 2015), and a system-level reform is needed, including educational policies and pre- and in-service teacher education (Bergroth et al., 2022). However, when it comes to actual classroom practices, teachers' actions are essential (Dražnik et al., 2022; Slaughter & Cross, 2021).

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Recent studies conducted in Finland show that Finnish pre- and in-service teachers have positive attitudes toward multilingualism in general, but their teaching practices are mainly monolingual (Alisaari et al., 2021; Harju-Autti & Sinkkonen, 2020; Heikkola et al., 2022). Although many pre- and in-service teachers have acknowledged the important role of students' first languages in learning (Alisaari et al., 2019a; see also Cummins, 2022), misunderstandings persist. For example, many teachers still believe that if students continue using their first languages, their skills in the language of schooling will not develop sufficiently, and consequently prevent them from learning and integrating into society (Alisaari et al., 2019a; Shestunova, 2019). Alarmingly, interviews with (Repo, 2020) and survey responses from teachers (Alisaari et al., 2019a) have revealed remarkably negative stances toward multilingual students and their languages. Similar findings related to an insufficient use of students' linguistic resources for learning have been found in international studies (Iversen, 2019; Lundberg, 2019; Rodríguez-Izquierdo et al., 2020).

Studies have shown that pedagogical and interpersonal motivations influence the language choices teachers make in their daily work (Nikula & Moore, 2019). Moreover, a lack of both resources and professional development opportunities has hindered the use of multilingual pedagogies in Finnish classrooms (Alisaari et al., 2019b; Harju-Autti et al., 2021). However, teachers' stances toward students' use of their first languages are dynamic and can be influenced by both changes in student body and gaining new knowledge, for example, from professional development (Kirsch et al., 2020; Slaughter & Cross, 2021). In Finland, there has been a remarkable emphasis on teachers' professional development related to linguistically responsive pedagogies (Vaarala et al., 2021). When looking at teachers' stances toward the use of students' linguistic repertoires for learning, it is interesting to see whether changes in national educational policies and professional development affect the results. Teachers cannot be linguistically responsive in their practices without having positive attitudes toward linguistic diversity (Lucas & Villegas, 2013).

Methodology

This study is part of a larger research project investigating teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices related to culturally and linguistically diverse learners. In this sub-study, we focused on one open-ended question from an online survey that elicited teachers' self-reported perceptions of how they would be able to practice multilingual pedagogies, or what obstacles hinder their use of all students' languages for learning.

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Data Collection and Participants

The data were collected in autumn 2021 using an online survey that included both Likert scale (1–5) items and open-ended questions. The survey was developed by the research group DiManDi (Didaktiikka, Mångfald & Diversity) based on a survey that was used in 2016 for a similar purpose, which in turn was based on a preliminary version of a survey about linguistically and culturally responsive teaching by Milbourn et al. (2017). The survey used in 2016 was amended: items that were too ambiguous, or were otherwise not operational were omitted. In addition, some aspects related to the revised Finnish basic education curriculum were added.

The Ministry of Culture and Education sent a cover letter along with a link to the survey to all local education offices in Finland since it was part of another investigation of Finnish- and Swedish-as-a-second-language teaching in Finland. The school districts were asked to forward the survey to teachers working in basic and upper secondary education. In addition, the survey was advertised through social media. Information about the study, its purpose, and the protection of the data were included in the cover letter and on the first page of the online survey. Participants were informed that filling out the survey implied their consent. It was not possible to calculate a participation percentage, as the number of people who received or saw the survey link is unknown.

A total of 1,035 teachers participated in the survey, 63% of which ($n = 650$) answered the open-ended question that formed the data for this sub-study. The question was as follows: [The revised Finnish common core] curricula encourage the use of all the languages students know for learning. Do you practice this in your own teaching? How? If not, what are the potential obstacles? Of the 650 respondents, 72% identified as female, 17% as male, and 1% as other. The mean age of the participants was 48. The gender and age structures correspond fairly well with the general Finnish teacher population (Kumpulainen, 2017). Of the participants, Finnish was the first language (L1) of 92.7%, while Swedish was the L1 of 5.8%, and the L1s of 1.5% were other languages. The respondents included primary school teachers (30%), various subject teachers from lower and upper secondary schools (46.5%), special education teachers (15.9%), principals (3.2%) and study counselors (1.9%) and others (2.5%), such as preparatory class teachers, language and culture teachers and supplemental teachers. All the aforementioned groups have teaching responsibilities in Finland.

Data Analysis

All the analyzed responses were in Finnish or Swedish, and the coding was done in Finnish. The examples from the data presented in this chapter have been translated into English by the authors. At the beginning of the

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TABLE 6.1
Topics and Categories That Arose from the Data

Topic	*Categories under the Topic*	*Subcategories*
1. Possible negative stance	Negative stance	
	No negative stance	
2. Current abilities to use students' linguistic resources	Able to use students' linguistic resources	
	Not able to use students' linguistic resources	
3. Established practices	L1 used as a support and resource for learning	Using dictionaries and translation tools
		Encouraging students to translate concepts and expressions into their L1
		Processing content or taking notes in L1
		Using all linguistic resources to search for information
		Taking exams in L1
		L1 material is available
		Teacher actively searches for L1 materials, such as videos or texts
	Collaboration with more capable others	Peers with the same L1
		Teacher's own language skills and experiences
		School personnel or other adults with the same L1
		Collaboration with parents
		Additional teacher resources
	L1 treated as valuable per se or as a way to increase language awareness	Students acting as experts in their L1 in the classroom
		Comparing languages during lessons
		L1 production in school
		Textbooks encourage using all linguistic resources
		Reading L1 books as part of coursework

(*continued*)

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TABLE 6.1
(Continued)

Topic	*Categories under the Topic*	*Subcategories*
4. Possible obstacles that prevent teachers from using their students' linguistic resources	Personnel-related challenges	Lack of teachers' skills
		Lack of staff or interpreters who share the students' L1
		No knowledge of students' L1s or their needs
	Resources	Lack of time
		Groups too big and too linguistically heterogeneous
		Lack of or insufficient materials or tools
		Lack of general resources and support
	Student-related challenges	Students' language and literacy skills
		Lack of student willingness
		Teaching first grades in primary school
		Lack of L1 peers

Source: Created by the chapter author.

qualitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 1980), Authors 1 and 2 read the first 150 responses to gain an initial understanding of the analysis of the data. Based on this preliminary review, Authors 1 and 2 identified four topics for more detailed content analysis: (1) teachers' possible negative stances toward students' use of first languages, (2) teachers' current abilities to use their students' linguistic resources in the classroom, (3) established practices (i.e., the ways teachers reported using their students' languages in the classroom), and (4) possible obstacles that prevented teachers from using their students' linguistic resources. Next, Authors 1, 2, and 3 created the final categories (see table 6.1). After the first 150 responses were coded by Authors 1 and 2, interrater reliability was calculated, and the coders reached satisfactory agreement for the different categories (current abilities: 82%; established practices: 43–54%; possible obstacles: 33–77%). Authors 1, 2, and 3 then discussed and negotiated the cases until a consensus was reached. Finally, Author 1 analyzed all 650 responses. There were 24 cases that were somewhat difficult to code; Authors 1 and 3 negotiated these together to reach a consensus.

The frequencies of the responses were calculated for all four categories. For the categories *established practices* and *possible obstacles*, the frequencies were calculated using the multiple response set function in SPSS (version 28), in order to include all the responses given by the participants (1–3 responses per participant).

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Results

The results are presented following the order of the research questions: First, we present the current state of multilingual pedagogies in primary and upper secondary school classrooms in Finland and the respondents' possible negative or pessimistic attitudes toward using students' first languages as a resource during lessons. Next, we report the teachers' established practices of multilingual pedagogies. Finally, we describe the obstacles preventing teachers from using multilingual pedagogies.

Current State of Multilingual Pedagogies

Over half (57.7%) of the teachers reported using multilingual pedagogies in their daily work, and some claimed to do so constantly, although this did not appear to be the norm. Examples of these responses can be seen in the following excerpts (at the end of each excerpt, we present the number of the respondent and the category):

> Yes. The different mother tongues of the pupils are taken into account so that everyone can use their mother tongue in their learning. All mother tongues are considered equally valuable. (421; *currently using multilingual pedagogies*)

> I try to do this to make learning meaningful. (505; *currently using multilingual pedagogies)*

> [I use multilingual pedagogies] to some extent. We translate Aapinen and Eka Suomi words into our own languages. The children help friends with the same language to tell about their weekends. They also help newcomers understand the teacher's information, for example, when going on an excursion. Sometimes, the pupils get together to do things in language groups. We also have Lukulumo—a digital library where you can listen to stories in many languages and read in Finnish. Once a year, we take part in Multilingual Day, which is organized by the library. There, we play in different languages with teachers who speak different languages. It has been a really nice event. Every student gets to make a greeting in our classroom in their own language and put it on the door of the corridor. The birthday song is sung in several languages. (582; *currently using multilingual pedagogies*)

Many of the teachers considered multilingual pedagogies a natural part of their teaching, and they justified these practices based on principles reflecting the recommendations of the Finnish core curricula (National Agency

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for Education, 2014, 2015) and current understandings of the importance of students' first languages in all learning and identity development (Agirdag & Vanlaar, 2018; Cummins, 2021, 2022; Ganuza & Hedman, 2018; Goldenberg, 2008). However, relatively many respondents (42.3%) reported that they were not currently able to use multilingual pedagogies. As indicated by one respondent, "It seems that resources for anything 'extra' are pretty scarce when the days are more about survival" (514; *not currently implementing*).

Only 2.3% of the respondents expressed negative attitudes toward using students' L1s as a resource during lessons. There were also responses that reflected outdated beliefs, namely, that using other languages would hinder learning Finnish or Swedish and that the main aim or only relevant goal should be learning the language of instruction.

> I cannot; it is not always necessarily relevant. (337; *negative stance*)

> No. There are so many languages in our school. In addition, in Finland, you go to school, take exams, and are assessed in Finnish. Allowing the students to use other languages would put them on an unequal basis (quite a few teachers understand English compared to Swahili). (437; *negative stance*)

Thus, there were many respondents who reported being unable or unwilling to implement multilingual pedagogies, as has been found in previous studies conducted in Finland (Alisaari et al., 2021a; Heikkola et al., 2022; Harju-Autti & Sinkkonen, 2020, Repo, 2020; Shestunova, 2019) and internationally (Iversen, 2019; Lundberg, 2019; Rodríguez-Izquierdo et al., 2020). In sum, although remarkably few teachers expressed negative stances toward multilingual pedagogies compared to studies using previously attained, similar survey data (e.g., Alisaari et al., 2019a), the change in educational policies has not yet led to multilingual pedagogies being mainstreamed in all classrooms.

Established Practices

When the teachers' established practices of multilingual pedagogies were analyzed, three main categories emerged from the data: (1) *L1 used as a support and resource for learning*, (2) *collaboration with more capable others*, and (3) *L1 treated as valuable per se or as a way to increase language awareness*. The frequencies of the teachers' established practices were calculated using the multiple response set function in SPSS: all the respondents' answers were pooled together to calculate frequencies. As respondents could give more than one response, the response percentages rose above 100% (see table 6.2).

Of all the teachers' responses, 87% mentioned the first main category, *L1 used as a support and resource for learning* (see the subcategories in table 6.2). Examples of these practices are presented below.

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TABLE 6.2
Frequencies of the Reported Established Practices (*n* = 650)

Categories	*n*	%
L1 used as a support and resource for learning	**224**	**85.5**
Using dictionaries and translation tools	77	29.4
Encouraging students to translate concepts and expressions into their L1	54	20.6
Processing content or taking notes in L1	42	16
Using all linguistic resources to search for information	28	10.7
Taking exams in L1	9	3.4
L1 material is available	8	3.1
Teacher actively searches for L1 materials, such as videos or texts	6	2.3
Collaboration with more capable others	**114**	**43.6**
Peers with the same L1	59	22.5
Teacher's own language skills and experiences	35	13.4
School personnel or other adults sharing the student(s)' L1	17	6.5
Collaboration with parents	2	0.8
Additional teacher resources	1	0.4
L1 treated as valuable per se or as a way to increase language awareness	**83**	**31.7**
Students acting as experts in their L1 in the classroom	32	12.2
Comparing languages during lessons	30	11.5
L1 production in school	17	6.5
Textbooks encourage using all linguistic resources	3	1.1
Reading L1 books as part of coursework	1	0.4

Source: Created by the chapter author.

Students can ask each other for help in the languages they know. I have guided them in the use of their mother tongue, for example, by writing down the most important words in their own language. I use English as an auxiliary language. (504; *processing content or taking notes in L1*)

Students translate words and texts from different subjects into their mother tongue every day. I make picture glossaries using Papunet, and the pupils translate the words into their mother tongue. We use a highlighter to observe the main themes of the texts. The highlighted sentences are translated into their mother tongue in the notebook. The sentences are also written in Finnish in the notebook. This makes it easier, for example, to study for the exam and to understand the topic in more depth. I also encourage pupils to make their own vocabulary Quizlet on the Internet (word in Finnish and the same word in their first language + picture). (723; *encouraging students to translate concepts and expressions into their L1, processing content or taking notes in L1*)

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The most often used strategies concerned translating words or sentences, but they did not necessarily explore deeper ways to express the phenomena behind the words. Moreover, vocabulary-related strategies are the easiest to implement and do not require pedagogical planning in advance (see, e.g., Hammond & Gibbons, 2005; Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Symons, 2021). Thus, the most common strategies were pedagogies that were easy to use.

The second largest category of established practices was *collaboration with more capable others* (43.6% of the mentions). This category included the subcategories of *peers with the same L1*, *teacher's own language skills and experiences*, and *school personnel or other adults sharing the students' L1* (see all the subcategories in table 6.2). Examples of these practices are presented below.

> I guide the students to search for information in the languages they know. The students help each other with their shared languages. We also search for translations together in different languages. The students also do some of their homework in their home languages during their Finnish-as-a-second-language classes. (268; *peers with the same L1*)

> In a group, students can help other students in their own language. A native-speaking tutor clarifies concepts—this is a great asset. (815; *peers with the same L1, school personnel or other adults sharing the students' L1*)

> I use all the languages I speak to support my lessons—Russian, English, German, and Swedish—whenever they are useful. I let students search for information in their own languages, and I encourage them to say the key words in their mother tongue, even if I don't know the language myself. It works quite well. (824; *teacher's own language skills and experiences*)

These responses indicate that the teachers acknowledge their students' languages as resources for learning (see also Cummins, 2021) and use shared language knowledge as support. This approach fosters students' perceptions of their language skills as valuable per se and creates a space wherein language is seen as a shared resource. Similarly, students' languages were treated as valuable resources for the whole community or seen as valuable per se in the third category of established practices, *L1 treated as valuable per se or as a way to increase language awareness* (31.7% of all the mentions; see the subcategories in table 6.2). Examples of responses in this category are presented below.

> Different languages are constantly present in the classroom. Students help each other, and sometimes study in groups that share the same language, for example, new vocabulary. I might translate or explain

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> individual concepts in English, French, or Russian, and sometimes I'll throw in a few words of Arabic or Somali. Sometimes, I'll ask how it's expressed in the students' mother tongues. Dari would be a good addition. I don't know any Dari at all now. (98; *students acting as experts in their L1 in the classroom*)

> I will use it if necessary. Not consistently, but whenever a migrant or Finnish as a second language learner would benefit from it in a foreign language class. Otherwise, we do reflect together on how different languages differ from each other and think about how to use other languages that we know in our learning. (873; *comparing languages during lessons*)

To conclude, the teachers presented various established practices. Most of the reported practices were spontaneous (see, e.g., Hammond & Gibbons, 2005; Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Symons, 2021), for example, using dictionaries and web-based translation tools, asking students to explain expressions in other languages, or learning to greet one another in the languages that the students in a classroom know. However, the use of multilingual pedagogies requiring more conscious decision-making and pedagogical planning by the teachers (see Hammond & Gibbons, 2005; Nikula & Moore, 2019; Symons, 2021) was not often reported. For example, processing content or taking notes in students' L1s were mentioned in only 42 of 650 responses. However, an approach to content processing that accesses the phenomena behind the words (Bernstein, 1999) could optimally support students' understanding of the topics being taught (Tharp et al., 2000) and co-construct knowledge through social interaction with peers who speak the same language (Teemant & Hausman, 2013).

Reported Obstacles

The teachers were also asked about the obstacles preventing them from using multilingual pedagogies. Frequencies for obstacles were calculated using the multiple response set function. The respondents could give several responses, so the percentage was above 100%. Three main categories arose from the data: (1) *personnel-related challenges*, (2) *resources*, and (3) *student-related challenges* (see table 6.3).

Personnel-related challenges were the biggest category of obstacles (57.9% of all mentions), with subcategories related to lack of skills, knowledge, or personnel (see table 6.3). Examples of these are presented below.

> I can't. I do not personally know Arabic, Persian . . . (14; *lack of teachers' skills*)

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TABLE 6.3
Frequencies of Reported Obstacles (*n* = 650)

Categories	*n*	%
Personnel-related challenges	**203**	**57.9**
Lack of teachers' skills	181	51.7
Lack of staff or interpreters who share the students' L1	11	3.1
No knowledge of students' L1s or their needs	11	3.1
Resources	**125**	**35.7**
Lack of time	51	14.6
Groups too big and too linguistically heterogeneous	49	14
Lack of or insufficient materials or tools	13	3.7
Lack of general resources and support	12	3.4
Student-related challenges	**123**	**35.2**
Students' language and literacy skills	59	16.9
Lack of students' willingness	24	6.9
Teaching first grades in primary school	22	6.3
Lack of L1 peers	18	5.1

Source: Created by the chapter author.

> Mission impossible in primary school, where we have to make sure that the students can move on to the next grade. Personnel resources in small schools in rural areas are limited, so it is correct that Finnish as a second language is centralized into a bigger unit. (68; *lack of staff or interpreters who share the students' L1*)

> There is one student in my group who studies Finnish as a second language and uses Finnish for everything in their everyday life. I do not even know their L1. I have used English a few times. (90; *no knowledge of students' L1s or their needs*)

> I do not have the know-how. I would need training. (293; *lack of teachers' skills*)

Often, the responses in the subcategory *Lack of teachers' skills* revealed the assumption that if teachers do not personally have skills in their students' languages, they are not able to use multilingual pedagogies. However, as the quotes in the first category indicate, teachers do not, in fact, need to speak other languages to implement multilingual pedagogies.

A lack of resources in general was mentioned as an obstacle in 39.4% of the responses. Subcategories included, for example, *lack of time* and *groups too big and too linguistically heterogeneous* (see all the subcategories in table 6.3). Examples of these are presented below.

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> Every student can do this on their own. In teaching, we do not have time to delve into every student's language repertoire. (240; *lack of time*)

> No, there can be many different languages in one group, and ensuring that the learner understands the teaching is challenging. Using Google Translate or other tools to help with text comprehension has mainly brought about misunderstandings. (289; *groups too big and too linguistically heterogeneous*)

> There are too many languages, and students' language skills can be poor in all of them. (338; *groups too big and too linguistically heterogeneous*)

Some of the responses in the category *resources* indicate that students are left alone with a task to develop their linguistic repertoires or their learning in general without teacher support. Previous studies have revealed similar findings (Dávila, 2012; Harju-Autti & Sinkkonen, 2020). However, teachers should support their learners in ways that include creating space for using multiple languages during lessons. In the category *resources*, students were often seen as capable of surviving by themselves when working in their L1s. However, in the third category of obstacles, *student-related challenges* (35.2% of mentions), students were seen as lacking skills enabling them to use their L1s for learning. Subcategories of *student-related challenges* were *students' language and literacy skills*, *lack of students' willingness*, *teaching first grades in primary school*, and *lack of L1 peers*. Examples of these can be seen below.

> I think this is a good and relevant idea, but I have noticed that some of my students have a lower command of their first language than Finnish, so in the end, their L1s are rarely useful. Other languages are usually needed to understand abstract concepts, but some of the students have no words for these phenomena in another language, either. For many pupils, their L1 is just a language spoken at home; they do not read anything in it, for example, leaving them with a very limited vocabulary and a lack of familiarity with the terms used in different subjects in any language. (234; *students' language and literacy skills*)

> A large proportion of non-Finnish-speaking students do not want special attention to be paid to their differences. (354; *lack of students' willingness*)

> I teach 1st grade. Children typically cannot yet read and write in their own language. This is a barrier to using their own language as a reference language, for example. In addition, the topics are still relatively easy, and

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all children are taught new words in Finnish. In addition, I do not have several children who speak the same language. (482; *teaching first grades in primary school*, *lack of L1 peers*)

To sum up the reported obstacles, teachers reported being unable to establish multilingual pedagogies for various reasons, such as a lack of skills or time. This result is similar to the results of studies conducted during the previous Finnish curricula (Alisaari et al., 2022), before the requirement for linguistically responsive teaching. When claiming that a shortage of time hinders the use of multilingual pedagogies, teachers show that they might be unaware that if they focus on strategies for guiding students to better comprehend texts and access information with the help of their L1s, their teaching and their students' learning might be more effective (Slaughter & Cross, 2021). Furthermore, it seems that many of the teachers were under the misconception that having language skills of their own was a prerequisite for implementing multilingual pedagogy, and if they did not know their students' languages, they were not able to implement multilingual pedagogy. Thus, they were unfamiliar with ways of including students' languages in learning processes. This result is similar to that of our previous study, which was conducted among pre-service teachers; almost one-third of the respondents reported allowing the use of L1s only if someone else, mainly the teacher, knew the language (Alisaari et al., 2023a). This finding strengthens our belief that there is a significant need for targeted training for teachers concerning multilingual pedagogies in Finland.

A relatively large number of teachers referred to teaching the first grades in primary school as an obstacle to implementing multilingual pedagogies, as the students in these grades do not yet have literacy skills in their L1s. Considering the established practices, however, there are good examples of how to implement multilingual pedagogies with younger learners. Thus, age should not be a restrictive factor; rather, pedagogy should be tailored to respond to the needs of various age groups. Good examples of these practices in our data include learning expressions in students' languages, having students explain things orally to other students with the same L1, and multilingual morning routines, such as greetings in different languages.

Conclusion

Our results indicate that the participants had highly positive stances toward multilingual pedagogies, which many reported using as a natural part of their teaching routines. However, their established multilingual practices were mainly spontaneous and ones that did not require intensive pedagogical planning (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005; Symons, 2021) or take students'

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optimal knowledge construction into account (e.g., Teemant & Hausman, 2013; Tharp et al., 2000). Moreover, many teachers reported not using any multilingual pedagogies for various reasons, mainly because of a lack of confidence or due to a perceived lack of time.

In addition, a number of teachers seemed to believe that using multilingual pedagogies was possible only if they themselves knew their students' L1s (see also Alisaari et al., 2023a). On the one hand, this may be explained by a possible misunderstanding of the wording of the survey question: if the respondent interpreted the question as concerning the need for teachers to master all the languages present in their classrooms instead of the ability to encourage students to use their linguistic resources, their response may have been formed from this perspective. Thus, this must be taken into account when interpreting the results, and in further studies, the wording of the question should be revised to be more exact. On the other hand, previous studies have found that teachers often feel inadequately prepared to teach multilingual learners (Alisaari et al., 2022); stepping outside one's comfort zone and losing the sense of being in control might feel frightening. However, seeing students as experts in their languages supports students' learning and may bring joy and pedagogical satisfaction to the teacher as well.

Some of the respondents reported not knowing that the curricula recommend the use of different languages for learning or had never considered what this would mean in practice. Many claimed that they would be willing to start implementing multilingual pedagogies more frequently. Therefore, it seems that taking part in the study provoked the teachers to consider implementing multilingual pedagogies in their own teaching in the future, which is encouraging. Some of the respondents also hoped for more professional development possibilities in order to increase their skills related to multilingual pedagogies. Although several in-service courses have been organized since the new core curriculum came into being, the availability and accessibility of these courses have been limited. Thus, such courses have not reached all the teachers that could benefit therefrom. In the future, multilingual pedagogies need to be a required component of teacher education (see also Bergroth et al., 2022; Dražnik et al., 2022).

Somewhat alarmingly, some teachers believed that multilingual pedagogies would hinder the students' learning of the language of instruction. Realistically, if students' first languages have not yet developed to a sufficient level for academic purposes, multilingual pedagogies might not benefit their learning (Schleppegrell et al. 2022). It seems that changing the curricula to recommend the use of multilingual pedagogies (see Alisaari et al., 2019b) and increasing possibilities for professional development (Vaarala et al., 2021) is not enough; there is a need for national-level guidance, as well as more training and resources for teachers to be able to implement the national

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educational policy recommendations (see also Harju-Autti & Sinkkonen, 2020). There is also a need for more studies in the Finnish context to explore the most optimal ways to develop all students' linguistic repertoires simultaneously with their content learning. Fortunately, where there is a will, there is also a way (see also Li & Qin, 2022).

Teachers send powerful messages to their students about the value of their languages, and the choices teachers make when implementing classroom practices determine "the position and value of [the] linguistic and cultural knowledge" that their students experience having (Slaughter & Cross, 2021, p. 56). Thus, it is essential that teachers critically reflect on their language practices and the consequences thereof on their students' identity development. Multilingual pedagogies need to be mainstreamed to contest the monolingual paradigm and promote social justice in diverse classrooms and schools (Bergroth et al., 2022). Teachers might also need support to implement multilingual pedagogies in the form of material resources. From the responses, it is clear that multilingual ready-made resources are still scarce, and teachers do not often collaborate with students' first-language teachers or guardians to develop their linguistic repertoires holistically.

When considering the validity and generalizability of this study, it must be noted that the response ratio to the open-ended question was lower than the response ratio to the Likert scale statements. This may be due to the open-ended questions being at the end of the survey, the number of questions, or the fact that answering them was not compulsory. Nonetheless, the number of responses to this question (n = 650; 63% of all participants) was sufficient for providing data that enhances the understanding of the beliefs behind the classroom language practices of Finnish teachers. These are key to addressing the obstacles and opportunities related to the implementation of the progressive curricula. However, it should be taken into account that responding to the survey was voluntary; therefore, participants may have been more interested in the topic than teachers who did not participate, which can affect the generalizability of the results.

There is a need to develop teachable strategies for using multilingual pedagogies (Aalto & Mustonen, 2022; Duarte, 2020), as well as to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills to enable them to be confident doing so (see also Aalto & Mustonen, 2022). According to previous studies, professional development can support teachers in implementing multilingual pedagogies (David et al., 2021; Kirsch et al., 2020). Therefore, there is a need to create more opportunities for in-service teachers to participate in professional development courses, as well as to expand teacher education programs to better respond to the needs of multilingual students and the requirements of educational policies (Cinaglia & De Costa, 2022). Furthermore, to develop a school culture of mainstreaming multilingual

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pedagogies, collaboration among colleagues at the entire school level is of utmost importance. Only this way of implementing multilingual pedagogies can influence the learning of all multilingual students rather than a select few in individual classrooms.

However, it is not enough to provide strategies for implementing multilingual pedagogies if teachers do not see the importance of these pedagogies or if they perceive them as competing with other, more relevant aims and strategies (David et al., 2021). Thus, it is crucial for teachers to reflect critically on linguistically responsive pedagogies, including multilingual pedagogies, as a way of supporting social justice and more equitable learning opportunities. This would also enable teachers to adjust their pedagogies to accommodate their students' abilities and needs. Multilingual pedagogies are not one-size-fits-all tools; they need to be adapted to different classrooms and to individual students' needs (David et al., 2021). At their best, multilingual pedagogies promote social justice in schools and enable each student to reach their full potential, as proposed by the Finnish core curriculum for basic education (National Agency for Education, 2014).

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7

How Do Teachers of Plurilingual Learner's Mother Tongue (PLMT) Implement Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy?

Maija Yli-Jokipii, Inkeri Rissanen, and Elina Kuusisto

Increasing diversity in society heightens the need to develop culturally and linguistically sustaining educational praxes. It is essential to analyze and develop culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) at different levels, addressing everything from classroom interactions to organizational culture and structural questions, such as teacher education and qualifications. This is pivotal to ensuring equity in learning and the inclusion of all learners. In Finland, the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (henceforth the National Core Curriculum) states that organizational culture is most visible in everyday activities and proceedings and/or practices (Finnish National Board of Education [FNBE], 2016). In this chapter, we study the pedagogical thinking and practices of teachers teaching plurilingual pupils' mother tongues in Finnish schools with respect to culturally sustaining education. With the term *plurilingual* we are referring individuals who are using more than one language in their everyday life and work, whereas the term *multilingual* refers to communities or societies that are using several languages in their everyday practices (Council of Europe, 2001). We argue that the mere presence of these teachers in schools can be significant, and the importance of their professional attributes and pedagogical thinking in supporting the learning of plurilingual students and strengthening inclusivity practices in schools should not be underestimated and merits more research.

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In the National Core Curriculum (FNBE, 2016), the subject taught by these teachers is referred to as instruction in students' "mother tongue complementing basic education." The program is sometimes called Heritage Language Education or Home Language Education; we call the subject Plurilingual Learners' Mother Tongue (PLMT), which is a pragmatic and apt term that concisely summarizes the subject and whom it targets. However, we are aware of the multiple and often ambiguous definitions of *mother tongue* (e.g., Skutnabb-Kangas & McCarty, 2008). In Finland, PLMT is seen as a complementary subject in basic education. It is organized by the municipalities, but funding is applied annually from the Finnish National Agency for Education. In 2020, some 22,000 students were enrolled in PLMT, and it was offered in 57 different languages (FNBE, 2022). The syllabus for PLMT has been placed in the appendix of the National Core Curriculum (FNBE, 2016), which illustrates the status of the subject: it is supported at the administrative level, but organization of PLMT is voluntary for municipalities and schools, and participation in the subject is voluntary for students. Therefore, not all students have the same opportunities to participate in PLMT tuition, which can be perceived as structural inequality (e.g., Harju-Autti & Mäkinen, 2022).

Language is a tool central to learning and development and a resource for the creation of identity and social belonging (Vygotsky, 1978). Internationally, research has indicated that PLMT tuition in the school context supports academic success and positive identity development (Cummins, 2000; Cummins & Early, 2010; Kennedy, 2019; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Several studies have demonstrated the significance of mother tongue or first language (L1) proficiency in second language (L2) acquisition (Cummins, 2000; Cummins & Early, 2010). However, it seems that when living in an L2 environment, children's L1s do not develop similarly to those of children who live in a more linguistically homogenous context (e.g., Akoglu & Jagmur, 2016). There are also indications that if the mother tongue is learned only in the home environment and other informal situations, it does not have the same effect on academic success (Agirdag & Vanlaar, 2018). Therefore, more attention should be paid to the linguistic education of plurilingual youths to avoid subtractive bilingualism, in which the dominant language is developed at the cost of a student's L1, and to promote their full linguistic capacities and repertoires (see Cummins, 2017; for subtractive bilingualism, see Skutnabb-Kangas & McCarty, 2008). In addition, PLMT education promotes minoritized students' identity development and a sense of connection to their families and cultures (Kennedy, 2019).

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of research on PLMT in Finland and other countries. Prior research about PLMT teachers' work and perspectives in Finland has focused on variations between municipalities, the lack of language-specific curricula, inadequate, or non-existent

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PLMT teacher training, and inconsistent commitment from families (Piippo, 2016). The use of one's mother tongue seems to be insufficient for active bilingualism (Tarnanen et al., 2017). However, participating in PLMT tuition appears to be challenging for many students in Finland (Kyckling et al., 2019). Furthermore, studies have shown that PLMT teachers and teachers of minority religions in Finland face many similar challenges: the groups are heterogeneous with regard to both age and skill, and the classes are held outside of regular school hours and are often in schools other than where students' regular classes take place. In addition, attaining suitable learning materials is challenging, and PLMT teachers must commute from one school to another, often in a single day (Oman äidinkielen opettajat ry, 2019; Piippo, 2016; Rissanen, 2014, 2020; Tarnanen et al., 2017). PLMT teachers are not automatically included in school communities, and their contributions are not always recognized (Yli-Jokipii et al., 2022). In international research, the focus has been mostly on learning, not teaching, heritage languages, but there are some researchers in the Nordic context who have highlighted PLMT teachers' work and the qualities they need to succeed (Ganuza & Hedman, 2020; Vuorenpää & Zetterholm, 2020).

Studies on linguistically and culturally sustaining education in the Finnish context have mostly focused on the thinking and practices of teachers of subjects other than PLMT, who often represent ethnic and linguistic majorities (e.g., Hummelstedt, 2022; Koskinen-Sinisalo, 2015). In this study, we highlight the perspectives of PLMT teachers with ethnically, linguistically, religiously, or culturally diverse backgrounds that resemble their students' affiliations. Finnish principals of culturally diverse schools emphasize the significance of teachers representing linguistic and cultural minorities in creating culturally sustaining school environments (Rissanen, 2021). The existence of PLMT, which helps to increase similarities between student and teacher populations in schools, can be seen as supporting a culturally sustaining school culture (see also Yli-Jokipii et al., 2022). However, celebrating and focusing on the mere existence of teachers who represent linguistic and cultural minorities in schools *an sich* is naive and overly simplistic (Carrington & Skelton, 2003; Cherng, 2016). It is important to study what practices and competencies PLMT teachers bring to schools and to analyze the key features of their work as part of culturally sustaining education. In this study, we are interested in their role as educational professionals who contribute to the learning and well-being of students both in school and in society.

The research question and sub-questions of this study are, How do PLMT teachers in Finland implement CSP? In particular, what kind of pedagogical thinking and practices do they express with respect to supporting their students' (a) academic success, (b) cultural competence, and (c) sociopolitical consciousness?

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Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

The present study uses CSP, as conceptualized by Ladson-Billings (2014), as an analytical framework. CSP is based on an understanding of culture as a fluid and ever-changing phenomenon (Ladson-Billings, 2014). This framework promotes teaching practices that explicitly engage questions of equity and justice and develop students' learning skills, capacities to work in culturally and linguistically diverse settings, and understanding of societal power relations. The core aims of CSP are to support students' academic success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2014). These three components guided this study's analysis of PLMT teachers' pedagogical thinking and practices (see table 7.2).

In Ladson-Billings' framework, *academic success* refers to the intellectual growth that students gain when they are not seen as minoritized but are expected to succeed, and classroom activities are planned with this objective. Minoritized students should be perceived as subjects—rather than objects—of education (Ladson-Billings, 2014). CSP also promotes linguistically sustaining practices, and these two are especially aligned in Cummins' concept of active bilingualism, which is here regarded as an integral aspect of supporting plurilingual learners' academic success (Cummins, 2017). Active bilingualism emphasizes the heteroglossic and complex linguistic realities of plurilingual individuals and takes into account the power relations that are present in educational contexts (Cummins, 2017), hence it is considered a better aim than additional bilingualism. In active bilingualism students embrace translanguaging practices and simultaneously develop skills in their L1 and L2, whereas in additional bilingualism the languages, their use and learning are kept separate (Cummins, 2017). Cummins suggested that for L1 speakers of minority languages, more exposure to their L1 strengthens their proficiency in their L2 and their overall learning in L2-medium education (Cummins, 2017). Thus, more attention should be paid to developing plurilingual learners' various languages, as transfer of concepts, skills, and learning strategies occurs across languages (Cummins, 1981). High expectations for these students' academic success are fair and possible when linguistically sustaining education is granted.

The second focal point in Ladson-Billings' theory is *cultural competence*, which refers to teachers' practices of supporting students' knowledge and understanding of both their cultures of origin and other cultures as ways of being, thinking, believing, and producing concrete and abstract artefacts (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Ladson-Billings emphasizes dynamic view of culture as fluid and ever-evolving, and highlights the heterogeneity of cultural experience (Ladson-Billings, 2014). In this study, we analyze how PLMT teachers perceive culture and support students' cultural competence.

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The third key component of CSP is *sociopolitical consciousness*, which refers to the capacity to use school knowledge to address real-world problems—the beyond-school application of school tasks. In addition, the questions of whose knowledge is worth studying, whose music, history, arts, and so on are relevant for academic success, what kinds of patterns of speech, behavior, or appearance are acceptable or desirable, and what privileges or impediments students have based on their cultural and linguistic backgrounds are salient parts of sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2014). In this study, we looked for any implications of the teachers supporting their students' critical thinking skills, as well as whether they discussed stereotypes and prejudices, power relations in Finnish society, or classroom behavior.

The theoretical framework was chosen because it highlights the viewpoints of inclusive and equitable education. It also aligns with the current National Core Curriculum (FNBE, 2016), which reflects the ideals of culturally sustaining education by emphasizing the value of linguistic and cultural diversity and the support of different cultural identities, but also endeavors to avoid essentialized views of the majority or minority cultures by referring to Finnish cultural heritage as being constantly shaped by different cultures throughout history as well as in the present. It also mentions the role of PLMT in supporting pupils' integration into society:

> The purpose of this instruction of the pupil's mother tongue is to support the development of active plurilingualism and to develop his or her interest in lifelong development of language proficiency. Studies in the pupil's mother tongue support integration into the Finnish society. (FNBE, 2016, p. 498.)

Therefore, we find it pivotal to research PLMT teachers' educational practices within this framework and see what pedagogical implementations they offer to their students' lifelong development of language proficiency and inclusion into Finnish society, as well as to the curriculum's aim of culturally sustaining education.

Data and Methods

Data Gathering and Participants

We used semi-structured interviews to collect the data. The interview guide was tested in two interviews. After reflecting on those interviews, we reworked the frame to be more concise. The themes discussed in the interviews were (1) teachers' perspectives of PLMT work and its meaning and purpose for learners, school communities, and Finnish society and (2) teachers' notions

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about CSP in the school context and their pedagogical thinking and practices related to implementing CSP. Most of the interviews were conducted in Finnish; two respondents asked beforehand to use English, which we did. In several interviews, we used spontaneous translanguaging practices. The interviewer (the first author) has extensive experience working in plurilingual environments and with language learners, which contributed to a thorough interview process and clear communication.

The respondents were found through the Finnish Association of Heritage Language Teachers (*Oman äidinkielen opettajat ry*). We sent the call to enroll participants using their mailing list, as well as social media platforms. Within two weeks, 20 individuals had enrolled (18 females and 2 males). They were teachers of 13 languages from 10 different municipalities. All the interviews were conducted via Zoom, and they were recorded and later transcribed. The interviews lasted approximately 50 minutes to 1 hour and 50 minutes. By the end, we had 310 pages of textual data (12 pt. font, Times New Roman, line spacing 1.5). In table 7.1, we introduce the participants by language and educational qualifications.

Data Analysis

We used abductive qualitative content analysis to analyze the data, following Ladson-Billings's (2014) framework of CSP and its three dimensions as the main deductive categories; subcategories were formed inductively. The

TABLE 7.1
Interviewees According to Language Taught, Gender, and Educational Qualifications

Languages taught*	***f = 4***	***Gender***	*Female*	***n = 18***
	Russian			
	f = 3		*Male*	***n = 2***
	Estonian			
	f = 2	***Educational qualification***	*Subject teacher*	***n = 7***
	Farsi		*Dual (subject + classroom teacher)*	***n = 4***
	Hungarian			
	Italian		*Vocational teacher*	***n = 1***
	Kurdish			
	f= 1		*Pedagogical studies*	***n = 1***
	Arabic		*In progress*	***n = 4***
	Chinese		*None of above*	***n = 3***
	Dari	** There are two teachers teaching two languages: therefore F = 22*		
	Japanese			
	Romanian			
	Turkish			
	Vietnamese			

Source: Created by the chapter author.

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analysis was done with the help of Atlas.ti software, and we used researcher triangulation to test and verify the analysis. A total of 464 expressions were identified in the data as meaning units and categorized into dimensions of CSP (see table 7.2).

Results

In the data, we found 464 expressions reflective of themes that we set to the CRP categories. The categories and sub-categories are shown in table 7.2. All main categories included expressions from all interviewees with two exceptions: two interviewees did not discuss topics categorized as cultural competence.

Supporting PLMT Students' Academic Success

According to Ladson-Billings (2014), academic success refers to the "intellectual growth that students experience as a result of classroom instruction and learning experiences" (p. 75). All the PLMT teachers found supporting their students' academic success to be their responsibility, and the interdependence between L1 skills and skills in the language of mainstream tuition, which are crucial for general academic success, was clearly indicated (see also Cummins, 1979, 2017).

In the data, *supporting translanguaging and linguistic repertoire* (f = 68) was regarded as significant by almost all the respondents (n = 16), and the

TABLE 7.2
How PLTM Teachers in Finland Implement Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

Culturally Sustainable Pedagogy in PLMT Teaching is Manifested by Supporting Students'		*Meaning Units by Category*
Academic Success		***F = 147***
	Translanguaging and linguistic repertoire	*f = 68*
	Literacy skills in students' own language	*f = 47*
	Learning in mainstream classrooms	*f = 32*
Cultural Competence		***F = 54***
	In-depth understanding about cultures	*f = 31*
	Surface-level knowledge about cultures	*f = 23*
Sociopolitical Consciousness		***F = 263***
	Belonging to multiple cultures	*f = 118*
	Critical thinking	*f = 108*
	Belonging to background culture	*f = 37*

Source: Created by the chapter author.

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respondents' own plurilingual capacities were salient. *Translanguaging* refers to practices in which all linguistic resources (of all participants) are utilized for communicative and learning purposes (e.g., García, 2009), and it these practices are very much aligned with the ideas of active bilingualism (Cummins, 2017). Many PLMT teachers pointed out two pivotal ideas when talking about a language, language as phenomenon and the languages they worked with at their classes. First, they said it is impossible to teach a mother tongue to the same level as when that language is the medium of instruction; they thought their task was to encourage students to use their mother tongue and provide them with basic skills in that language, through which they would have opportunities to learn more in the future.

Second, they used their own linguistic repertoires to both teach (if needed) and to be an example of language learning. For example:

> *I use Finnish when I explain grammar; otherwise, the students do not understand.* (#18, Dari as mother tongue)

> *I use my emerging Finnish skills to show students that we can make mistakes, and it is not always so serious. I put on a PowerPoint, and I use Google Translation, and some kids correct my Google-translated Finnish [laughs]. Also, I like to encourage my kids to speak in any language they want.* (#15, Chinese as mother tongue)

The teachers also claimed to tell students the benefits of plurilingualism and encourage them to use all their languages. One teacher commented that:

> *One emerging principle is to recognise one's own linguistic repertoire and opportunities to start using it in a more holistic manner.* (#4, Kurdish and Turkish as mother tongue)

Second, the PLMT teachers' expressions in the first main category were related to *supporting literacy skills in students' own language* (f = 47). Under this subcategory, we categorized teachers' practices related to basic literacy skills, such as [mechanical] reading and writing, as well as literacy skills in a broader sense (e.g., Windle & Miller, 2019).

When teaching literacy skills, PLMT teachers had very different starting points. With languages that use the Latin alphabet, mainstream education does part of the job by teaching the alphabet, but PLMT teachers still need to teach orthography. Teachers of languages that use an alphabet other than the Latin alphabet need to work more on basic literacy skills. The PLMT teachers were found to use many resources to teach these skills, as shown in the following excerpt:

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> *Their writing and reading skills have really developed, and I have tried to develop them well. The alphabet I teach is not the Latin alphabet, so learning and having this concept of reading from right to left, for example, is, by itself, a big challenge for these kids. From among the four language skills, writing and reading have been my main areas of focus.* (#18, Dari as mother tongue)

The teachers knew that with the resources they had been given, they could not teach as much literacy as they would prefer or as much as many parents would like. At the same time, they commonly noted that they concentrated on basic literacy skills, positive attitudes, and interest in the students' L1, as, with these, the students would have opportunities to learn more by themselves later. Interestingly, three interviewees validated this point: as youths, they had all been plurilingual learners in Finland, and they all studied their L1 later in life and made it their occupation. They were also all balanced bilinguals, who have equal proficiency in both (or several) languages (Cummins, 1979) and who were working in both languages.

> *We had to read quite a lot, and I think that if I hadn't been in the [PLMT] class, I wouldn't be so interested in literature. [. . .] Also, you could use your own language in the class. We were always learning something new, which was something that brought us together.* (#16, Russian as mother tongue)

> *For me, it would have been awesome if there had been somebody in my youth—and I've lived both in Finland and in Hungary—an adult who could have discussed and reflected on these things with me.* (#8, Hungarian as mother tongue)

Many PLMT teachers also regarded *supporting students' learning in mainstream classrooms* (f = 32) as an important part of ensuring the academic success of their students. There were some who were able to do this regularly; however, while many others said it was something they would gladly do, it was not possible in the schools where they taught. Some municipalities have developed structures that enable co-teaching with PLMT teachers, but according to the PLMT teachers, there were differences in mainstream teachers' awareness of these possibilities.

> *Another consulting teacher's task is to give so-called remedial teaching to the students. For instance, I have science class for two pupils once a week, and there we use the regular Finnish science study book and we do the exercises, etc., but we look up the terminology in both Finnish and Russian.* (#5, Russian and Estonian as mother tongue)

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Another way of supporting academic success in PLMT classes was to focus on the content or themes that students were studying in other subjects.

> *For instance, we might discuss illnesses that they are studying in their science classes, and then we can talk about it in our own language, and this way we can study grammatical materials.* (#11, Estonian as mother tongue)

> *Also, they [students] might ask something about history or something that is not actually connected to language learning but is happening in their everyday lives. Or they might ask, like, 'Now I have an exam in Swedish, and I don't know it well enough' and how it is. And then I say, 'This is how I recall, and maybe you could think that if it's like this in Russian, it is quite similar in Swedish'.* (#14, Russian as mother tongue)

Supporting PLMT Students' Cultural Competence

In this category, we coded the notions in which the PLMT teachers discussed their practices of teaching about certain explicit cultures. This category was the only one that was not mentioned in all interviews; two interviews did not include statements related to this topic. Two sub-categories were formed: *supporting in-depth understanding about cultures* (discussing worldviews and their different aspects, such as explicit and implicit behavior norms; $f = 31$) and *supporting surface-level knowledge about cultures* (teaching about cultural features such as food, festivities, clothing, and music; $f = 23$).

Interestingly, teaching about or discussing *in-depth understanding about cultures* was often not planned but student initiated: a student would bring up something that had happened to them or something that was bothering them, and the PLMT teacher would explain the situation and bring the historical dimension to the discussion, too. One teacher commented:

> *. . . and we talk about it [a personal experience] in a historical context: who are we? Why do we speak this language? From where did we come? Are we all Arabs? Is Arab, for example, a race, [or] what is it? So yeah, we talk about this a lot. It's very important for them to know what Arabs have done in the world, and what they haven't done.* (#13, Arabic as mother tongue)

The PLMT teachers avoided stereotypical or essentialist views and emphasized the fluidity of all cultures, which aligns with Ladson-Billings's (2014) ideas of CSP. In the next excerpt the teacher is pointing out the multiplicity that is existing in national culture:

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> *I am very careful when talking about this. I am not the teacher who says that "you must develop a Japanese identity," there are so many people in there [in Japan]. It is your [student´s] family heritage, but there are so many dimensions, we cannot put just one thing under the word Japan.* (#3, Japanese as mother tongue)

Some teachers expressed insecurity about discussing complex cultural topics, stating that for most of their students in primary school, the topics were too intricate. When teaching about pupils' cultures of origin, most teachers focused on the surface-level features of culture that are non-controversial and relatively easy to grasp, such as traditional foods, clothing, festivities, music, and literature. They also familiarized their students with the history and geography of the culture or country in question. For example:

> *. . . festivities and holidays, all of these things that are important to the pupils. Especially Nowruz, the New Year's festivities, is important for the Kurdish people.* (#1, Kurdish as mother tongue)

> *Well, yes, always, if it's Father's Day or Independence Day, any day when you have a flag on the pole, we discuss in Russian what day it is. Sometimes the kids can tell, sometimes not. I've tried to find materials in Russian about the Finnish holiday and something about the history of this day. We also compare whether there is such a holiday in Russia, too. For instance, in Russia, we do not celebrate Father's Day: is it good or is it bad? Those who were born here in Finland [ask], 'How don't you have Father's Day?' But it is not part of Russian history. Mother's Day, we celebrate, but not Father's Day. Women's Day, on the 8th of November, is important, and you should give flowers and such.* (# 18, Russian as mother tongue)

As previous quote shows, Finnish cultural features and traditions are also discussed in PLMT lessons, and sometimes cultural comparisons are made, but some teachers said that they wanted to avoid making comparisons. They explained that they did not want to give students the idea that there were differences between them and native Finnish students. Teachers felt that linguistic comparisons were problematic too, since that might emphasize difference and end up in order of precedence and judgmental ideas.

However, discussions about surface-level cultural features sometimes enforced cultural stereotypes and essentialisations, as may be seen in the following comments:

> *For instance, make them understand the meaning of holidays in Italy and here, the cultural differences, and so on, and, like, speaking with*

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> *your hands and the gestures you are making.* (#20, Italian as mother tongue)

> *I try to be a typical Kurd, and I teach them what Kurds find funny, what is taboo for Kurds, and what Kurds value, so I also teach these kinds of things in Kurdish language class.* (#10, Farsi as mother tongue)

At the same time, the teachers endeavored to avoid essentialization of culture by promoting critical cultural self-reflection. Most of the teachers claimed that they wanted their students to be able to build individual cultural identities to become well-balanced members of future societies.

Supporting PLMT Students' Sociopolitical Consciousness

Ladson-Billings (2014) defined sociopolitical consciousness as "the ability to take learning beyond the confines of the classroom using school knowledge and skills to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems" (p. 75). All 20 PLMT teachers represented the idea of sociopolitical consciousness in a broad sense, and they also stated the sociopolitical importance of PLMT tuition. In this category, there were three pivotal topics: *supporting belonging to the student's culture of origin*, *supporting belonging to multiple cultures* and *supporting critical thinking*.

In the data, it was common to see instances of *supporting belonging to multiple cultures* ($f = 118$). The teachers were quite explicit about students needing capacities to build membership in several cultures, and it was often noted that students must create a culturally fluid identity to be able to live a well-balanced life. For example:

> *On the other hand, sometimes parents are extremely strict and want to stay with only their own culture and own language. It's very difficult for them to send their children to a Finnish school, so it's important to discuss with them and persuade them to give their children some sort of freedom so that they can integrate and feel included at school. Yet, mainstream teachers should also value and show respect for all cultures and languages.* (#15, Farsi as mother tongue)

> *I have also had students whose parents require extremely good results because [these] parents work at the university—they are professors—and so forth. So, parents want their children to perform better than they are capable of, and children have had some psychological problems because of that. The parents explained to the school what has happened, and they were surprised that the school was reacting to their way of bringing up their own children. In this case, my role has been to listen to the child and*

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> *understand their perspective. I've also explained the values and ideas of a Finnish school to the parents and explained the cultural perspectives and why the parents do what they do to the teachers.* (#2, Romanian as mother tongue)

As illustrated in this quote, increasing both parents' and teachers' awareness through mediating school–home collaboration is an important aspect of PLMT teachers' practices of supporting students' cultural belonging and sociopolitical consciousness.

Usually, *supporting critical thinking* (*f* = 108) was mentioned not as part of the planned curricular action, but as a reaction to something the students were experiencing or mentioning in classroom discussions. When asked if they included these topics in their lesson plans, the teachers were found to be hesitant to teach this kind of topic. However, whenever the students raised questions or had problems or conflicts, the PLMT teachers helped students to solve these problems or conflicts by encouraging them critically reflect on the situation and on their prior understandings. In addition, some teachers constructed lesson plans with topics that helped them teach critical thinking skills. One teacher commented:

> *I always try to choose topics that urge them to think. I, yeah, I think, and I like my kids also to research. I like to push them: "Go and find this by yourself." I don't give it easily to them if they need to know something. Yeah. I can say, yeah, I am a teacher who focuses more on themes, important themes, sensitive themes, themes that would make kids think. This is my idea, and around the theme, I build everything.* (#13, Arabic as mother tongue)

According to the PLMT teachers, their students need critical thinking skills to face a complex reality and to create their own transcultural identity, which can be understood as ABC, when the expectations of their families and society are in controversy. One teacher explained:

> *. . . if the teacher could explain both cultures in a way that would benefit the student in their everyday life and not only at the theoretical level. [. . .] I see how the languages are supporting each other, and the cultures are supporting each other. [This can help students] understand [them] self and [their] own behaviours or patterns better, like, "Why do I behave in a certain way when the others have different kinds of practices?" So, this kind of understanding could help build the identity.* (#14, Russian as mother tongue)

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The teachers explicitly *supported belonging to the culture of origin* (*f* = 37), yet almost all of these mentions were somewhat intertwined with critical perspectives and notions of culture as fluid and ever-evolving.

> *For the older students, I have told them, "Hey, when you talk about Japan, you must take care of what kind of explanations you give. Japan is a very broad idea, so you cannot say that the Japanese are like this and like this. Even if you've been in Japan several times and you know the culture, you must be careful when explaining these things, and you must explicitly tell what you are talking about, your family, or something else".* (#3, Japanese as mother tongue)

So far, we have discussed the teachers as one group since no major differences were found among different teacher groups with respect to their thinking related to the first two main categories of analysis. However, we did find that one group of PLMT teachers had a distinct approach to supporting students' sociopolitical consciousness: those teaching Middle Eastern languages, which in this study included Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Kurdish, and Turkish. These teachers found it very important to help students integrate into Finnish society and find a balance between the identities promoted at home and those supported in society. They produced critical perspectives about the rigorous religious or nationalistic ideologies that are prominent in some of the societies in which these languages are spoken, and they were aware of the tensions that might exist between these kinds of approaches and "Western societies." Therefore, the teachers reported working hard to lessen these tensions and teach their students to think critically and learn skills with which to navigate between ideologies and become complete persons with their own identities. For example, with regard to the violence and riots happening with migrant youth in other European countries, one teacher stated that their aim was to ease these kinds of tension:

> *I feel that I am also contributing something good to this country because I have these political concerns. I watch carefully what's going on in Germany and France [pointing out riots and violence in several European countries reported in the news at the time of the interviews], and I don't want Finland to be the same. I don't want Finland to have the same challenges. So, as an Arabic language teacher, I feel that with these kids who one day will be a part of this coming generation, I'm trying to give them keys to live in this community [society].* (#13, Arabic as mother tongue)

Similar approaches were visible among all but one of the teachers teaching these languages, and parallel, albeit not as strong, initiatives were common among other teachers.

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Discussion

Pedagogical approaches to support educational equity in the context of cultural diversity, discussed in scholarly fields such as multicultural, intercultural, and culturally responsive-sustaining education have been criticized for focusing on immigrant and other minoritized students instead of working to develop structures and norms for an educational system in which no student would be regarded as "culturally other" (e.g., Dervin, 2020; Gorski, 2016). While we acknowledge the importance of these aims, we also emphasize the significance of recognizing and meeting the particular needs of plurilingual learners in the education system. Offering mother tongue education is one of the most important structural-level solutions for supporting the educational equity of students who do not speak the language of instruction as their mother tongue (e.g., Cummins, 2017). However, far more than language learning happens in mother tongue education classrooms: they are important spaces for plurilingual students' identity development and cultural learning, and mother tongue teachers are potentially powerful influences on their students (Ganuza & Hedman, 2019; Yli-Jokipii et al., 2022). From this perspective, it is surprising how little research in the field of CSP has focused on mother tongue teachers and their pedagogical thinking and practices. In this study, we addressed this research gap by interviewing 20 Finnish teachers to PLMT and analyzing their pedagogical thinking and practices using the core aims of CSP—supporting students' academic success, cultural competency, and sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2014) as a theoretical frame while including a perspective of linguistically sustaining pedagogy.

In this study, we researched the implementation of CSP by PLMT teachers in Finland. Through this, we wanted to learn more about the meaning of PLMT tuition for students and for the Finnish educational system and society. We found that PLMT teachers reported having many pedagogical practices aligning with CSP:

1. The most prominent skills the PLMT teachers emphasized were literacy and learning skills, and they had several practices to support both.
2. A pivotal part of PLMT teachers' work was supporting students' sociopolitical consciousness and critical thinking in order to help them find balance between home and societal norms and expectations.
3. PLMT teachers helped their students to gain understanding about cultures they are submerged to, yet the teachers need in-depth knowledge about aspects of the culture(s).

These findings show that PLMT teachers are following the guidelines of the National Core Curriculum (FNBE, 2016), wherein the main target for

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PLMT tuition is to support students' active multilinguistic skills, to raise their interest in lifelong language learning, and to enhance their integration into Finnish society. The interviewed PLMT teachers paid attention to achieving these goals despite the challenges of heterogeneous groups and a lack of suitable materials and collegial structural support (e.g., Piippo, 2016; Yli-Jokipii et al., 2022).

The literacy skills that PLMT promotes are pivotal in all learning and for social and identity construction. Through literacy development, learners get opportunities to verbalize, construe, and produce meanings for their own lives and social interactions (Kinossalo, 2020). Translanguaging was found to be a regular policy in PLMT classes, and many teachers encouraged their students in this regard, for example, by having them search for information in all their languages. The requirement of using only one language was abandoned to bolster communication in real-life situations. Since the PLMT teachers were plurilinguals themselves and most of them were working in their second or third language environments, they had personal knowledge about the requirements of and need for real-life skills. They used this knowledge to encourage their students to use their entire linguistic repertoire.

In addition, both sociopolitical consciousness and cultural competency were visible in the data. In some cases, these two were intertwined, and in other cases it was difficult for us to make an analytical decision as to which category was more appropriate. It was clear, however, that based on their responses, the MLMT teachers worked hard to support their students' learning, well-being, and inclusion. Moreover, the teachers also helped their students' caretakers to gain more understanding of Finnish society. Cultural distance (e.g., Hofstede, 2011) may be an explaining factor: the more distant the culture a student came from, the more actively their teachers worked to find a balance between cultures and wanted to teach them to critically review both cultures to support inclusion. (see Cooper et al., 1999; Ishimaru et al., 2016).

Most of the teachers felt some insecurity when discussing culture in-depth. This suggests that the PLMT teachers did not always recognize all the culturally sustainable practices they could utilize in their work. Furthermore, in some instances, the teachers had practices that essentialized cultures and strengthened cultural stereotypes. Even if the PLMT teachers are plurilinguals themselves and have diverse cultural backgrounds, that does not automatically give them the understanding and knowledge about CSP—even though they sometimes are assumed to be able to bring this expertise to the school communities (Rissanen, 2021). Therefore, we suggest that teacher education for PLMT teachers should be planned and organized with this kind of critical cultural awareness in mind. These teachers frequently face cultural competency questions; therefore, they need more knowledge and competence to

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work with these matters. The pedagogical thinking and practices the PLMT teachers used were prominently student- and future-oriented and thus well aligned with the National Core Curriculum (FNBE, 2016).

Even though this study had a unique and relatively large dataset, there may have been some misinterpretations due to the languages used, which can be considered limitations of the study. In all interviews, either the researcher or the interviewee spoke a language that was not their most fluent one. In addition, since the respondents enrolled themselves in this study, it is possible that they were exceptionally active and motivated with regard to PLMT, which can create bias. Therefore, the results might not represent the pedagogies of all PLMT teachers in Finland.

In the analysis, we discovered that the PLMT teachers' reported CRP practices actualized in three spaces/dimensions of work: actions in the classroom, actions in the school community, and actions with families. We explored the teachers' perceptions in all three fields, but our main emphasis was on classroom actions. Although the data were ample, the analysis highlighted only a narrow scope of PLMT teachers' work. There is a need for more research on the pedagogical practices and educational needs of PLMT teachers. In the Finnish context, it is pivotal to learn more about PLMT teachers' work as cultural mediators, as their role in the inclusion process for both students and their families seems crucial. Comparative research from other countries is important as well, as it would enable analysis of the ways in which different structural-level solutions influence everyday reality in linguistically and culturally diverse schools.

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III

IDENTIFYING SKILLS AND COMPETENCES FOR FUTURE TEACHERS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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8

Critical Approaches to Religious Diversity in Education

What Skills Do Future Teachers Need?

Anuleena Kimanen

Growing awareness of cultural diversity in the Nordic countries means growing awareness of religious diversity. More than ever, schoolteachers in the Nordic countries not only need to take cultural diversity into account but also need to understand diverse conceptions and practices that can be recognized as part of institutionalized religious traditions or defined as lived or non-institutionalized forms of those traditions. This chapter reflects on how a critical approach to cultural diversity in education can be applied to religious diversity in the Nordic context. The aim is to identify skills or competences that future teachers need in order to engage religious diversity in a socially just manner. This chapter leans on critical approaches to cultural diversity in education and reviews their implications specifically for religious diversity. I illustrate these approaches through existing Nordic research on religious diversity in education, focusing on identifying skills or competences that future teachers need. I conclude with implications for teacher education.

The focus on religious diversity is not to mean that secular worldviews do not need attention in school education. There is, however, some evidence that in a Nordic educational context, religious diversity seems to be subject to problematic discourses and practices, like secular normativity (e.g., Berglund, 2017; Niemi et al., 2020; Rissanen, 2019), ethnicizing (Kimanen, 2023a; Ubani, 2018), and suspicious attitudes toward exclusive views (Kimanen, 2018). This highlights the need to discuss religious diversity as a special case

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within worldview and other cultural diversity. So, in Nordic education, topics and views arise that either the pupil or the educator, or both, experience as religious. In this chapter, these topics and views are defined as "religion," although the common understanding of the category is problematized. Furthermore, the relationship between the secular and religious in the context of education in the Nordic countries will be briefly discussed from the perspective of power.

Recent researchers identified three fields where religious diversity poses new challenges to teacher professionality, namely, religious education (RE) as a school subject, content related to religion in other school subjects, and diverse practices in the general school culture. First, RE, taught not only by specialized subject teachers but also by class teachers with thin education on RE, varies to some extent depending on the Nordic country in question. In Finland, RE and its secular alternative are basically taught in separate groups based on religious affiliation (e.g., Sakaranaho, 2013), with the exception of Åland, where an integrative subject on religion and worldviews was started in August 2021. In Sweden, there is a long history of a single RE subject for everybody, where neutrality and objectivity dominate, with a Lutheran Protestant keynote (Berglund, 2013). Denmark and Norway also have a common subject but with explicit emphasis on Christianity (Böwadt, 2020; Bråten & Skeie, 2020). In Iceland, RE is merged with other social studies subjects (Gunnarsson, 2020). This means that the growth of religious diversity on the demographic level affects the composition of the RE classrooms in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, and the size and number of diverse RE groups in Finland. Simultaneously, it affects the urgency for providing interreligious and inter-worldview competence but on a policy level there is pressure to contribute to social cohesion and preserve cultural tradition (Böwadt, 2020; Bråten & Skeie, 2020).

Second, religious topics can be discussed in history, literature and geography lessons, and religious views can come up in physical education, music, arts, home economics and health education—or virtually everywhere across the curriculum. These topics and views require professional skills to make sure that certain identities are not continuously silenced or offended in the classroom (Simojoki, 2021). Third, diverse school practices with no connection to specific school subjects can cause situations where religious claims are used in negotiations, like school meals, possibilities for individual prayer or institutional worship during school hours, and celebrations (Niemi, 2019; Rissanen, 2020).

Teacher educators should provide the student teachers with the most valid approaches to each of these challenges. Cultural diversity in education has already been theorized for a long time, and there is a vast body of literature suggesting that education concerning cultural diversity should involve a critical

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review of power relations (e.g., Dolby, 2012; Gorski & Parekh, 2020; Kumashiro, 2000; May & Sleeter, 2010). Power structures have been discussed within research on religious diversity in education, for instance, power imbalances in inter-worldview encounters (Kimanen, 2019), or in dominant discourses in RE classes (Eriksen, 2010; Kimanen & Poulter, 2018; Kittelmann Flensner, 2015) and concerning certain religious traditions (von Brömssen & Olgaç, 2010; von der Lippe, 2011). In this chapter, by "education" I mainly mean primary and secondary schooling, starting in the Nordic countries at the age of six or seven, but concerning the development of teacher's competences some examples will be taken from training for teachers in early childhood education.

Critical Approaches to Cultural and Religious Diversity

Critical multiculturalism or critical multicultural education is perhaps the most prominent label for approaches that scrutinize power relations when addressing cultural diversity. According to Sleeter (1996), multicultural education was anti-oppressive from its beginning in the 1960s in the United States, but critical approaches were marginal for a long time due to political shifts and practical obstacles. Multiculturalism was critiqued—for instance by the British antiracist movement—for its insufficient attention to structural inequalities, leading to the development of critical multicultural education. The focus on group-based identities and the threat of cultural essentialism have also been criticized (May, 1999).

To avoid cultural essentialism, some scholars have substituted the term "multicultural" with "intercultural." For instance, Vavitsas and Nikolaou (2021) understand "multicultural" as preserving diverse, distinct cultural identities at the expense of intergroup contact and favor "intercultural" as a dynamic endeavor for respect and solidarity. In their view, intercultural education is critical throughout because it focuses on intergroup relations, addresses inequalities therein, and improves society. In some contexts, intercultural stands for a decolonizing approach that brings indigenous perspectives into conversation with dominant ones (Aikman, 1997; Gorski, 2008; Walsh, 2015). Indeed, some proponents of interculturalism have used multiculturalism as a label for "descriptive [. . .], apolitical, assimilationist approaches employed by dominant cultures" (Bernardes et al., 2021, 503). These perceptions fail to acknowledge the work of May and Sleeter and others, hence Gorski (2008), for instance, defines both multicultural and intercultural similarly but sees multiculturalism as more devoted to formal education.

Some scholars are critical of the focus on culture in intercultural education. For instance, Dervin (2015), has outlined "post-intercultural education" that

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focuses on identification and discourses of culture constructing identities. This approach recognizes the power that is embedded in use of terms and power relations that influence the processes of identification.

From another perspective, the problems of the concept of culture can be avoided by focusing on social justice, which as a whole is a critical approach (see Mikander et al., 2018). There is body of (mostly US) research on social justice education that addresses ethnic and racial minorities (e.g., Clark & Seider, 2017; Flynn, 2012; Morales-Doyle, 2017; Schindel Dimick, 2012; Welton et al., 2015), the same groups that often are in the focus of intercultural education. Social justice in education has been identified as redistribution (compensating deficits), recognition (attention to structures behind those deficits), activism (engaging pupils in questioning problematic assumptions), and capability (pupil agency in the school context) (Mills et al., 2017). Partly similarly, social justice education has been categorized as education about social justice (concepts, facts), into social justice (enhancing ability to recognize inequalities and willingness to act), with social justice (democratic teaching practices), and through social justice (pupil-led action projects) (Kimanen, 2022b).

It has been noted that "cultural differences" are sometimes used as a ground for a "new racism" to disguise attitudes and hierarchies attached to ethnicities and races (May, 1999, 12). School policies, educational practices and concepts, and all other similar structures are culturally and historically constructed where cultural background that deviates from the dominant culture may create a risk to school failure (Nieto & Bode, 2012, 262). In this chapter, I share the view that awareness of diverse cultural practices and conceptions (including those that can be interpreted as religious) and of their implications to privilege, and power is a vital part of teacher professionality.

The work of Nieto and Bode (2012) is part of a vast body of literature on culturally responsive or relevant education. Similar to others presented earlier, this educational approach not only aims at social justice and emancipation and requires critical reflection from the teachers who adopt it but also aims to ensure learning for all pupils regardless of their cultural identities and backgrounds. The main idea is to affirm identities and enhance engagement in education by attaching learning activities to each pupil's prior knowledge and life worlds. There is evidence that these pedagogies do affect learning outcomes, attitudes, and similar factors (Aronson & Laughter, 2018).

Concerning religious diversity, Small (2020) has pointed out that critical approaches have not gained much attention. She suggests critical religious pluralism to reveal the privileged position of Christianity in educational institutions that claim to be plural or secular. Her guidelines include critical examination of the intertwined nature of religion and culture, intersectional analysis, and understanding religion as a source for personal positive agency

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as long as religion's potential for both liberation and oppression are recognized. These guidelines show the particular challenges of critical approach to religious diversity, and some of them will be elaborated on later.

Critical Approaches to Cultural Diversity in Teacher Education

How to enhance intercultural competences in teacher education is an issue that has interested many researchers and teacher educators. There are problems with an essentialist view of culture as a fixed mindset that directly influences an individual's thinking and behavior. Jokikokko and Järvelä (2013) suggest that if cultural identities are processes rather than products, intercultural competences should be taught and learnt as an ongoing process of accommodating new information, encounter, and reflection. Teachers should base their praxis on an emancipatory knowledge interest, not on technical (positivist) or practical knowledge interests. This is because technical and practical definitions of knowledge, or competence in a prescribed set of skills, is not enough when the educators gain more experience and responsibility.

Reflection seems to be the cornerstone of a critical approach to cultural diversity in education. Byrd Clark and Dervin (2014) identify three forms of reflexivity in intercultural education: critical reflection to reveal power structures, becoming aware of representations and constructions, and hyper-reflexivity surpassing the limits of traditional reflexivity. An empirical study by Acquah and Commins (2015) shows that self-reflection and critical reflection on course materials can create dissonances for student teachers but also help them to resolve these dissonances.

Case-based methods are used in teacher education to enhance reflection, help students to acquire sociocultural knowledge, and give them a repertoire of strategies to deal with sensitive issues. These methods fit well in teacher education concerning cultural and religious diversity (Brown & Kraehe, 2010; Kleinfeld, 1990). Kimanen and Innanen (2020) have analyzed case discussions on intercultural encounters from the point of view of critical reflection and noticed that formulating questions concerning the cases helped student teachers and in-service teachers to question different assumptions and practices.

Some research on social justice in science teacher training considers culturally responsive teaching as part of social justice education (Rivera Maulucci, 2013). Culturally responsive education in a certain school subject may fight underrepresentation of minoritized groups in certain field and empower them to use knowledge of that field to improve their living conditions. Research on social justice in teacher training contributes to our understanding of how teachers develop critical agency. Moore (2008) showed that the

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extent to which student teachers saw themselves as teachers determined how they saw themselves as agents of change. Student teachers are members of various groups, too, and some may be minoritized or privileged. Francis and LeRoux (2011) have analyzed the interplay between those social identities and the formation of critical agency.

Critical Approaches and Religious Diversity in Education in a Nordic Context

From the earlier literature survey, four requirements for educators can be identified. They will be discussed in the following subsections in relation to religious diversity in the Nordic educational context in the following order. First, to avoid the pitfalls of essentialist or discriminatory use of the concept "religion," educators need a critical awareness of the category. Second, educators need to be able to reflect on their own worldview and relationship to religion. Third, educators need to know how to affirm diverse religious identities in their teaching. Fourth, educators need tools to include power structures and social change in classroom discussions and activities.

Critical Awareness of the Concept "Religion"

The ability to critically review discourses concerning religion and one's own position toward it is the basis of any other skills related to religious diversity. These skills have recently been listed under the concept religious literacy, which has been developed in religious studies and adopted in research on RE (e.g., Enstedt, 2022). Two influential definitions of religious literacy are given by Adam Dinham and Diane L. Moore. Both include a certain amount of knowledge of religious traditions, but for a critical perspective, other aspects are more significant. Dinham's definition contains "category," that is, understanding the complications in using the term "religion" and drawing boundaries with it, and "dispositions," that is, emotions activated when encountering phenomena that are interpreted as religious (Dinham et al., 2017). Moore's definition, published by the American Academy of Religion (2010), stresses the necessity to understand the historical, social, and cultural impact of religion and vice versa, which can be understood as a critical review of structures.

Beyond these definitions, there is a need to develop the concept of worldview literacy (Kimanen, 2023a; Shaw, 2023). Kimanen (2023a) has suggested that analysis of power relations should be added to the definition of worldview literacy. Although this chapter mainly addresses recognizing and interpreting diverse religious worldviews and their practices, Kimanen's (2023a)

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study of Finnish preservice and in-service teachers' worldview literacy shows the challenges they face in interpreting religious diversity. Only a handful of the survey respondents considered power imbalances in their interpretations of a case. An even smaller proportion expressed negative assumptions concerning religious worldviews, including embedded intolerance. Some responses showed signs of cultural essentialist thinking, for instance, the idea that certain "cultures" are more religious than the "Finnish culture" and this difference in intensity has a powerful impact on pupils' behavior. This essentialist thinking implies that children do not have the agency to form their own worldview, but follow their culture non-reflectively.

In their discussion of the relationship between religion and culture, Rissanen et al. (2020) noted that some Finnish and Swedish educators tended to strategically use distinctions between culture and religion. By labelling certain practices as cultural and thus as secular they could move these practices outside the scope of religious freedom. Protestant Christianity was an important source of tradition in the school cultures they studied, but other religions were perceived as "too religious" to have pedagogical relevance as cultural heritage. This culturalization of one type of Christianity at the expense of other confessions has been noted in the Norwegian and other RE curriculums, and it has been regarded as neo-nationalism or neo-confessionalism (Andreassen, 2014). Rissanen et al. (2020) also show that Protestant Christianity was often assumed to represent the essence of humanity, giving any similarities with it in a disproportionate role in representing other traditions as similar. These observations highlight the need to recognize privilege as part of religious literacy.

Another sign of lacking religious literacy is what Rissanen et al. (2020) call "religionization," a tendency to interpret any wishes or needs of (in their case) Muslim pupils or parents as dictated by religion. Berglund (2017) uses the term "religification" to describe educators' tendency to place Muslim youth who attend Islamic supplementary education into the category of "the religious," which is not a desired identity in a secular school context. These tendencies may be one aspect of an essentialist view of religions, especially minority religions, as distinctive packages that individuals either follow as wholes or not (see, e.g., Enstedt, 2022). Alongside several attempts to define culture in a non-essentialist way, discussed earlier, in cultural studies and intercultural education, similar moves are being made in religious studies. For instance, a cultural approach to religion stresses the internal diversity and dynamic, evolving nature of religions as well as the situatedness of any concepts and knowledge concerning religion (Moore, 2014). Lived religion pays attention to individuals' choices and interpretations that may cross the boundaries of organized religious traditions (e.g., McGuire, 2008). Discursive religion addresses the purposes for which the category of religion is used (e.g., Taira, 2016).

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To sum up, as theoretical as it might seem, teachers do need a critical orientation toward the use of the category of religion. Without that, a Protestant understanding of religion may dominate in the Nordic educational context, teachers may draw boundaries of secular and religious in an unreflective way, and essentialist views of religion may be reflected especially on non-Christian pupils and families. Hence, a hint of religious studies is needed in teacher education.

Critical Self-Reflection

Essentialist views, religification and the strategic use of the category of religion are often not entirely conscious, but in the Nordic context they are cultural assumptions and schemes that influence the educators' thinking and practices. Self-reflection in the sense of reflecting on one's assumptions and power position helps educators to overcome these assumptions.

For instance, Rissanen et al. (2016) noted that many Finnish student teachers, even if they considered themselves interculturally competent, saw religious diversity from the perspective of limitations to educational practices and difficulties with parents. Hence, they thought that the best solution would be to exclude religion from the school. After receiving instruction on religious diversity, containing some case examples and opportunities to reflect their own views, many of them started to see opportunities to affirm religious identities through public recognition of religious diversity. Similarly, Kimanen and Innanen (2020) showed that Finnish preservice and in-service teachers were better able to question school practices in familiar cases like Muslim girls' swimming lessons than for less common ones such as a how a pupil who was a Jehovah's Witness responded to national festivities.

Cultural assumptions and personal privilege are often close-knit with one's own worldview. Personal life history and worldview affect our perspectives on the relationship between diverse organized worldviews. Thus, the concept of worldview is needed as an overarching term for both religious and secular identifications (Bråten & Everington, 2019). Following Valk and Tosun (2016), worldview should cover not only beliefs and values but also identities, rituals, and symbols. Such a definition of worldview communicates the fact that having beliefs and strong views, symbolic language, and rituals is not confined to religious people but that secular people also base their values and norms on a worldview. Poulter and Tosun (2020) found out that Turkish and Finnish student teachers gained four things through inter-worldview dialogue: increased knowledge of one's own worldview, recognition of that everyone's worldview is unique, multiple perspectives, and openness to new questions. Lamminmäki-Vartia et al. (2020) have also reported that

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inter-worldview activities, particularly practical encounters, benefit trainee teachers in early childhood education.

Religiously Responsive Education?

Whereas culturally responsive or relevant education is a widely researched concept, its religious equivalent is not as commonly discussed. Niemi et al. (2020) found that Finnish in-service and preservice teachers took a religiously responsive approach to worldview diversity. It differed from both a secularist approach that avoided public display of any religion and an equal visibility approach that focused on equal recognition of diverse worldviews. In contrast, the religiously responsive approach took a positive stance toward exemptions from certain school activities, gender-based grouping of students based on religious needs when necessary, and providing students with spaces to pray in the school. In their interview study, Lipiäinen et al. (2022) found five teacher attitudes toward worldviews in school, of which emphasizing freedom of religion came closest to a religiously responsive approach. However, this approach appeared in the interviews mostly together with emphasis on the school's neutrality, an attitude that accepted religion at an individual but not an institutional level. Silencing religion in teacher discourse and teaching materials cannot be seen as particularly religiously responsive.

From the pupils' perspective, many Finnish Muslim pupils interviewed by Vähärautio-Halonen (2021) experienced allowing prayer at school as an important sign of acceptance. Although some of them adopted the dominant discourse that open religiosity does not belong in school, those who negotiated prayer opportunities in their educational contexts experienced agency, using different strategies and arguments. As far as affirming diverse identities is considered important in culturally or religiously responsive education, the equal visibility approach (Niemi et al., 2020) works toward that end. There is a lot to be done to ensure that teachers provide all learners an inclusive learning environment. This has been a lively area of research, especially in the context of RE.

First, RE teachers in the Nordic countries often seek to maintain a scientific or non-confessional atmosphere through secularist discourses that generally construct religious identities as the Other (Eriksen, 2010; Kimanen & Poulter, 2018; Kittelmann Flensner, 2015). Second, religious traditions are frequently presented stereotypically, so that religious pupils do not recognize them as their own. There are several tensions in adopting the role of a defender, explainer, questioner, or a mere representative of a certain faith, but especially minoritized pupils seldom have the choice (Buchardt, 2010; Holmqvist Lidh, 2021). Other subjects are not necessarily safer spaces: religiously positioned young Swedes interviewed by Holmqvist Lidh (2021) reported science

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teachers' disrespectful discourses toward religious truth claims and difficulties to get support when contrasting religious convictions with views on evolution theory, abortion, or homosexuality. In contrast, teachers who respect religious views and practices and use their knowledge of them in negotiations gain trust from both pupils and parents (Berglund, 2012). Third, historical, religious, and political conflicts bring about tensions in religiously diverse RE classrooms—and no doubt also in other subject classrooms, partly heightened by media representation. Pupils may start self-censoring their words and teachers may avoid topics that lead to conflicts (Vikdahl & Skeie, 2019) although bringing diversities and conflictual issues up in the classroom would be vital for affirming identities and cultivating the pupils' religious literacy.

The competences of the ideal teacher in a religiously diverse school context range from inter-worldview reflectivity (Kimanen & Innanen, 2020) to worldview (cf. cultural) awareness (Holm et al., 2021). Kuusisto and Lamminmäki-Vartia (2012) have used the concept of worldview sensitivity, derived from cultural sensitivity, as part of a teacher's "moral compass" with an obligation to foster worldview democracy, derived from cultural democracy, enabling members of minorities to maintain their identities and practices. However, the concept of religiously responsive education shifts the focus from the educator to the educational practices. What would it mean to provide student teachers the ability to educate pupils in a religiously responsive way? In addition to critical self-reflection and ability to critically review the category of religion, it would entail commitment to include different, also religious, viewpoints in discussions and to gain information about them. No doubt, this kind of education would involve dealing with conflicts between school knowledge and religious truth claims, liberal rights, and religious moralities. Sometimes there is a need to detect the oppressive within a religious tradition (Small, 2020). However, when respect and understanding have been expressed, identifying oppression in a tradition should not break the relationship of trust altogether. A religiously responsive approach is needed to ensure that education is relevant for religious pupils and that they do not have to hide their religious identity at school.

Teaching about Social Justice and Enhancing Agency Concerning Religious Diversity

When future teachers have gained the ability to critically review the category of religion in their practice and the skills to positively affirm diverse religious identities, something is still missing. Future teachers also need the ability to address the justice of power structures with the pupils and to foster pupil agency (Kimanen, 2022b; Mills et al., 2017). RE in all the Nordic countries

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has content about religious diversity. Commitment to addressing power structures and fostering pupil agency concerning religious diversity involves paying attention to past and present majority and minority relations, stereotypes and discrimination, and possibilities for change. From another perspective, any intercultural or social justice education provided in school should somehow recognize religious diversity. In the following, I will use Kimanen (2022b), discussed earlier, on categories of education about, into, with, and through social justice.

Concerning education about social justice, the curricula in Sweden and Finland cover human rights and democracy. However, researchers have called for a more transformative commitment and explicit mentions of structures that create inequality in religious and ethics education (Osbeck et al., 2018; Kimanen, 2022a), intercultural education (Zilliacus et al., 2017), and social justice education (Sporre, 2020). There is little research on fostering critical agency (education into social justice) in Nordic schools. Apart from studies by Kimanen (2022a, 2023b, 2022b), the project called EthiCo II (Sporre et al., 2022) can be regarded as related to social justice. It addressed multidimensional ethical competence, defined as moral sensitivity, moral judgement, moral motivation and acting morally—abilities that are partly also outcomes of education into and through social justice.

Teaching into social justice to pave the way for change-making is challenging. First, a classroom with pupils from both dominant and minoritized groups is a tricky context because each group could need different kinds of awareness and action strategies. The power relations of the wider society are reflected in the classroom (Welton et al., 2015), and that probably leads many educators to avoid directly addressing minoritized identities when discussing social justice (Kimanen, 2022a, 2023b). Second, pupils may hold both dominant and minoritized identities; since very many layers of identities cannot all be addressed in depth in the same classroom activity, certain identities may be excluded (Flynn, 2012). The lack of explicit curricular instruction also explains why support for pupils' sense of agency in social justice matters is not very frequently seen in the classroom. Kimanen's study (2022a, 2023b) has shown that even when RE teachers taught about and into social justice, formation of agency was often left incomplete: discussions about who could and should act on certain topics were frequently vague and pupils' expressions of powerlessness were not always followed up by empowering discourses.

Teaching with social justice is a way to practice what you preach. Kimanen (2022b) shows that Finnish teachers who taught minoritized pupils either in their own groups (like RE or Finnish as the second language) or as substantial proportions of their classes saw listening to pupils' views and creating class rules together as an important tool in social justice education. In another

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study (Kimanen, 2023b), listening to pupils' concerns about the school's practices was an important exception when pupils' minority positions were addressed: as non-privileged members in the school community none of the pupils was constructed as less privileged than the others. However, applying democratic teaching methods does not address religious diversity in any special way.

Teaching through social justice would probably be very efficient in enhancing agency because it gives the experience of action and hopefully also change-making. However, there seems to be no Nordic research on this kind of activities in the context of RE. Pupil-led social action projects probably are not very common teaching methods in RE and ethics education (Kimanen, 2022b). There is US research on the influence of project-based, justice-centered learning (Morales-Doyle, 2017; Schindel Dimick, 2012;), but other research suggests that minorities, at least, may gather agency from education into social justice (e.g., Clark & Seider, 2017; Flynn, 2012; Welton et al., 2015). Education without direct action can also construct forms of delayed agency, like plans and dreams for the future (Kimanen, 2023b).

What principles can we teach the future teachers so that they can effectively promote pupil agency and ability to recognize power imbalances in matters of religious diversity? First of all, it takes sensitivity, commitment, diverse approaches, and activities (Kimanen, 2022b). Discussion is important, and the teacher needs to be open to use those occasions when pupils bring up topics that are relevant for them. Teacher-initiated discussion about inequality is also needed, and may be enhanced through pictures, narratives, and drama (Kimanen, 2022a, 2022b). Reading fiction has been successfully used to foster ethical competences (Sporre et al., 2022). It is important to positively affirm and engage non-privileged identities as well as suggest forms of action for both privileged and non-privileged pupils—that is, to male, female, white, and racialized pupils as well as pupils who identify with discriminated and privileged religious or non-religious groups (Kimanen, 2023b). Most importantly, it is important to give the future teachers the conviction that despite the challenges, social justice education is possible.

Implications for Teacher Education

In this chapter, I have sought to show how critical approaches to cultural diversity in education have already been used in relation to religious diversity and how they could be further elaborated. The findings have implications for all teacher education: not only specialized RE teachers need competences concerning religion.

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First, recognizing the use of power in categorizing is vital in any field, including religious diversity. Research in the Nordic context shows Protestant Christian underpinnings, unreflective use of the categories of culture and religion to draw boundaries between the secular and religious, and some essentialist views. Religious studies have developed several tools to better deal with these problems. Religious literacy, although also a contested concept (see Andreassen, 2019), can serve as a title for the necessary knowledge and tools of critical analysis that teacher preparation should offer, with a tight connection to educational practice.

Second, in critical forms of education, teachers always need critical self-reflection and to recognize their own assumptions and privilege. In the context of religious diversity, educators need to recognize their assumptions concerning religion as a phenomenon, diverse religious traditions, and the boundaries between the secular and religious, as well as their power position as teachers negotiating school practices. In the Nordic context, this includes revealing the Lutheran Christian assumptions. Considering that a diminishing number of future teachers have religious worldviews, the concept of worldview as an umbrella term for secular and religious notions, values, and symbols is important for cultivating future teachers' self-reflectivity and avoiding the conception of the secular as neutral.

Third, religiously responsive education has not been outlined comprehensively before, although there is a body of research that shows religious pupils' identities are insufficiently affirmed in the Nordic educational context. Admittedly, religiously responsive education can be included in other concepts, such as worldview sensitive (Kuusisto & Lamminmäki-Vartia, 2012) or reflective (Kimanen & Innanen, 2020) education. In the context of this chapter, it is important to recognize that religious viewpoints may appear in almost any subject and that a teacher needs skills to address them in an inclusive way. This means that teacher education should provide tools for creating an atmosphere of respect and trust, for instance, through participatory ground rules and providing relevant and understanding examples of religious diversity, so that conflicts and oppression can be dealt with in a safer space.

Fourth, social justice education provides the view that pupils are future agents of religious freedom and equality between diverse religious and secular identities. Hence, teachers need awareness of the ways to teach about, into, with and through social justice (Kimanen, 2023b) and to enhance pupil agency.

The research on cultivating these four skills in future teachers shows that reflection assignments, case-based methods, and worldview reflection can help students to develop reflective abilities (Acquah & Commins, 2015; Kimanen & Innanen, 2020; Poulter & Tosun, 2020; Rissanen et al., 2016). To learn and use these skills, teachers may need to form an identity as an agent of

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change (Francis & LeRoux, 2011). Far from being mechanical tricks or tools, these skills are analytical, deep-reaching, and require moral commitments. Teachers need to maintain their knowledge of religious traditions, their internal diversity, sacred texts, various interpretations and global historical, social and political relationships in which religious identities are embedded. Thus, it is vital to regard these skills more as an ongoing process that can be started and supported by teacher education than a product acquired when teachers qualify (Jokikokko & Järvelä, 2013). More research is needed on how trainee teachers acquire all four skills, but also on the motivations and resources that help in-service teachers keep their knowledge-base and skills updated.

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9

Reconceptualizing Non-Confessional Religious Education in Norway from a Freirean Perspective

Thor-André Skrefsrud and Vander Tavares

Across the Nordic context, the subject of religious education (RE) is seen increasingly as an important tool with which schools may enhance students' sense of identity, promote interpersonal understanding, and raise an awareness of issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (Jackson, 2014; Llorent-Bedmar & Cobano-Delgado, 2014; Rothgangel et al., 2014). Acknowledging that religious beliefs and practices are essential dimensions of diversity in a pluralistic society, educators working with RE are given the responsibility not only to teach skills and knowledge that are vital for different cultural groups to live together, but also, more importantly, to recognize and address issues of social injustice originating in the view of diversity and difference as deficit. In RE classrooms, students get to learn about a variety of religious, non-religious, and secular philosophies and worldviews. As such, RE can provide a space in which students are given the opportunity to reflect on philosophical questions and enhance their understandings of the beliefs and perspectives of people whose worldviews, life stances, and values differ from their own (Bråten, 2015; Engen, 2018; Reiss, 2016). As noted by Reiss (2016), when RE is conducted in ways that promote tolerance and acceptance for differences, it has the potential to "engage students, build knowledge, sharpen ethical thinking, contribute to community cohesion and make religious extremism less likely" (p. 111).

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In this chapter, we discuss the intercultural potential of non-confessional RE in public schools in Norway, using Freire's theory of liberation pedagogy as a theoretical lens. Drawing lines between RE studies and Freire's critical and constructive perspectives on teaching and learning, we aim to challenge a RE-practice wherein students' personal lived experiences are isolated from teaching and learning in schools. Moreover, we argue that a Freirean thought and pedagogy not only offer a critical foundation for interpreting non-confessional RE in public schools but also contribute to a constructive rethinking of the intercultural potential of the RE-subject. Building on Freire's work and the centrality of dialogue in the educational process can help educators create transformative educational experiences.

We start the chapter by providing a background for our argument. Central in this regard are the insights provided by Johnsen (2017), Skeie (2022), and others, that studies in RE have tended to overlook contemporary educational theories on how learners actively construct their own understanding of the world, and rather depended on simplistic approaches to knowledge transfers from teachers to students. As such, the intercultural potential of RE may be reduced to what Freire (2005) framed as a banking model of education, which reproduces conventional ideas about teaching and learning as the transmission of abstract knowledge from someone who knows to someone who supposedly does not, thus isolating knowledge from practice and personal experiences. Against this background, we find it interesting and important to bring perspectives from Freire's philosophy of education into a conversation with the Norwegian RE subject. We ask, How can Freire's theory of liberationist pedagogy open discussions about the intercultural potential of non-confessional RE in public schools?

Subject Didactics and Educational Sciences: Background and Rationale

A crucial task for teachers is to create and cultivate spaces through which students can explore and investigate meaning and new learning (UNESCO, 2021). For teachers working with RE, creating meaningful spaces will mean encouraging students to engage with a plurality of views in ways that recognize personal experiences and stimulate critical reflections. When the curriculum is connected to the students' prior knowledge and experiences, instruction gives them the tools to critically understand and act upon those experiences (Dodman et al., 2022; Skrefsrud, 2022). Consequently, teachers' interest in students' life-worlds challenges a traditional perception of teaching and learning where teachers speak, and students listen. Hence, in making connections between the curriculum and the lives of the students, teachers invite scholars and educators to rethink the idea that students' engagement

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with religion and worldviews simply implies the reproduction of curricular content and a static body of knowledge.

To develop and strengthen an experience-based RE that corresponds with students' life-worlds, an enhanced scientific dialogue between the subject didactics of RE and educational sciences is of highly importance (Johnsen, 2017; Skeie, 2022; Skrefsrud; 2022). While subject didactics address issues such as the selection of content, methodological structuring of lessons, and evaluation of learning material, educational sciences shed light on how students learn, and lay out more specific understandings of aspects involving teaching (Cramer & Schreiber, 2018). As such, the elements of subject didactics are building on insights from educational sciences, while educational sciences are operationalized and materialized within the field of subject didactics.

However, in the Norwegian context, which is the starting point for our discussion, didactical research in the field of RE has paid remarkably little attention to educational theory on how teachers can embed students' experiences and life-worlds into their teaching (Johnsen, 2017; Skeie, 2022; Skrefsrud, 2022). While concentrating on subject-specific knowledge and debates on legitimation of the subject, simplified theoretical understandings of teaching and learning seem to have been repeated, often conceptualized within what Johnsen (2017) has framed as a limited sender-receiver model of communication. Hence, although the field of RE research has moved from a theological legitimation of the subject to religious studies, contemporary educational and pedagogical theory is scarcely incorporated as part of the research field.

As noted by Cramer and Schreiber (2018), such a disconnectedness between subject didactics and educational sciences comes as no surprise. Research within educational sciences has often been conducted away from the classroom and is in many cases presented from a decontextualized perspective, without linking educational perspectives or theories to subject specific examples. For researchers within the field of subject didactics, educational science can thus be seen as too general to be integrated as part of a subject-oriented research, and even as less relevant for teachers' work with the subject in schools. Moreover, due to differentiation and increasing levels of specialization within the educational sector, research fields that are basically complementing each other continue to be developed separately with less opportunities for communication and interaction. For example, although the overall quality of teacher education is depended on a dialogue between different constitutive elements such as scientific disciplines, subject didactics, educational science, and practical training, the specialization of departments within and between institutions reduce the possibilities for interdisciplinary exchange (Cramer & Schreiber, 2018). As a result, teacher education may reproduce the myth for student teachers that findings from education sciences

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are of little relevance to their teaching in the classroom. In addition, researchers within subject didactics may lose opportunities for integrating knowledge about phenomena relevant for students' learning in general, such as students' motivation, assessment, or knowledge about learning strategies.

With regard to the RE field, the lack of communication between subject didactics and educational sciences runs the risk of reproducing conventional ideas about teaching and learning, emphasizing the transmission of abstract knowledge from someone who knows to someone who does not, thus isolating knowledge from practice and personal experiences (Johnsen, 2017; Skeie, 2022). When this is the case, schools create a distance between classroom learning and students' everyday lives. Moreover, traditional teacher and student roles are recapitulated or at least not sufficiently addressed, modelling teachers as the active knowers and experts, and students as passively accepting the curriculum prescribed for them by the teacher.

On this background, there is a need for integrating more nuanced and responsive theoretical approaches to teaching and learning within the research field of Norwegian RE. More specifically, the subject faces "the notable challenge of developing a bridge between discipline and profession" (Schreiber & Cramer, 2018, p. 154), which implies linking the subject-specific academic knowledge to pedagogical theory on teaching and learning. In response to this challenge, the chapter at hand proposes Freire's theory of liberationist pedagogy as a theoretical lens for discussing the didactics of an intercultural non-confessional RE, such as the Norwegian subject. In this chapter, we argue that although Freire's theories cannot be transferred directly from its context of origin, the overall "pedagogy" articulated by Freire can still offer a critical foundation for interpreting non-confessional RE in public schools. Moreover, a Freirean perspective on teaching and learning can also contribute to a constructive rethinking of the intercultural potential of the RE subject. We argue that building on Freire's work and the centrality of dialogue in the educational process can help educators provide transformative educational experiences within the subject of RE. Before introducing Freire's perspectives and bringing them into dialogue with the subject of RE, we give a short introduction to Norwegian RE and the debate that has followed the subject since its introduction in the late 1990s.

Non-confessional RE in Norwegian Schools: The Debate

In Norway, the introduction of a common, non-confessional RE subject in 1997 was a constructive attempt from the government to address a growing diversification of the Norwegian school and society. When the subject was introduced 25 years ago, immigration, globalization, and internationalization

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were already having substantial effects on Norwegian communities, resulting in a growing cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity in schools. Simultaneously, the government recognized the need for building shared values, creating relationships and a sense of belonging among the members within the community itself. To separate students into different groups when learning about religion, as the situation was before introducing the common RE subject in 1997, was thus sending a negative signal that religious diversity was too difficult to include in discussions on how to live with diversity. Against this background, the RE subject should emphasize the significance of acknowledging religious diversity when developing a more diverse and inclusive society. Engen (2003, 2018), for example, argued that the subject's qualitative differentiation of content provided an opportunity for supporting students' identity development, and at the same time offering opportunities to create and gain knowledge and understanding of other life interpretations. Subject content that for some would provide greater understanding would affirm the identities of others, and vice versa. Hence, the aspirations were high for introducing a common, non-confessional RE subject, which was supposed to make students better equipped to face the contemporary challenges of a diversified society (Engen & Lied, 2010).

However, the non-confessional RE subject was highly debated, both nationally and internationally. The critique found that the Norwegian RE subject was still forming implicit biases toward Christianity and claimed that the subject was unable to fulfil its intercultural intentions (Lied, 2009). As a result of criticism from the UN's Human Rights Committee in 2004 and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in 2008, the subject was revised several times and substantial changes were incorporated. In the latest version in 2008, the subject was specified to provide an objective, critical, and pluralistic teaching of religions and worldviews, which also is the case for the latest curriculum reform for primary and lower secondary school in Norway. Here, the RE subject is described as a common school subject that aims to give students intercultural competence, meaning that the RE subject should prepare them for interactions with people from diverse backgrounds, help them to understand and respect other viewpoints and life interpretations than their own, and enable students to see how intercultural encounters can be a profound and powerful enriching experience (Ministry of Education, 2020).

In latest years, the debate around the subject has slowly diminished. As noted by Bråten (2015), Skeie (2022), and others, the recent understandings of the subject have been informed primarily by religious studies, privileging an outsider-approach to teaching with the aim of giving non-partial information about religions and worldviews to students. However, while such an understanding has led to increased support for the subject and reduced a polarized debate, there are reasons to ask what kind of didactics that follows a distanced,

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critical, and analytical RE subject. How does a one-dimensional outsider-approach to RE correspond with contemporary educational and pedagogical thinking on teaching and learning? To what extent is a distant, analytical, and informative non-confessional RE subject able to make connections between subject content and students' own experiences of religious life and practice?

As noted in the introduction, there is a pressing need for creating dialogues between the research field of RE and pedagogical knowledge on teaching and learning. We now turn to Freire's theory of liberationist pedagogy and ask how such a theoretical lens may open discussions about the intercultural potential of non-confessional RE in Norwegian public schools.

Recalling the Legacy of Freire

For Freire, education has always been political. An attention to the socio-cultural context of Brazil, particularly the northeast region of the country, where Freire grew up and attended university, helps elucidate the reasons for his unwavering stance on education. The arrival of Portuguese colonizers in Brazil, around 1500, fueled the beginning of a historical process that completely reconfigured the social, cultural, and linguistic matrices of the country in the centuries that followed. This process unfolded initially through colonization, and subsequently through coloniality, which can be considered, at a broad level, the structural remains of colonial systems that have shaped modern society, even after the official end of colonization and slavery (Mignolo, 2017). The imposition of a Western education model upon the society that existed then served the explicitly political purpose of controlling Indigenous Brazilians for the expansion of the Portuguese Empire and the enrichment of the Portuguese Crown. Consequently, education was a strategic mechanism employed to erase the cultural and linguistic identities of Indigenous Brazilians as well as their ways of living. Education for financial gains was implemented by force, resulting in the displacement, diminution, and both directly and indirectly, the extermination of some Indigenous tribes over the centuries (Fleuri & Fleuri, 2018; Puntoni, 2019).

In addition to control, education was also a tool to replicate the elitism embedded within the status quo of the Portuguese Empire. In practice, this meant that only the children of Portuguese colonizers received a comprehensive education. Indigenous and Black Brazilians were placed first into language and religion classes. In most cases, they were also barred from attending higher level classes and college, once these were established (Olinda, 2003). Thus, the jobs in public administration, teaching, and governance in the colony that required a diploma were continuously filled by descendants of Portuguese. Conversely, everyone else—Blacks, Indigenous, and mixed-race

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children—was relegated to manual labor, especially on plantation fields. In schools, teaching consisted of epistemological and social subordination: memorization, recitation, and obedience (Paiva, 2015). In a nutshell, education was the mechanism that ensured "the development of the elites and of governance of the colonial society, so that the consolidation of the Catholic culture would be guaranteed" (Zotti, 2006, p. 126). Colonization extended the elitist and medieval nature of education in Brazil for the ensuing centuries. Freire was educated within the remains of this very system. His educational experience was surrounded by turbulent times of authoritarian governments in Brazil. Inspired by an eclectic philosophical and experiential repertoire, he sought to restore and reinvent the purpose of education in Brazil, though his influence grew globally.

The Banking Concept of Education and the Importance of Dialogue

Freire conceptualized traditional education as a "banking system" primarily in light of the position assigned to students. In banking education, students are objectified and turned into empty vessels into which teachers deposit information (Freire, 2018). As such, teachers hold all knowledge and students become merely the recipients of it. However, the same knowledge, which takes on the form of static and preexisting information that is transferred unilaterally, is not only simple and conclusive but also irrelevant to students' daily lives. Indeed, one of Freire's major concerns was the *distance*—or in many cases, a refusal by teachers operating within the banking system—to make students' lived experiences pedagogy. In fact, students are made to believe that their lived experiences comprise a problem, rather than a solution, to societal challenges. In the banking system of education, teachers, as authority figures, numb students' critical thinking abilities by constantly suppressing students' knowledges and experiences. By doing so, the banking system of education guarantees that power remains distributed unevenly between students and teachers, thereby perpetuating inequality and division.

Interlacing the curriculum with students' personal experiences is essential for the development of students' critical thinking skills. Freire proposed that a "problem-posing education" could accomplish such a goal as it is grounded in pedagogy that is participatory, contextualized, and equalizing between teacher and student. Put differently, the students' lived experiences become sites of learning through ongoing problematization and reflection. Rather than passing "knowledge" on to students, teachers and students work in collaboration to co-construct knowledge in active ways that reflect students' direct experiences with the subject matter (Freire, 2018). Freire considered problem-posing education liberatory because it not only seeks answers and solutions to problems in society but also empowers students to be actors

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within a meaningful learning experience that is mediated by the very world which students are a part of. In Freire's (2018) words, "those truly committed to liberation must reject the banking concept in its entirety, adopting instead a concept of women and men as conscious beings [. . .] and replace it [the banking concept] with the posing of the problems of human beings in their relations with the world" (p. 122).

Freire believed that education that includes dialogue has the potential to be liberatory and transformative. He used the terms "dialogic education" or "the dialogic method" to refer to a pedagogy that rejects the authoritarian role of teachers through which they are entitled to teach through monologues that do not invite students' perspectives (Shor & Freire, 1987). When education is based on dialogue, teachers and students come together to identify what they know and what they do not know about the subject matter. Dialogue works to validate an equal relationship between teachers and students in which both learn and relearn the object of study. In this sense, dialogue is not only a teaching method but also a democratic position in education because it redefines the traditional roles of students from passive recipients to co-contributors and co-creators of knowledge. In dialogic education, teachers need to (learn to) listen to students' voices, not as a symbolic act of acknowledgment of students' perspectives, but instead, as an opportunity to (re)learn from students as partners.

The linguistic construction of dialogue on the part of teachers is also key to how and whether teachers and students understand one another. Freire believed that teachers teaching through the dialogic method should conceptualize and practice a pedagogy that departs from the ways students themselves use language to describe their social realities. Freire (Shor & Freire, 1987) explained that "my insistence on starting from *their* description of *their* daily life experiences is based in the possibility of starting from concreteness, from common sense, to reach a rigorous understanding of reality" (p. 20, italics in original). Teaching from concreteness meant a teaching that is not only reflective of what students experience in their daily lives but also linguistically accessible. Freire believed that verbose and abstract language could confuse students and further widen the distance between teachers and students, preventing an epistemological alignment between them, one necessary for social change. He argued that "the more we are like this, the farther we are from the masses of people, whose language on the contrary is absolutely linked to concreteness" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 19).

Problem-Posing Education: Involving Students into Learning

Freire put forth a model for teaching and learning which he termed "problem-posing education" (Freire, 2018). Problem-posing education has a

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humanizing character for it completely re-envisions the traditional role of students. Such a vision has dialogue at its core, which simultaneously depends on and promotes mutual respect, trust, and collaboration between teachers and students. Freire proposed that problem-posing education epistemologically aligned teachers and students, recognizing that such a shift, however, must originate from teachers given their position of authority: teachers "must be partners of the students in their relations with them" (Freire, 2018, p. 119). Micheletti (2010) argued that problem-posing education "*diminishes* a teacher's authority to a level that does not obstruct the exchange of ideas" (para. 12, italics in original). Because traditional education—or banking education—has been designed upon unequal, and even exploitive relations of power, Freire insisted that reversing students' and teachers' roles would only preserve systemic oppression. As such, he called for equalizing roles by first humanizing students' roles into that of active, critical, and knowledgeable individuals.

Humanizing the role of students has to do with awakening and cultivating students' critical awareness about themselves and the world. Freire (2018) used the term *conscientização* from Portuguese to mean "conscientization," which is the process by which students become cognizant (or aware) that their social conditions are the result of historical processes rather than natural causes. *Conscientização* is about finding both the reasons for and solutions to social problems in "concreteness," or put differently, precisely in the world students live in (Cruz, 2013). *Conscientização* links consciousness and history together to develop an analytical lens in students. Yet, this is also a continuous process because social reality is not static as power structures evolve and expand over time. Problem-posing education does exactly what it is called: poses questions, problems, and scenarios to students based on their lived experiences throughout the course of their educational journey. Teachers teaching within banking education provide students opportunities to learn *about* critical thinking, but do not connect critical thinking to students' realities for individual liberation (Micheletti, 2010). Learning consequently remains decontextualized and unempowered.

Conclusion

Freire's philosophical ideas have informed the disciplinary development of different branches of education over the years (e.g., Tavares, 2023), including RE. Although Freire's work was informed considerably by his Christian faith (Boyd, 2012), his ideas have been built upon within and across different religious faiths given their potential for liberation and social justice. As the curriculum of RE of schools in increasingly diverse societies continues to invite

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multicultural and intercultural perspectives, Freire's ideas remain relevant for they pave a way toward critical citizenship, intergroup collaboration, and social transformation. Speaking to Islamic RE in the Pakistani context and inspired by Freirean thought, Ashraf (2018) argued that "to achieve freedom from oppression under cultural diversity, the appropriate awareness, actions, and attitudes must be in place, which calls for teachers and students to step outside of their cultural norms and attempt to understand and educate themselves about others' cultures, social norms, and values" (p. 9). To this end, dialogue that is based on students' personal experiences can play an instrumental role. Ashraf (2018) further proposed that "the curriculum must be constructed in such a way that learning about diverse religions and teaching respect and tolerance for these differences is an integral part of this education" (p. 9). As such, teachers need to (re)learn about religious diversity by engaging in dialogic relationships with their students in which the students' personal religious experiences are discussed and reflected upon (Noddings, 2006).

Ali et al. (2021) have also underscored the importance of interfaith *dialogue* as a means to improve religious intolerance and extremism. The authors discussed interreligious literacy learning, which "refers to the knowledge necessary to recognize different religions and accept different belief practices both within one religion and between different religions" (p. 387) in the context of Islamic institutions of higher education in Indonesia. Interreligious literacy learning, specifically the introduction of Christianity to Muslim students, involved inviting interfaith leaders as resource persons, site visits, and interreligious study events so that Muslim students could demystify stereotyped and one-sided perspectives about Christianity. One lecturer argued that "if our students have never visited a Christian place of worship, or vice versa, and have never had a dialogue with Christian pastors and lecturers, they may be less open and claim to be the most correct" (Ali et al., 2021, pp. 390–391). Yet, the same lecturer proposed that interreligious literacy learning must also go beyond dialogue and include experiential learning: "religious studies must contain interreligious literacy material, conveyed through observation at other religions' places of worship and dialogue between religious communities" (p. 391; see also Tavares & Skrefsrud, this book). This initiative proved fruitful for students were able to develop contextualized understanding of not only another religious faith, but also their own, through comparison, analysis, and reflection. While the authors did not directly link it to Freirean philosophy, they emphasized that students' experiential and intellectual involvement evoked in them a new awareness, which may be conceptually in line with Freire's *conscientização*.

With regard to the Norwegian RE subject, we thus see a potential for critically challenging a practice where students passively absorb the knowledge

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laid before them by the teachers. The idea of *conscientização* would mean that a non-confessional teaching of religion and world views that privileges a distant, informative, and outsider-approach needs to be followed by a critical reflection on how to make meaningful connections to the students' lives. As Freire (2005) noted, "liberating education consists of acts of cognition, not transferals of information" (p. 74). When the curriculum is prescribed by teachers in ways that reproduce a static body of content, dominating perspectives can easily be taken for granted without giving students the opportunity to bring the content into relationship with critical and reflective thinking. For teachers conducting RE in an objective, pluralistic, and critical manner, Freire's idea about liberation through education is a constant reminder to enhance students' abilities for reflection, perspective-taking, and critical reviewing. By starting from students' descriptions of their daily life experiences (Shor & Freire, 1987), the teaching of RE has the potential of making students invest time and effort in their own learning. According to Shor and Freire (1987), "we gain a distance from the given by abstracting it from its familiar surroundings and studying it in unfamiliar critical ways, until our perceptions of it and society are challenged" (p. 104). As such, a distant, critical perspective is maintained, not as dissemination of information from teachers to students, but as a reflective approach that stimulates awakening and cultivates awareness.

In a similar vein, we also see that bringing Freire's perspectives into dialogue with the teaching of RE may challenge the conventional roles of teachers and students. Despite its shortcomings, the traditional classroom has often been characterized by teacher-centered patterns of instruction where the teacher initiates the content and passes on knowledge to the student via lectures or direct instruction. As noted by Johnsen (2017), approaches to RE that, for some reason, rely on the reproduction of curricular content will easily replicate such roles, or at least not challenge them sufficiently. Within this setting, the teacher is positioned as the active, knowledgeable expert, while the student is expected to passively receive the knowledge being presented, listening to and absorbing information. As noted by Freire (2018), however, such patterns not only guarantee for an uneven distribution of power between actors in school but also fail to empower students and make them active co-constructers of knowledge. As such, Freire's liberationist perspectives on education, including practices of RE, invite scholars and practicians to rethink and redefine the roles of students. Rather than defining and placing teachers and students in hierarchical structures, the legacy of Freire has the potential of transforming the teaching of RE into an arena for in-depth understanding and critical reflection.

Summing up the argument, we believe that Freire's contributions to critical reflection, conscientization, emancipatory teaching, and problem-posing

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in education provide a rich and nuanced framework that can help educators reflect further on the intercultural potential of non-confessional RE. Although it is difficult, if not to say impossible, to encompass Freire's contributions to education within the frame of a short chapter, we hope to have illustrated some of the possibilities that lie in a dialogical relation between teacher and student. When RE educators recognize the complexity and richness of students' experiences and utilize these experiences in their classrooms, diversity—and appreciation for diversity—becomes more than an abstract concept. Allowing students and teachers to work in active collaboration and to engage with a diverse range of views and positions in a critical and reflective way can challenge harmful presumptions and stereotypes. Hence, by bringing perspectives from Freire's philosophy of education into a conversation with the Norwegian RE subject, scholars and practitioners are given a tool to reflect further on the intercultural potential of the RE subject. Recalling the legacy of Freire helps us to see more of how the RE subject can contribute to students' positive understanding of the dynamic values and beliefs of different cultures and religions.

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IV

EDUCATORS SUPPORTING CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

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10

Diversity and Inclusion in Physical Education

Kinesiocultural Exploration as Anti-Oppressive Teaching

Håkan Larsson

Some years ago, I read a piece by American educationalist Kevin Kumashiro which really got me thinking about inclusive teaching in physical education. Kumashiro (2004) wrote that "perhaps one barrier to anti-oppressive teaching is the very notion that good teaching happens only when students respond in ways that we *want* them to respond" (p. 114). My response to this was as follows: What a challenge for teachers and teacher educators in physical education! Somewhat exaggerated, the opposite perspective currently dominates this subject, that is, a perspective where "good teaching" happens when students move according to preestablished standards (Kirk & Houssin, 2020; Larsson & Nyberg, 2017). There are many reasons why this is so. For example, since physical education involves movements, there are risk factors that teachers must continuously consider. Moreover, compared to most other school subjects, students are highly visible to each other, and in that sense, they are exposed to scrutiny by peers, not least because they may be lightly dressed during class (and be expected to change clothes and have a shower after class). These features may contribute to that teacher-centered pedagogies are dominating subject and that teachers value control over the teaching situation (Capel, 2005; Karlefors & Larsson, 2018). However, there are other, arguably stronger, reasons as to why teachers strive for certainty,

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which relate to the history of physical education, and to which I will soon return.

There are good reasons to pay attention to Kumashiro's suggestion. Anti-oppressive teaching is indeed a key issue in contemporary physical education. Many students favor the subject, particularly able-bodied cis-gender boys with middle-class backgrounds and good experiences of competitive sports, but in the research, this group of students is discernible mainly indirectly in studies that focus instead on marginalized groups, such as girls, LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, and other) students, students with working-class backgrounds, students with immigrant backgrounds, and disabled students (Ennis [Ed.], 2017, parts IV and V). Research has also spearheaded an intersectional approach to the problem, which indicates the privileging of the former group (Azzarito, 2020; Dagkas, 2016; Flintoff et al., 2008).

The question is, What constitutes this social pattern? And why is it so difficult to change? I argue in this chapter that the dominating "teaching for certainty" approach contributes to the re-production of marginalizing and excluding patterns. Thus, changing these patterns requires a changing of the teaching approach—and possibly of the whole format of physical education. But perhaps we also need to understand why the teaching for certainty approach is so strong. Kirk and Houssin (2020) hold that physical education is dominated by what they call a "molecularized" approach to skill learning, which entails decontextualized sport techniques taught in short sequences of two to three lessons in a rather mechanical fashion where teachers mainly use direct instruction to achieve certain student responses. Efficiency and product orientation are prioritized over exploration and experimentation, especially as teachers often feel that time is limited (Kirk, 2010). But there is more to it.

Some years ago, Kirk (2002) also coined the notion of physical education as existing mainly in a "masculinized version of the subject." This expression, the "masculinized version of the subject," serves the purpose of highlighting that other versions of physical education are conceivable, but they are currently marginalized in favor of a masculinized one. In the masculinized version of physical ability for education, power of initiative and competitive "instinct" prevail, that is, norms and values that are also dominating competitive sports (Anderson, 2010; Connell, 2008; Larsson & Andreasson, 2020). Teachers may observe that some boys dominate at the expense of other groups of students, but they seem reluctant to intervene in the boys' behavior because it is perceived as normal and impossible to change (Larsson et al., 2010).

Taken together, the masculinized version of physical education and the molecularized approach to teaching the subject constitute what I will call the dominant *format* of physical education. I argue that this format contributes to re-producing the social pattern described earlier. Therefore, to seriously

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enable anti-oppressive teaching, the whole format of physical education needs to be reconsidered. There is no shortage of research which points to the need for anti-oppressive teaching in the subject (e.g., Fitzpatrick, 2019; Moen et al., 2020; Philpot et al., 2021; see also research about so-called activist approaches, Luguetti & Oliver, 2021; Oliver & Kirk, 2015). As these approaches focus mainly on participation, it seems to me that they conceptualize physical education foremost as physical activity. In this chapter, I will propose an approach where the *educational* aspect is foregrounded.

When physical education is conceptualized foremost as physical activity, the term "content" is used primarily to highlight what activities are taking place during lessons. Based on this conceptualization, it is reasonable to focus on selection of *activities*, and, possibly, in an aspiration to teach inclusively, to call for more inclusion of "alternative activities." If physical education is taken to be about sport, health or recreation, then "content" typically designates the activities to be included in the curriculum. If the subject is taken to be about educating children and youth, however, "content" means the knowledge, skills, competences and capabilities to be included in the curriculum. While it is common among teachers to propose that they will teach "football," "gymnastics," or "waltz" (Larsson & Karlefors, 2015), in Sweden, for example, football is not considered to be a content, although this activity may certainly occur in the teaching. Rather than football, gymnastics, or waltz, the content is conceptualized in the national curriculum as "Complex movement in games and sports, indoors and outdoors, and also dance and movement to music" (SNAE, 2018, p. 50). This reconceptualization of the meaning of content links to the need to rethink the notion of knowledge, which will arguably also allow for anti-oppressive teaching.

The purpose of the chapter is to link anti-oppressive teaching, specifically Kumashiro's suggestion to teach for uncertainty, with an alternative approach to movement education, which calls for a "teaching for *un*-certainty" approach. The structure of the remaining chapter is as follows: First, I will deepen the understanding of the dominant format of physical education and illustrate why it has been so viable despite extensive social changes within recent decades. Second, I will deepen Kumashiro's call for uncertainty, and discuss what anti-oppressive teaching might look like in physical education. Third, I will introduce a kinesiocultural approach to movement education, which also entails a suggestion to teach for uncertainty. Finally, since research has yet to offer empirical examples of kinesiocultural exploration that explicitly includes exploration of social norms, I will hypothesize about what such teaching might look like.

A Physical Education Format Emerging

Depending on when modern education systems were introduced in a country, physical education (PE) might have been involved pretty much from the

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start. In the case of Sweden, the year 1842 stands out because this was when six-year-long primary education became statutory for all children—and from the start, subject was a mandatory subject for both girls and boys. However, at that time, physical education already existed in grammar schools, a school model which has an older history, which and was populated only by boys from society's elite. The subject thus already had a prehistory and a particular set of values when it was introduced in general education. This prehistory came to strongly influence the further development of the subject.

From Physical Education-as-Gymnastics to Physical-Education-as-Movement-Techniques

Physical education as it was taught in grammar schools began to take shape nearly half a century earlier, at the turn of the 1800s, when continental gymnastics was discovered by Swedish educationalists. In 1813, officer and educationalist Per Henrik Ling founded the Central Institute of Gymnastics in Stockholm. Here, Ling and his successors developed a particular type of gymnastics, internationally renowned as Swedish gymnastics, which came to characterize teaching in physical education in many countries worldwide during the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century (e.g., Bazoge et al., 2013; Kirk, 1992; Lindroth, 2004). This form of gymnastics was mainly performed standing freely on the floor, or possibly with the help of equipment, such as rib chairs. The idea was that the musculature around each joint would be exercised, but the activity had no competitive or acrobatic elements.

This form of gymnastics much resembled military drill, which strengthened its connection to masculinity. The exercises were linked to a view that disciplining the body was ultimately aimed at disciplining the character, which was also primarily seen as a male concern (Ljunggren, 2000). Moreover, even though Swedish gymnastics became one of Sweden's most successful educational exports, it was still strongly marked by nationalism and patriotism. Nineteenth-century Europe was more generally a context of national awakening, but specific to Sweden was that during the previous century, the country had lost its position as a great power in northern Europe. This meant that Swedish gymnastics, at least to some extent, came to be associated with revanchism (Lindroth, 2004; Ljunggren, 2000).

Military drill, a disciplined body, a strong character, and patriotic sentiment thus became strong elements in a form of gymnastics that dominated physical education in nineteenth-century schools. At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, a struggle arose between orthodox (male) Lingians and more progressive female gymnastics pedagogues about what form of gymnastics would be suitable in the education of girls in state

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secondary schools (where they were allowed entry in 1927) and children in primary schools. A certain form of "female gymnastics" emerged, aimed at older girls, which emphasized flexibility and grace (Carli, 2004). This movement contributed to the separation of girls and boys in secondary school physical education. In primary schools, where coeducation of boys and girls remained, the gymnastics educator Elin Falk fought for a form of gymnastics that to a greater extent emphasized dynamic and "natural movements," compared to the rather mechanical and constructed movements of orthodox gymnastics (Lundquist Wanneberg, 2013). The progressive forces were strong and emerged victorious from the struggle, but the era of Swedish gymnastics was nevertheless sealed just a few decades later. During the period between the 1930s and 1960s, gymnastics was gradually phased out as the constitutive activity of physical education and was replaced by sports and partially also by dance, play, outdoor activities, and fitness. Important to note, however, is that some very significant elements of Swedish gymnastics survived (Kirk, 2010).

Among the elements that survived were the separation of girls and boys in secondary school, which was seen as appropriate also in a sports-dominated curriculum. Furthermore, a focus of character formation survived, but now rather expressed in terms of physical, mental, and social development (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1969). Perhaps even more significant is that a certain lesson structure survived, where a series of carefully executed exercises was carried out according to a predetermined pattern, with the teacher "directing" the students. This lesson pattern, and its appurtenant teacher-centered pedagogy, was maintained even if the gymnastics exercises were changed to various techniques in sports, dances, outdoor activities, and other movement activities. The transformation of physical education-as-gymnastics into physical education-as-movement techniques (Kirk [2010] talks about sport techniques, but in Sweden, a broader repertoire of movement activities seems to have been included), and the establishment of the currently dominant molecularized approach to the subject were completed in the 1960s, in Sweden (Engström, 1975) as well as in other countries (Kirk, 1992).

Physical Education as a "Practical-Aesthetic" Subject and Linear Pedagogies

Swedish national curricula of the 1960s distinguished between "knowledge (or academic) subjects" and "practical-aesthetic subjects," which also reflected a division between "knowledge" (theoretical, propositional) and "skill" (practical, procedural). The role of practical-aesthetical subjects was partly to provide students with skills that were useful in everyday life, which applied specifically to crafts (or sloyd) and domestic science (or home economics). Partly, the role was also to raise the students to be good citizens—or

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to raise character in them, which applied specifically to art, music, and physical education. However, while skills were explicitly emphasized in crafts and domestic science, they received a more ambiguous position in arts, music, and, particularly, physical education. The ambiguity surrounding the position of skill learning in physical education related to the notion that the subject was considered as "something else" in relation to competitive sports, which never held a strong institutional position in Swedish schools.

Nevertheless, to the extent that skill learning was an aspiration of teachers in the subject, the physical education format foregrounded a certain perspective of movement skill learning, or movement education. In their review of literature about approaches to movement education, Barker et al. (2017) found that what they call a motor programming and information processing perspective is the prevailing perspective (see also Fusche Moe, 2005). While the here referenced research is rather recent, I hold that this perspective, which was basically the only perspective during my own teacher training in the late 1980s and early 1990s, was established much earlier.[1] More generally, this perspective can be found in research and textbooks about "motor learning" and "motor control" which for a long time have been used in most physical education teacher education contexts. Within this perspective:

> computer programming is used as an analogy. Learning is equated with acquiring sets of cognitive instructions, or "schema" [. . .] that learners can "run" at the appropriate time [. . .]. The brain is seen as a type of hard drive and program acquisition is an internal process that takes place through the central nervous system via a process of encoding [. . .]. Encoding is initiated through a demonstration of the desired outcome and achieved through repetition and practice. (Barker et al., 2017, p. 424)

Barker and co-authors (2017) point out that the motor programming and information processing perspective includes a *linear* pedagogical approach, where it is assumed that learners must first learn "fundamental" movement skills before they can proceed to more "advanced" or "applied" movement patterns. This idea fits neatly with the dominant physical education format where teachers design teaching according to a meticulous linear principle and where learners proceed from fundamental movement skills to advanced or applied skills. In this pedagogical process, teachers appear mainly as technicians. "They essentially modify learners' [motor] programs: removing errors so that step-by step, observable outcomes more closely match the ideal program represented in an initial demonstration" (Barker et al., 2017, p. 424).

To sum up, a molecularized approach where movement techniques are taught in short lesson sequences, and where teachers use mainly

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teacher-centered pedagogies that are supported by linear scientific perspectives of movement education, grew to become the dominant format of Swedish physical education in the 1960s. This decade coincided with the start of social changes which would have far-reaching consequences for the possibilities for anti-oppressive teaching within the framework of the dominant physical education format.

Social Change Changes the Playing Field

The social changes include the development of mass education at the secondary level, extensive immigration, and the introduction of coeducation of girls and boys. Moreover, and more recently, a changed view of education, specifically a reconceptualization of "knowledge," has radically changed the playing field. Let me expand a little on all these points.

The decades after World War II saw a development of secondary level education into mass education, which meant the addition of social groups that had not previously attended secondary schools. In the early 1950s, only about 5 percent of a year cohort went into secondary education (Petersson, 2010). Today, this number is about 90 percent (Public Health Agency of Sweden, 2022). During the 1960s and 1970s, extensive labor immigration began, which was later supplemented by large groups of refugees. Today, just over a quarter of a population of 10.35 million were born abroad and have migrated to Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2022). This has added to create an even more socially complex school situation. Finally, and specific to physical education, before 1980, boys and girls were taught separately, but in 1980, a school reform which embraced strong gender equality ambitions decreed that teaching should be carried out in the form of coeducation of girls and boys. However, the coeducational curriculum did not integrate in equal parts content from the earlier gender separate curricula. Parts of girls' physical education curriculum were almost completely lost in the new coeducational curriculum (Carli, 2004; Lundquist Wanneberg, 2014). In this way, the second main aspect of the dominant physical education format, that is, the masculinized version of physical education, is in place. In sum, since the dominant physical education format struggles with accommodating for diverse groups of students, the social changes have meant that this format has become ever more obsolete.

On top of the social changes described previously, during the 1990s, a new view of knowledge was introduced in Swedish education, which did away with the previously existing division between "knowledge subjects" (academic subjects) and "practical-aesthetic subjects." Since a school reform in 1994, *all* school subjects are to be seen as "knowledge subjects." However, the conceptualization of "knowledge" changed in tandem. To counter the

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traditional division between "knowledge" and "skill," educational scholars and school legislators have tried to promote a broader conceptualization of knowledge, which includes both theoretical-propositional and practical-procedural aspects of knowledge in all subjects. The transformation from a practical-aesthetic subject to a knowledge subject has proven to be challenging in physical education, though, and the new approach to knowledge has not significantly contributed to changing the dominant format of the subject. New guidelines have not been able to guide teachers beyond the strong distinction between knowledge (propositional knowledge) and skill (procedural knowledge). Perhaps lured by the contemporary focus of "accountability" (Redelius & Hay, 2012; Ward, 2013), teachers today still tend to distinguish between theoretical-propositional knowledge and skill-procedural knowledge (Larsson & Nyberg, 2017) because these are easier to document and assess when kept apart. Nevertheless, I believe that this new perspective of knowledge sits well with Kumashiro's suggestion to teach for uncertainty.

Teaching for Uncertainty

I will now delve deeper into Kumashiro's (2004) call to teach for uncertainty as a path toward anti-oppressive teaching. The notion of uncertainty, or risk, has also found space in educational thinking more generally. Biesta (2014), for example, contends that educational processes are not—and should not be—entirely straightforward. The current drive for certainty in educational processes are misdirected and focus too much on qualification and socialization along preestablished norms. A true educational process is always two-way and involves a certain amount of uncertainty and risk. Kumashiro's approach to education is mainly based on experiences of inclusion of LGBTQIA+ students, but I believe that the same approach can be used to target also a more intersectional approach. Kumashiro (2004) begins the paper "Uncertain Beginnings" in the following way: "In the field of teacher education, sexual orientation (when addressed) is often addressed in one of two ways: adding to what students know, and complicating what students already know" (p. 111). This means, first, that teachers try to teach *about* the marginalized group. The danger here is that teachers, albeit inadvertently, may contribute to what is usually called "othering," that is, a reinforcing of a perception that some individuals are not fitting within the norms of the majority culture—they are odd (or queer) and not like "us" (Hill, 2015; Røset et al., 2020). Second, it means that being "different" seems so problematic that it should preferably be avoided, for example, by not promoting LGBTQIA+ issues, multiculturalism or mixing of social groups at all. In other words, it may inadvertently promote a perception

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that "birds of a feather flock together" as the most suitable pedagogical approach. Paradoxically, Kumashiro (2004) says, the open discussion among his students

> was both too open and not open enough. That is, it was too open by allowing students to express heterosexism and/or homophobia and silence the LGBTQ people in the room, but it was also not open enough for those students who ended up expressing their homophobia in masked, politically correct ways. (p. 114)

Kumashiro's response to this situation was to not try too much, as a teacher, to aspire to produce *expected* responses among students. Hence, his call to teach for uncertainty. But what does it mean, more exactly, to teach for uncertainty?

Teachers often asked Kumashiro about concrete approaches to challenging heterosexism and/or homophobia. "What do I need to know? What can I do tomorrow?," were common questions. Kumashiro (2004) acknowledges that such questions are understandable. As teachers, "[w]e want tools to make good teaching doable. We want to feel certain that we are beginning to teach in anti-oppressive ways" (p. 115). In contrast to this, Kumashiro says that we need to "teach in ways that center the *uncertain* elements of our teaching" (p. 115; my emphasis). He takes "reading" as an example. Some teachers may seek to "teach the best way to read" (p. 113). This is an example of teaching for certainty, where teachers aspire to have "all students to respond in only certain ways" (p. 112). An alternative approach would be to acknowledge "that there is not a best way to 'read,' and that any lens is partial and has both strengths and weaknesses" (p. 112). However, this is not the same as saying that "all ways are equally good." Kumashiro (2004) goes on to say that:

> Any way of reading makes possible certain insights, but closes off others; it makes certain changes possible, but others impossible. Any way of reading has political implications: Some ways of reading reinforce the notion that being LGBTQ is sinful and deserving of punishment, while other ways of reading challenge this notion. Still others address this notion in contradictory ways. Furthermore, each of these lenses also challenges or reinforces other notions about what is normal or better—including notions of racial normalcy, religious virtue, and so forth. (p. 112)

What would the goal for teachers be, then, if it is not to teach "the best way to read" (i.e., teaching for certainty)? According to Kumashiro (2004, p. 113),

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it could be "to examine how any way of reading has political implications." Teachers might ask a number of pertinent questions, such as:

> How does this reading challenge stereotypes?
> How does it reinforce it?
> What does it leave unchallenged?
> What does it raise critical questions about?
> Whom does it leave invisible?
> Whom does it call on to contest their own privileges?
> (taken from Kumashiro, 2004, p. 113)

Let me offer a first example of what this could look like in physical education. A few years ago, I participated in a research project which included observations of physical education lessons. A specific incident occurring during a lesson sparked my first ideas about teaching for uncertainty, or what we at the time called paradoxical teaching (Larsson et al., 2014). The incident happened in a grade 9 class (students aged 15–16) who were about to start the second lesson of a schottische dancing unit. Schottische is a classic Swedish folk dance. During the previous lesson, the teacher taught the techniques of the dance, the "steps and spins," through direct instruction to students who danced boy-girl. Now, as the second lesson was about to start, four girls approached the teacher. They were reluctant to participate. What's the point of learning schottische, nobody dances it anyway? Why can't they dance Zumba instead? And why do they have to dance with the boys? The teacher tried not to clash with the students, but instead to get them involved. He answered their questions thoughtfully (the quotes below are from Larsson et al., 2014): "Why must girls and boys dance together? Because we normally do that…dance boys and girls" (pp. 142–143).

The girls' objections continued. The teacher, for his part, followed a line of reasoning in which dance is associated with heterosexual partner relationships, but of course it was not expressed that explicitly in the conversation. The following quote illustrates the girls' response:

Girl 1: Perhaps I'm a lesbian?
Girl 2: I'm also a lesbian.
Girl 3 and Girl 4: Me too.
Girl 2: Then you want to dance with a girl.

These queries made the teacher more confused, but still not confrontational. Instead, he tried to listen to what the students wanted to say:

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Teacher: Okay . . .(*hesitantly*).
Girl 1: Are you with us? Do you understand?
Teacher: Yes, I do understand. (*still slightly hesitantly*)
Girl 2: I think Anna has a good point here.
Teacher: Yes . . . one doesn't have to dance boy and girl. That's right. It's my heterosexual norm that haunts me here.
Girl 1: Exactly!

As a result of this conversation, the teacher radically changed the teaching. The students got the opportunity to dance in varying pair constellations gender-wise. Since the previous lesson involved the students learning "boy and girl steps," they now had to take a step back in the learning process to explore schottische anew. Among other things, strong norms regarding gender and sexuality associated with dance surfaced, thus making it possible for the teacher to explore and discuss them explicitly among the students. Although this is not a full-fledged example of teaching for uncertainty, we suggest in the article that the example points in this direction (Larsson et al., 2014). The teacher abandoned the teacher-centered and linear approach of "steps and spins" as the "best way" for students to acquire pre-determined and decontextualized schottische skills. Instead, a more exploratory and experimental teaching and learning emerged where schottische capability involved knowledge in, through, and about movement (Arnold, 1979), thus also paving the way for anti-oppressive teaching. In the following section, I will present research where such kind of teaching is systematized.

Physical Education as Kinesiocultural Exploration

Recently, my colleagues Dean Barker, Gunn Nyberg, and I (Barker et al., 2022; Larsson et al., 2022) have developed what we call a *kinesiocultural exploration* approach to movement education. The term "kinesiocultural" was chosen because it highlights the intersection between movements (in Greek, *kinesis*) and culture. Kinesiocultural exploration involves embodied exploration of kinescapes, or "movement landscapes" which include mechanical and material as well as cultural and aesthetic features, where learners gradually discover more features that enable participation in a practice (Barker et al., 2022). Depending on both past experience and the context of the practice, kinescapes may be experienced differently by learners: "A cartwheel performed in the kinescape of artistic gymnastics, for example, constitutes a qualitatively different movement experience to a cartwheel performed during a capoeira routine" (Barker et al.,

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2022, pp. 29–30). Based on kinesiocultural exploration, rather than learning a narrowly defined movement skill according to a particular normative standard, which is typically the case in the dominant physical education format, kinesiocultural exploration means that learners learn to perceive and assess their own movement patterns in relation to different standards. In broad terms, in contrast to teaching for certainty, which is congruent with a *convergent* view of learning, where teachers aspire to help students to "get it right," kinesiocultural exploration constitutes a *divergent* view of learning. Here, teachers offer students learning tasks that will help them experience kinescapes in various ways with a possibility to discern aspects that are critical for versatile participation in the practice. I will now offer two examples of kinesiocultural exploration, respectively in the practices of juggling and unicycling.

Example 1: Exploring the Juggling Kinescape

The first example comes from a series of lessons where secondary school students (aged 15–16) explored juggling kinescapes (Barker et al., 2020a; Nyberg et al., 2021). We established collaboration with two physical education teachers who were interested in developing their teaching based on kinesiocultural exploration, and together, we designed a unit of ten lessons where two classes had the opportunity to explore juggling kinescapes. The first couple of lessons included stations with tasks that students were assigned to explore in groups of three to four. Gradually, the tasks changed to being about composing a sequence that the groups were to show at a final exhibition toward the end of the unit. Below are some examples of the initial tasks. While the idea behind the tasks is to meet a diverse group of students with varying prior knowledge and experience, the tasks are not intended to be explored in any specific order (the tasks, and the figures, are taken from the teaching material used in the study):

Throw and catch one object (see figure 10.1)

> Practice throwing a ball, a bean bag, or a similar object back and forth between your hands. Try to get the flight phase to resemble the one in the picture. Practice doing it without looking at your hands.
>
> Discuss: How do you know when you can do this?

Throw and catch two objects (see figure 10.2)

> Practice juggling two objects. Start with an object in each hand. Start by throwing one up. When it's at its highest, throw up the other one. Catch the first in the other hand and then the other.
>
> Discuss: What do you think is difficult about this? Try to explain in as much detail as you can. What do you think is the difference between juggling one, two or more objects?

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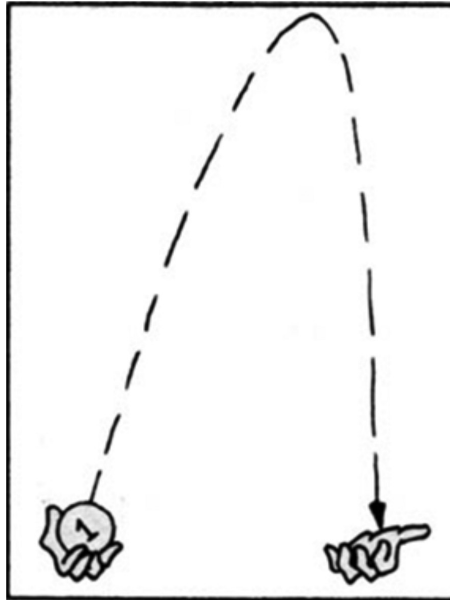

Figure 10.1 Station Card Exemplar 1. *Source*: Created for teaching purposes by the author together with Dean Barker and Gunn Nyberg.

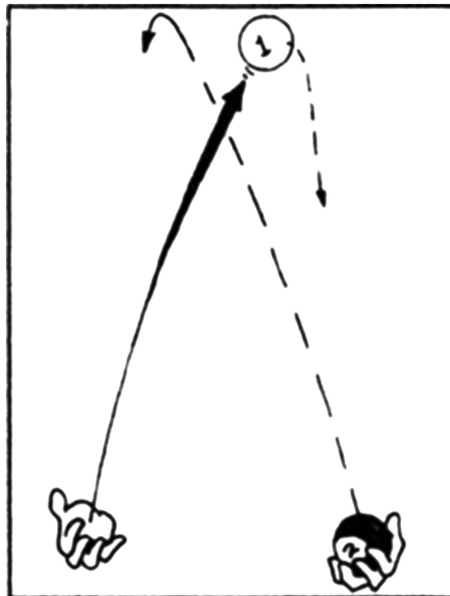

Figure 10.2 Station Card Exemplar 2. *Source*: Created for teaching purposes by the author together with Dean Barker and Gunn Nyberg.

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> Juggle with two balls in one hand.[2]
>
> Niels (the person in the video) shows three variations: inside-out, outside-in and straight up-down. Practice all three variations with both right and left hand. Discuss: Which variant is the easiest and which is the hardest? Why?
>
> Niels does not give much instruction in the third variant (straight up-down). What advice would you give to a beginner juggler?

Use music

> Choose music to accompany your juggling practice. Can you sing along? Can you juggle in time to the music? What happens if you switch to music with a different pulse or character?
>
> Discuss: Can music help when learning to juggle? Do you think that a certain type of music can be better than other types in facilitating learning?

While exploring tasks like these, the researchers moved between the groups with GoPro cameras mounted on their chest to record the exploration and what the students said to each other. At occasions, the researchers also followed up on the questions posed during the tasks. Based on this documentation, the researchers could construct several critical aspects of jugging kinescapes. For example, some students discovered that understanding, or "seeing," a pattern is important to progress in the learning process. This means that the objects "must be thrown and caught in an order that makes it possible to catch the object with one 'empty' hand so that they do not have to stop and start again" (Nyberg et al., 2021, p. 206). This critical aspect was named "Patterns as part of the landscape of juggling." Moreover, some students expressed:

> a need of finding a rhythm and keeping a certain pace in order to juggle without breaks, striving for a kind of flow. Throwing and catching at specific moments and adjusting the distance with which the balls are thrown, are issues to grasp in order to get a rhythm. (Nyberg et al., 2021, p. 207)

This critical aspect was named "Rhythm as part of the landscape of juggling." Thus, movement patterns and rhythm were experienced by many students to be key elements of their juggling kinescapes.

Norms and standards related to juggling started to surface right from the start during the practice. The ability to juggle "properly" meant, basically,

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to be able to juggle with at least three objects in a cascade pattern (throw—throw—catch—catch). To a few students, this standard needed to be explicitly negotiated before they would even consider participating in the practice. It also became something of an "a-ha" experience for the teacher and the researchers to discover this normativity. The standards do not necessarily have to be avoided, as learning presupposes at least some form of verticality (that something can be done "better"), but it may need to be made explicit and negotiated in relation to a heterogeneous group of students. Along with the prospect of having the possibility to practice over many lessons, the negotiation of standards helped some students to nuance the meaning of "juggling capability." It meant that students who otherwise hesitated to continue practicing now gained renewed motivation. Other norms that surfaced were that juggling ability is associated with a circus culture that is clearly distinct from the culture of competitive sports, which meant that students who identified strongly with the latter, at least initially, participated with some hesitation. Also in this case, some students were aided by the explorative approach and the possibility to explicitly negotiate the norms.

When analyzing the video material, we noted that the lessons were to some extent permeated by gender norms (Larsson et al., 2021). While the gender norms were obvious in one class, they were hardly noticeable at all in another class at the same school. In Larsson et al. (2021, p. 540), we highlight:

> how in class B strong gender norms, particularly concerning the propensity among (some) boys to take up a lot of space and burst into frenetic motion, and the simultaneous propensity among (some) girls to restrict their movements in space and persistently endure the boys' outbursts, limit the possibilities for girls and boys to explore particular dimensions of the juggling landscape. In class A, on the other hand, weak gender norms seem to leave room for both girls and boys to explore the movement of juggling. In this sense, the students of class A undo gender (Butler 2004) to a greater extent than the students of class B.

We concluded that, where apparent, "doing girl" and "doing boy" still to a large extent coincided with Young's (1980) and Connell's (1983) suggestions that social norms "teach" girls to a greater extent than boys to spatially restrict their movements, while at the same time they "teach" boys to a greater extent than girls to move more freely through space. In this way, girls and boys were either enabled or disabled to explore various paths and parts of the movement kinescapes. Why, then, were gender norms more apparent in one class compared to the other? In this case, we (Larsson et al., 2021) concluded that one of the teachers communicated both the overall purpose and the purpose of individual tasks more clearly than the other teacher. The

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students of the latter teacher were to a greater extent left to their own devices, which enabled gender (and other social) norms to govern the practice more strongly. This shows that even if the teaching is learner-centered, clarity about what is the purpose of the practice more generally as well as of specific tasks can help students to "bracket" social norms. However, the students were not presented with tasks where they could explore social norms more explicitly. In the concluding section of the chapter, I will give examples of what such tasks could look like.

Example 2: Exploring Unicycling Kinescapes

The second example of kinesiocultural exploration comes from a series of five two-hour sessions where university students (aged 20–35) explored unicycling kinescapes. This example draws on the work of Barker et al. (2020b), Nyberg et al. (2021), and Larsson et al. (2022). The purpose of the unicycling unit was communicated both as "exploring unicycling kinescapes" and the more colloquial expression "learning (how to) to unicycle." We were conscious that "learning (how to) unicycle" could implicitly convey an understanding that the students were to learn ways how to unicycle in particular ways, that is, direct teaching based on a convergent view of movement learning. Therefore, we supplemented the colloquial expression with "exploring unicycling kinescapes." The unit was planned and designed in collaboration between the researchers and a university lecturer, and the researchers then explored the practice in the same way as during the juggling unit. Just like in the juggling unit, the students practised at different stations, which each and one in their own ways could help the students discern various critical aspects of the unicycling kinescape. However, this time, and mainly because the learners were older and more experienced, there were no written tasks for each specific station. Rather, the students explored unicycling under the guidance of a more general task. Prior to the first session, the students were encouraged to search on YouTube for a video clip with unicycling which they found inspiring and which they thought could promote their learning. The general task looked like this:

> "Explore unicycling without unicycle." In groups of three, watch each other's videos. Discuss what it was that helped/inspired in "your" videos.
>
> Explore unicycling by unicycling. Adjust saddle height. Get on the bike. Cycle? How can you help each other?
>
> Summarize—Discuss: How did it go? Where did you start? What was easy and what was difficult? How could you help each other? Write down a short outline of how you want to proceed practicing. Remember, you work together in a group, but not everyone has to do it the same way.

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One feature of the unicycling kinescapes in this study was that the meaning of unicycle capability was rather narrow, yet not completely one-dimensional. While clearly visible, it was hard to describe with words how different individuals created their own embodied unicycling concepts. Several students learned to ride some twenty to thirty meters without falling, but their posture on the bike varied slightly, for example, how much they leaned forward, and how they used their arms to keep the balance. The route to what was commonly perceived as unicycling capability, or the learning process, varied more. Students were to varying extents involved in several learning strategies: lively experimenting (playing around in the kinescape) and systematic practicing (investigating one chosen path in the kinescape), group (collaborative) and individual (solitary) exploration, action *in* the kinescape and withdrawn observation *of* the kinescape and imitating others and experimenting (playing around) on their own. Common to all students, however, was something we call oscillation, that is, that the students' exploration of their unicycling kinescapes was characterized by oscillation between two or more of the above learning strategies (Nyberg et al., 2021).

Just as with juggling, norms and standards that relate to unicycling started spontaneously to surface early on. The meaning of unicycling capability gravitated in discussions among students and between students, teacher, and researchers around the ability to cycle a few meters from a standstill without falling. It did not seem important to be able to jump on the bike and ride away without support, but it was enough to be able to sit on the bike with support and then ride away. Moreover, the distance cycled did play a role, but it was not entirely clear how long this distance had to be before the trial could be considered successful. Social norms surfaced also here to some extent. While both male and female students learned to unicycle (or not), there was a clear pattern that male students risked more in their practice, while more female students moved forward with greater caution (see Barker et al., 2020b). One of the researchers reported this observation to the students, which prompted some of the female students to "spit in their hands" and risk more, which in turn resulted in that the pattern was somewhat changed. However, the students were not explicitly encouraged to explore gender or other social norms, which would probably have been expedient given the kinesiocultural approach. I will return to this matter in the concluding section. A clear social norm also materialized in the comments section of one of the videos available on YouTube. Someone had written: "a bunch of white people doing white peopling," which made at least the researchers aware of that most YouTube clips of unicycling, indeed almost everyone, included white people. This reminded us of that unicycling, like most, if not all, movement activities are culturally laden, which could thus be part of the exploration.

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Before I move on to the conclusion, I want to highlight how the kinesiocultural approach aligns with Kumashiro's call for teaching for uncertainty and, thus, can be(come) anti-oppressive. Put simply, in both cases I presented, kinesiocultural exploration does not constitute any attempt to "teach the best way to juggle/unicycle," which would align with a convergent view of movement learning. Rather, the divergent view of movement learning, together with ample time for exploration, experimentation, and practicing, allowed the students to experience juggling and unicycling kinescapes in various, yet nuanced ways, which also meant a possibility to discern important aspects of movement patterns, including ones that relate to social norms, that are critical for the capability to participate in the practice. In short, rather than being taught in a particular way to juggle or unicycle also in a particular way, the students were allowed to explore juggling and unicycling kinescapes based on tasks which had the function of guiding their exploration in a divergent direction. Moreover, rather than to "show the students the best way to (learn to) juggle or unicycle," the teachers asked questions about how the students approached the tasks, what they discovered, and how their exploration could help them continue to develop juggling or unicycling capabilities. Put simply, I believe that this approach meets diverse groups of students to a greater extent than the currently dominant physical education format.

Discussion

The purpose of this chapter was to link anti-oppressive teaching, specifically Kumashiro's suggestion to "teach for uncertainty," with an alternative view of knowledge, teaching, and learning in physical education, a view where teaching for uncertainty is expedient not only in relation to diversity and inclusion but in relation to the whole purpose of the subject (see also Biesta, 2014). This is important if anti-oppressive teaching is not to be experienced by teachers as merely an add-on or an extra burden. One example of teaching for uncertainty was found in the kinesiocultural exploration approach to movement education. This approach evokes a need for learner-centered pedagogies. In the previous section, I outlined the basic structure of the kinesiocultural exploration approach (Barker et al., 2022; Nyberg et al., 2021). I also pointed out some features regarding norms and standards that spontaneously surfaced during practice, but the research so far has only marginally presented findings where a focus of social norms is explicit. In this concluding section, I will give some examples of tasks that could have more clearly guided the students' exploration of social norms in the juggling and unicycling kinescapes.

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When designing such tasks, it is important not to frame them too narrowly. Below are some examples of how juggling could be explored (some of these tasks were included during the studied lessons, but they have not been systematically explored):

> Why learn to juggle at all?
>
> In this clip, a professional juggler shares eight reasons why it could be worthwhile to learn to juggle: http://jugglegood.com/blog/8-reasons-normal-people-should-juggle/
>
> Discuss: Which reasons do you think seem the most reasonable? Explain why.
>
> Where does juggling come from?
>
> Juggling has occurred throughout history in many different cultures. Search for information on the Internet and summarize it in writing. Also write a sentence or two about why you think juggling has existed in so many cultures.
>
> Similar tasks (or questions) could be included in the unicycling exploration:
>
> Do you have any idea why people take up unicycling in the first place?
>
> Do all sorts of people unicycle, or is it particularly popular within particular groups of people?
>
> What could be behind the fact that people of all sorts do not ride unicycles?

The point with not framing questions like these too narrowly is to avoid reinforcing stereotypes. It is important that the questions are directed toward the norm, not toward "the others." However, sometimes, especially if certain social patterns are systematically disregarded, it may be necessary to encourage students to specifically explore, for example, gender, ethnicity, social class, or ability. Considering the findings of Larsson and colleagues (2021), the juggling example could for instance include questions about how gender and heteronorms affected the possibilities to explore critical aspects of juggling. Similarly, the unicycling example could include questions about how gender and heteronorms as well as race affected the practice. Both juggling and unicycling could also include questions about ability. For example, how would standards for what is to be seen as juggling and unicycle capability need to be challenged to include more diverse student groups? In this way, focus is placed not on "adaptation for the others" but on challenging the

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norms and standards that constitute marginalization and exclusion (Larsson et al., 2014).

To conclude, my ambitions were to discuss and problematize why physical education teaching is so strongly permeated by teacher-centered approaches with a focus on certainty and how these approaches contribute to aggravate anti-oppressive teaching. Ultimately, my aspiration has been to highlight how the dominant format of physical education teaching, including the molecularized approach and the masculinized version of the subject, needs to change if physical education is to have relevance for gradually more diverse groups of students. In the kinesiocultural exploration approach to movement education, which evokes learner-centered pedagogies, I found an approach which aligned well with Kumashiro's (2004) suggestion to teach for uncertainty. My point in linking teaching for uncertainty to kinesiocultural exploration is that the anti-oppressive ambition otherwise risks being perceived as something that goes beyond "ordinary" teaching in the subject. Arguably, not until teaching for uncertainty is perceived as a purposeful approach more generally within physical education, will it be integrated into teaching on a comprehensive level.

Notes

1. As I indicate, I am not relying here on a particular study, but on my own basic education within sport pedagogy and physical education, and on my later involvement as teacher educator in half a dozen teacher education institutions in Sweden (five universities) and Norway (two universities).
2. Watch this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DKaWwRo-EI

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11

Esports

The New "White Boys" Club? Problematizing the Norms Limiting Diversity and Inclusion in an Educational Gaming Context

Fredrik Rusk and Matilda Ståhl

Gaming can be a gateway to developing technological competence (Hayes, 2008), learning (Arnseth et al., 2018; Barr, 2019; Ögland, 2017), and a sense of belonging (Consalvo, 2017). While both technology and society have evolved since Hayes (2008) published her chapter, the same norms of technology being a masculine form of competence continue to shape gaming communities. By maintaining a norm of young, white, able-bodied, heterosexual, cis-men (i.e., when a man's gender identity corresponds to their sex) as the ideal players (Johnson, 2018; Witkowski, 2018), those othered by this norm will be continuously excluded (Gray, 2020; Taylor, 2015). This norm of technomasculinity (Johnson, 2018) will not only affect who has access to trajectories of technological expertise but also affect their access to certain domains and careers (Hayes, 2008). Technomasculinity shapes not only player culture (Taylor & Voorhees, 2018; Sveningsson, 2012; Witkowski, 2018) but also the game industry (Johnson, 2018). Therefore, technomasculinity may also come to shape educational contexts. In not reflecting actual player demography (Kowert at al., 2014), the norm of the ideal esports player—man, white, heterosexual, and competitive (Witkowski, 2013)—limits which players feel included in the gaming culture, whether this gaming is done in or outside of educational contexts and settings. Hence, employing games in an educational context is challenging, since many values that are the

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norm in the gaming culture are in stark contrast to educational values such as democracy, diversity, and inclusion. However, excluding commercial games from an educational setting is to refrain students from improving skills such as communication and collaboration in a social learning platform that students find authentic and motivating (Barr, 2018; Gee, 2007). One could also see the problem through the following lens: What would be a better place to address issues with in-game culture than in safe educational spaces?

This chapter focuses on discussing issues of diversity with regards to gaming, specifically esports, in and outside of schools. We do this by presenting contemporary research on these issues, as well as through several of our own empirical analyses of one data corpus of esports gameplay from different perspectives (Rusk & Ståhl, 2020; 2022; Rusk et al., 2020; 2021; Ståhl, 2021a; 2021b; Ståhl & Rusk, 2020; 2022). The chapter is, hence, strongly based on what we have found in our research project titled "Identity Construction and Co-Construction in CS:GO" that focused on studying esports teams playing the online multiplayer first-person shooter Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO). Through the findings from our previously published work on the data, we find that a larger, synthesizing discussion is needed with a focus on diversity connected to gaming culture and its norms, and how teachers, teacher educators, and student teachers can, through a greater awareness of the intricacies of gaming contexts, better understand how they can address these issues.

The excluding gaming culture is more than toxicity (i.e., offensive language and other toxic behaviors ranging from cyberbullying to sexual and racial harassment). It is not enough to only tame the toxicity in situ to diversify gaming contexts. We need to recognize the impact of how "invisible" the structural challenges against diversity in the gaming culture are, and even educators may (unwittingly) proffer identities on students that are unfavorable and might undermine diversity in gaming contexts. The aim of this chapter is to critically review aspects related to identity within gaming contexts, especially on the intersection of social identities and gaming culture. More specifically, we problematize the published findings from our empirical projects to discuss structures that are part of identity (co)construction in online gaming and esports. These structures are so embedded into the canvas of gaming culture that even those wanting to change the culture from the inside may not be able to notice that they may propagate such structures themselves.

Ironically, these structures also hinder research on diversity in gaming contexts, since we, as white Nordic researchers, have so far been unable to find esports contexts with a group of diverse esports players to study. The contexts available for us to study are white, upper middle class, English-speaking (or other Nordic language speaking), and most often dominated by cis-men. This connects to our concern of how to become aware of how seemingly invisible

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structures, norms, and values that are part of identity (co)construction in gaming contexts may become part of educational contexts. This chapter is divided into three sections that discuss the state of the art regarding gaming in educational contexts, gaming culture, and results from our previous studies on identity (co)construction in gaming. We end the chapter with some suggestions on how educators can become more critically aware of some pitfalls that gaming culture and gaming communities can bring into the classrooms.

Esports and Gaming in Educational Contexts

Today, digital games form a central part of children and young people's lives. Within the gaming world, there is a great variety in genres with different focuses (Gee, 2017). Both pedagogically and commercially developed games can offer players the opportunity for learning and development (e.g., Arnseth et al., 2018; Barr, 2019; Ögland, 2017). Competitive gaming and esports, presupposes, among other things, functioning cooperation and good communication skills (Rusk et al., 2020; 2021; Rusk & Ståhl, 2020; 2022). The growing esports scene has brought games that used to be a spare time activity into professional and educational contexts.

The potential of using video games in an educational setting has been researched and confirmed in many studies (e.g., Clark et al., 2016). Esports, as a learning environment, has drawn attention from educators and researchers regarding the implementation of games in education (Arnseth et al., 2018; Ögland, 2017). For example, multiplayer games are inherently multilingual digital arenas. Games have proven to be social, motivating, and authentic learning platforms, which can contribute to the development of collaboration skills, which then supports the development of multilingual competence (Barr, 2019; Bluemink & Järvelä, 2011; Gee, 2017; Rusk & Ståhl, 2022; Steinkuehler, 2006). In multiplayer digital games online, the context is inherently social as players navigate the game and interact with fellow players from all over the world (Rusk et al., 2020; 2021; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012). Therefore, the skills needed in games, such as problem solving and cooperation, are often manifested and learned through mediation between the players' first or foreign languages (Brevik, 2019; Chen & Huang, 2010; Hung, 2007; Sylvén & Sundqvist, 2012). Research indicates that players learn English from teaching and learning the game and through in-game cooperation (Brevik, 2019; Gee, 2017; Rusk et al., 2020; 2021; Rusk & Ståhl, 2022). This use of and skill in English can also be seen in school (Brevik, 2016).

The social contacts that players engage in is a complex network of online and offline life, and the player is socialized into the social norms and values of the communities in and around multiplayer games (Taylor, 2009).

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Scholars have suggested that games have motivational effects and provide opportunities for active engagement with knowledge, which prepares players for future learning (Gee, 2007). Therefore, in educational research, there has been considerable interest in the implementation of games in instructional designs (Arnseth et al., 2018; de Freitas, 2018; Gros, 2007; Shaffer, 2006; Squire & Barab, 2004; Wouters & van Oostendorp, 2013). Commercial games have also been shown to be a social learning platform, which may improve collaboration skills and other advanced competences (e.g., Barr, 2018; 2019; Gee, 2017; Steinkuehler, 2006). However, there is a need to better understand commercial games from a more critical educational perspective. Especially, there is a need to better understand the norms and values that an educator may reproduce in the classroom by using commercial games and esports, and how to develop a "pedagogical awareness" of this issue in educators.

Gaming Culture and Technomasculinity

Anyone who plays video games on any device (e.g., mobile, console, PC) is considered a player. However, not all players necessarily identify as "gamers." To identify oneself as a gamer often indicates a certain number of resources (time and money) spent on games, as well as which games one plays (genres) and knowledge, if any, about games (Shaw, 2014). Already these identity structures exclude several players from being legitimate participants and potentially from ever trying out gaming. However, gaming and identifying as a gamer has become more mainstream, in contrast to being a more "unique" subculture for an exclusive and selected group (Taylor, 2015). TL Taylor notes that as the gaming subculture becomes more mainstream, the larger gaming communities wrestle with the implications of being "infiltrated" by the masses (i.e., not "real gamers") and, hence, a potential loss of uniqueness. However, both TL Taylor (2015) and Maloney et al. (2019) note that there are conflicting voices as the gaming communities wrestle with the implications of gaming becoming more mainstream. On one hand, there are "real gamers" that find casual gamers ("non-real gamers") to be infiltrating game culture with "hypersensitivity" regarding questions of diversity, such as gender, race, sexuality, and multilingualism. On the other hand, there are also voices in the gaming communities that are happy to see that gaming becomes a legitimate activity in mainstream culture, hoping to challenge and change the definition of a "real" gamer (Taylor, 2015; Maloney et al., 2019).

The overwhelmingly dominant stereotype of the online gamer as an anti-social cis-man in his teens is not true (Kowert et al., 2014). Nevertheless, videogames are, and have been, traditionally, arenas for white cis-men with limited access and representation for women-identifying players, players

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of color, as well as queer-identifying players (Corneliussen, 2008; Gray, 2018; Nakamura, 2009; Taylor, 2011; Taylor & Voorhees, 2018; Taylor, 2015). Preconceptions from everyday offline life affect online gaming culture considerably. For example, some players use derogatory words for sexual minorities as slander and thereby reinforce a negative view of the LGBTQ community. This practice reinforces the norm of heteronormativity and is used frequently enough to be considered standard "gamer lingo" (Kiourti, 2019; Pulos, 2013) or even a game within the game (Vossen, 2018). Nevertheless, the ideal of a man-identifying player is pervasive in online games. Even in explicitly LGBTQ inclusive groups, the player is presumed to be a (gay) man (Sundén, 2012).

Gender norms limit the association between "tech savvy, digital play, and femininity" (Harvey, 2015, p.137). Gaming is often discursively constructed as a masculine form of expertise, or technomasculinity. There appears to be a prevailing idea of a default competent esports player as a competitive young man, sporting traits that align with "antagonistic competitiveness and heterosexual virility" (Witkowski, 2018, p. 188). Hence, technomasculine traits (e.g., man, white, heterosexual, and competitive) are promoted as the default, while conflicting traits (e.g., femininity and queerness) are not (Johnson, 2018). Therefore, access for women-identifying players to gaming arenas tends to be more generous in low-stakes contexts and less so in more high-stakes competitive contexts (Sveningsson, 2012). Women-identifying players also tend to rate their skills as inferior to those of their men-identifying co-players, although it is commitment and not gender that mainly determines player competence (Ratan et al., 2015). While this norm does not reflect actual player demography (Kowert et al., 2014), it does limit which players feel included.

For example, Black women's presence in gaming has been seen as them invading a white platform for cis-men and their protests against that behavior are often ignored (Gray, 2020). There is also a prevalent stereotype of Asian players as a form of unwanted guest workers in the massively multiplayer online role-playing game World of Warcraft (Nakamura, 2009). That is, the stereotype proffers Asian players as selling in-game assets such as weapons or even characters for real money and, therefore, the buyer would get the content without any in-game work for it, which is seen as cheating. Asian players are perceived to precure such assets with less effort because they are considered naturally superior players (Harper, 2013). This stereotype and dehumanization of Asian players may stem from prejudices regarding Asian laborers as interchangeable and replaceable (Nakamura, 2009). The stereotype of Asian players also connects to how there is, in gaming culture, a dichotomy between East and West in esports: "North American and European players putting aside differences for the sake of a common goal:

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defeating the undefeatable giants of East Asia" (Zhu, 2018, pp. 229–230). This connects to the stereotypes previously mentioned and to a robotization of Asian players (Zhu, 2018).

Players representing different identity categories face obstacles to receiving in-game acknowledgement (Harper, 2013). The presence of non-default players is seen as an intrusion and the more non-default identity categories that a player fits into, the harder it is for the player to be taken seriously, acknowledged, and be included as a legitimate participant. One of the main groups of players that is perceived as non-default are women-identifying, which are seen as less able, and therefore must overcome more obstacles in order to receive the same amount of acknowledgement. While the participants acknowledge that women-identifying players are harassed in-game (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020), they do not question the hegemonic gaming culture. This is evident in discourses that do not express overt sexism and even sympathy for individual women-identifying players being harassed in-game, yet simultaneously refuse to, or not be able to, see the gender structures underlying such behavior (Maloney et al., 2019). Players who embody the ideal player norms seldom express any thoughts as to whether they receive any benefits by virtue of their identity (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020). These are the kinds of "invisible" structures that are at risk of being imported to classrooms and educational institutions if the educator is not aware of them, engaged in actively challenging them, and supporting students to "see" them.

However, not all participants engage unproblematically with the norms of the gaming culture. Our data reveal instances in which players questioned in-game toxicity (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020). This echoes the notion of tension between different stances within the gaming communities, previously described by TL Taylor (2015) and Maloney et al. (2019). In other words, while technomasculinity is currently shaping the identities (co)constructed in online gaming, there are also those who are questioning and refraining from such an ideal. Technomasculinity is currently openly contested and this might result in a more welcoming atmosphere for marginalized players. To encourage such a change, further emphasis should be placed on supporting especially young players and their mental well-being. Educators who use or plan on using commercial gaming and esports in their educational context need to embrace a pedagogical and critical awareness regarding the culture that may be silently and invisibly piggybacking on the activity of gaming into the classroom. For change to happen within online communities, this change should also happen within the connected offline communities (Ahmed & Madrid-Morales, 2021), such as classrooms employing commercial games or esports. Therefore, educators using commercial games, gaming and esports need to be a conscious part of this change.

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On (Some) Tools for Identity (Co)Construction in Games: Stats, Skins, and Discourse

Gaming culture is shaped simultaneously by norms originating from within and outside gaming communities. Regarding player identities, online platforms continue to be shaped by the identity categories we inhabit in our everyday offline contexts (Ståhl, 2021a). We employ a participant's perspective on identity (co)construction in interaction. That is, identities are not seen as static, but rather as fluid, multiple, and emergent in social interaction (Kopytowska & Kalyango Jr, 2014), which are (re)negotiated and (co) constructed in social contexts (Banjeree & German, 2014). The identities (co)constructed by participants in esports are highly shaped by normative gendered ideals from the everyday cultures and contexts outside of the online platforms and games. Such ideals are present both through the representation present in the game and in and through user agency and the identities they feel that they can (co)construct. Next, we briefly outline issues of diversity in competitive gaming settings through several of our own empirical analyses of one data corpus of esports gameplay from different perspectives. The data is from an ethno-case study: a qualitative case study informed by ethnographic methods (Parker-Jenkins, 2018) with a player-centered research approach on engagement with a game within a professional and educational context. The study focuses on the multiplayer first-person shooter CS:GO (Valve Corporation & Hidden Path Entertainment, 2012). The data was collected in collaboration with an esports program at a vocational school in Finland in 2017–2018. Seven students (aged 17–18, all white and identifying as cismen) took part in the study by sharing screen recordings of their CS:GO matches (fourteen matches in total) and by taking part in interviews (seven in total). Through the findings from our previously published work, as well as relying on contemporary research on similar issues, we can focus on discussing diversity connected to gaming culture and its norms, and how teachers, teacher educators, and student teachers can better understand how these issues can be addressed.

There are usually several tools for identity (co)construction in games and although customization is limited within some games in comparison to others, the participants still use the tools within the game context to construct various player identities. Most games have ranking systems and game statistics for how players perform. These are oriented to as an indicator for player competence (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020; Ståhl, 2021a; 2021b). The in-game status that is associated with a high player rank may help create mentor-apprentice relationships (Rusk et al., 2020). Ranks and statistics are used for measuring both situated performance and performance over time. In particular, the

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number of kills, in first-person shooters, define how well a player is performing. These systems are part of the game design and are continuously oriented to as relevant by players. In other words, statistics and ranking may be seen as tools for (co)constructing competent (or incompetent) player identities that also reach beyond the in-game context. These statistics and rankings may seem like neutral systems per se. However, when oriented to and used by participants in their in-game social interaction, the online gaming culture and the norms associated with it affect different players (e.g., the discussion above on Asian stereotypes and women-identifying players). Technomasculinity is at work in shaping how players who fit the norm of an ideal esports player are allowed to prove themselves through statistics and ranking, whereas the same statistics might not play as big a part or even work to the disadvantage of players who do not fit the technomasculine norm.

Another tool for (co)constructing identities in games are visual customizations, such as the use of weapons and avatar skins. Some game genres historically include more possibilities for visual (and other) customization (e.g., massively multiplayer online role-playing games, see e.g., Corneliussen, 2008) than others (e.g., first-person shooters). Moreover, game environments may be more or less customizable and more or less "realistic" or "fantastical." In our data (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020), there were tools for visual agency for the participants, such as skins, stickers, and renaming a weapon. A weapon skin in CS:GO, the game play we studied, does not affect any other properties of the weapon beyond how it looks in-game, both for the player using it and for other players. The views on how skins affect the gaming experience were varied. Some participants noted that skins can make one feel more confident, whereas others did not find them very meaningful and maybe used stickers (in-game decals) to decorate their weapons, while others made a profit on trading skins on the online platform (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020). The skins that the participants employed were often designs with masculine connotations based on their shapes, lines, and colors (see Longstreet et al., 2021). The themes of the skins were often technological or military, with masculine or gender-neutral color palettes. Although the participants had different preferences regarding the type and number of skins they owned, all of them oriented toward skins as meaningful (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020). We also found that weapons with skins on them can be considered war trophies and obtaining one from an opponent might disrupt the in-game performance of the opponent. For example, one participant picked up an opponent's weapon solely for its uncommon combination of skin and stickers and then felt irritated when an opponent did the same (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020).

Avatars can be seen as "the material to work with" in a virtual world (Taylor, 2009, p. 110). However, the lack of possibilities for customization of characters in some games does not equate to those games as being without

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material to work with. For example, if a game has a first-person perspective, it offers high player immersion and possibilities for constructing in-game identities through the players' "own eyes" (Mukherjee, 2012). However, to explore those venues for identity construction, we need to see beyond the bodily presentations such as the customizable avatar. In other words, identity (co)construction includes all tools that are meaningful for the player. Additionally, all forms of identity (co)construction are connected to online and offline communities. For example, while skins with a pink color palette are technically a possibility as it is available for purchase, social norms appear to limit use of such tools due to the feminine connotations. Hence, while games provide different tools for visual representation, the participants' visual agency was not solely limited by these affordances. The gaming culture that participants orient to plays an immensely strong part in which identities one wishes to (co)construct (Ståhl, 2021a; 2021b).

The third tool for identity (co)construction that we consider is discourse. In this case: language use. In our data (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020), participants presumed, in their communication, all players to be men unless a gamer tag or the voice of the player hinted that the participants needed to reevaluate such an assumption. While the participants stated to welcome women-identifying players, they did note that the gaming culture might not be supportive of women-identifying players (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020). Offensive language (in various forms) appeared to be part of the player's (co)constructed identities impacting the team discourse, as participants, random co-players, and opponents engaged in so called "gamer lingo" (Pulos, 2013): using both more general swear words, as well as slurs against women-identifying players and gay men. However, there were individual differences in the use of offensive language and different players indicated tendencies to use, and not use, certain words (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020). Hence, while offensive language can be considered "a game within the game" (Vossen, 2018), not all participants were part of said practice. Some players even took an explicit stance against this norm by pointing out toxicity within the team. While there was a prominent tendency to use words with either queer or feminine connotations to describe the players one considered provoking or irritating, and despite racism being an issue in online gaming (Gray, 2018; Nakamura, 2009), in our data racial slurs were few. In fact, when an opponent uttered a racial slur, the participants were quick to react by pointing out the language as racist (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020). While the participants appeared to agree that they do not condone racism and the use of racist slurs, they were not as critical toward language use potentially reflecting misogyny and/or homophobia.

All in all, while different games afford different levels of customization, it still appears as if the main constraining factor for identity (co)construction is, in fact, the gaming culture shaped by esports and competitiveness (Ståhl,

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2021a). It appears that, since the norm dictates that the ideal esports player is cis-man, white, heterosexual, and competitive, player identity construction needs to reflect these values in order not to break the norm. Constructing identities outside of this ideal is currently met with resistance and exclusion. The technomasculine ideal and gamer lingo present in the data are in stark contrast to educational values such as democracy, diversity, and inclusion. Nevertheless, excluding commercial games from educational contexts might limit not only the students' access to a social learning platform that they might find authentic and motivating (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020; Ståhl, 2021a) but also the possibility to address the problematic ideals and language use within online gaming in a safe educational space.

Possibilities for Pedagogically Aware Game Educators

While the participants in our data were all white men in their teens, their gameplay and in-game interactions are not homogenous (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020; Ståhl, 2021a; 2021b). This echoes points made by other researchers (Jenson & de Castell, 2010; Maloney et al., 2019; McKinnon-Crowley, 2020; Sveningsson, 2012) about not taking any group of players to be representatives of the same perspective or be part of the same "hive mind." Additionally, this also brings forth the point that a more inclusive and diverse gaming culture is a social issue, that is, a people's issue. It is not (only) solvable through technological solutions (e.g., automatic chat moderation). The norms are upheld and constructed in-and-through human discourse, and social interaction is seldom as simplistic as black and white. Therefore, as ethically responsible educators, we need to see the grayscales in between (Maloney et al., 2019) and weigh it all up against each other—situationally, dynamically, and relationally.

The toxic side of gaming culture is familiar to almost all young esports players. For example, one investigation done in Finland (Alin, 2018) found that 90 percent had witnessed hate speech or harassment while playing and 70 percent stated that they themselves had been subjected to such behavior. What is especially interesting to note is that almost all respondents (n = 156) want someone (or something) to intervene in the toxic behavior (90 percent) and 87 percent of the respondents wanted to see more encouragement and support to and from players to a greater extent. In other words, most players want competitive gaming to become a safer space for everyone (Alin, 2018). Nevertheless, they need the support of responsible adults who are aware of how gaming culture works and what it is. Because, currently, there is an unfortunate expectation that those who are subjected to toxic behavior just have to "take it," endure it, and not care about it (Jane, 2017), since it is "part of the game" (Vossen, 2018). This kind of thinking originates from

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the gaming culture as competitive and from the norm of the ideal, default, esports player as being tough. It also pushes the blame and fault onto those being targeted by the toxic behavior. As a result of this, some players avoid the chats (both text and voice) in the games because they are afraid of being harassed, or they may stop playing certain games because of the social toxicity of the game. Still, these kinds of (re)actions from those targeted by offensive behavior are not necessarily enough to change the online game culture.

As mentioned before, technomasculinity is currently, if not changing, at least being openly contested (e.g., Maloney et al., 2019). Accordingly, if the behavior of boys and men in-game is changing, then this should result in a more welcoming atmosphere for those othered by the norm, such as women-identifying players, non-binary players, queer players, and players of color. We mentioned previously that player identity construction is highly limited by the gaming culture shaped by esports, competitiveness, and the norm of the ideal esports player as man, white, heterosexual, and competitive (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020). However, there were also conflicting voices in the data (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020), such as when one participant mentioned the generally negative attitude in CS:GO toward players clearly stating to be women, for example, by gamertags such as "grl gamer." He mentioned that "they usually get a lot of crap" (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020, p. 19). He also remembered an instance where a co-player commented that the match was as good as lost, since they had a woman player on the team: "Someone immediately wrote 'gg there is a girl in our team.'" He further said that: "I don't give a damn if you're a girl. If you are good at the game, there should be nothing stopping you. That [women players are not as good as men] is just a stereotype" (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020, p. 19). It is fair to note that the participants did not express any misogynistic opinions during the multiple interviews conducted by a woman-identifying researcher (Ståhl). Rather, they stressed that anyone should be able to play if they want to and are good enough.

Young gamers know that hate speech and harassment also exist outside of the gaming culture, and they wish that interventions were made to reduce it on a more general level in society as well (Alin, 2018). However, they wish that offensive behavior would be addressed from within the gaming communities because they fear that "outsiders," who are not familiar with the language and function of games, will view the entire gaming culture with judgment because of its negative aspects. Hence, we see both a potential and even a desire for educators to be a part of changing the gaming culture from the inside. We also found in our study (Ståhl & Rusk, 2020; Ståhl, 2021a; Ståhl, 2021b) empirical examples of participants directly questioning practices that are oriented to as being toxic, both done by teammates and opponents. That is, there were mixed reactions among the participants in relation to situations that they appeared to perceive as toxic and/or hostile. In other words,

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no player is constantly toxic; that is, toxicity is not a question of either or but a situationally shifting behavior. Accordingly, these insights provide a foundation for believing that educators do have a potential for addressing issues with the in-game culture. Through a pedagogical awareness of what gaming culture is and how it manifests itself, educators can be a part of creating safe spaces for a more welcoming and including gaming culture in educational contexts. Changing norms is a slow process, but we must start somewhere.

When it comes to intervening in offensive behavior, hate speech and harassment, it is impossible to provide a universal solution that works in all situations. However, we wish to bring up three suggestions regarding the creation of safe spaces for gaming and (maybe) changing gaming culture for the better. These suggestions are based in a dialogic perspective on competitive gaming and education. That is, meaning making, communication and learning are situated within social practices when persons interact with others and cultural tools (such as games) that are both structured by norms and regulations, and flexible in the sense of being appropriated and given meaning by situated and contextual use for specific purposes (Wegerif, 2019). A dialogic approach encompasses an interest in how an utterance represents a certain position of a speaker and an orientation toward a recipient (Bakhtin, 1981; Wertsch, 1991). Games and gaming exist only through a dialogic relationship between players, the game, and other co-players (Arnseth, 2006; Silseth, 2012). For example, dialogic research on classroom interaction has shown the value of supporting student participation through the use of specific teacher moves in learning conversations (Howe et al., 2019), and positioning students as active contributors in learning dialogues (Castanheira et al., 2000). All suggestions connect to the educator, who is in a position to organize and structure the situated dialogic processes and, therefore, it all starts with (1) *the educator's own attitude* toward gaming, gaming culture, and gamers, as well as competition and collaboration. Secondly, we wish to highlight young people's desire for a (2) *safe, non-judgmental, adult presence in the gaming environment(s),* both on- and offline. Lastly, (3) *toxicity is not only language use and offensive language* but also other forms/modes of behavior in-game, such as sabotaging others (e.g., friendly fire) or disturbing others through other in-game actions (e.g., spamming in the voice/text chat or by using pings).

Initially, it is worth pointing out that it is often more effective for someone else, for example a fellow player or potentially an educator, to intervene in toxic situations. Those targeted by the abuse may not be able to stop the behavior through their own means. This is a way to show that harassment is not tolerated and that not all players are on the side of the harasser. Therefore, one needs to create a space where it is preferable to stand up to, or question, toxicity and not expect others to "endure." We claim that competitiveness is not about harassing and/or being offensive, it is about showing respect and

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having fun while competing, and it is important for the educators to embody this in their actions and activities. It is important to strengthen players' empathic and emotional abilities and help them control their emotions in the game and treat all fellow players (both opponents and teammates) with respect. Competitiveness is to be expected in an esports and competitive gaming setting, but all players have a responsibility to support and encourage sportsmanship. In any case, the responsibility for correcting offensive behavior should not fall solely on young players or those targeted by such behavior. A safe adult, a teacher, is a welcome support in troublesome situations, both on- and offline. In other words, engage and play together with the students.

Additionally, it is worth taking the students' concerns seriously and negotiate the principles for a safer gaming space in concert with them. How would they characterize a safe space for them to be able to enjoy playing the game? How can they, together as a group, and together with responsible adults, attempt to enforce it? What solutions and strategies do they already employ or want help in employing? A safe space is a space where the young person can be themself and rely on the goodwill of others (Nørgård et al., 2017). To be able to set a good example in their language and behavior, as well as in their handling of emotions during intense game situations, and support and help students in handling theirs, educators need to confront and challenge their own biases regarding gamers, gaming, and the gaming communities first. While it is currently considered "part of the game" (Vossen, 2018), offensive speech and behavior are not a force of nature that cannot be "tamed" or changed. It is also possible that if a player does not waste their energy being offensive, harassing and/or yelling at opponents and teammates, it will also be more fun to play and easier to concentrate on the game (e.g., Przybylski et al., 2014; Rusk & Ståhl, 2020; 2022). Even adults not deeply familiar with games can talk to young players about how others are treated equally and with respect and join in games to better understand the in-game social interaction. The educator also needs to be prepared to listen to troublesome experiences in connection with games without judging the student or the entire gaming activity and culture. If, for example, a teacher has a consistently negative attitude toward gaming, it can be very difficult for the young person to talk about unfair treatment or offensive comments they have received and, hence, not share their troublesome experiences.

Conclusion

It appears that Nordic esports and the educational employment of competitive games and commercial games is currently all but diverse. Most students applying for studies that involve esports or gaming are white and men. This is

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also what our data analysis indicated. So far, we have only had access to white men studying esports at the educational institution that is the context of our project(s), and we are immensely grateful for being allowed access into their private gaming spaces. Through the participants' willingness to share their in-game activities, we have learned so much regarding the benefits and possible pitfalls of combining competitive gaming with educational institutions. It appears that the competitive gaming rooms of the Nordic countries are still "white boys'" rooms. This is also reflected in our discussions within our Nordic network of esports and gaming researchers. They also indicate how difficult it is to find esports rooms that are not only occupied by white men. In other words, if Nordic educators, teacher education, and educational institutions are to uphold the standards of democracy, inclusion, and equal access to, for example, PCs, and if they are using, or thinking of using competitive gaming or commercial games in their education, they need to be aware of the social structures that exist and hinder "non-default" players from being interested or enlisting for gaming activities. Because these structures are already oriented to, by most students, before the school offers esports or other gaming activities. To run a diverse educational program, course, or other educational activity involving competitive gaming, for participants of any age (including in teacher education), requires that the educator is actively engaged in recruiting and welcoming diversity, as well as actively being involved in educating and contributing to the sportsmanship.

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12

Teaching Toward Transformation

Promoting Multicultural Pedagogy in Iceland through Reflective Participation

Charlotte E. Wolff, Renata Emilsson Peskova, and Beth Draycott

Multicultural classrooms have sometimes been misunderstood by teachers and teacher educators as a collection of students with various deficiencies rather than recognizing each learner and their individual strengths. One danger is viewing students as "empty vessels" needing to accumulate standardized knowledge, rather than as partners in knowledge creation and co-construction. Teachers may have the tendency to essentialize the cultural backgrounds of their students, label them with their nationalities, and interpret their needs from a single perspective rather than considering the complexities (Gorski, 2009; Ragnarsdóttir & Kulbrandstad, 2018).

Universities offer an array of courses on multiculturalism and social justice in education with markedly different aims and methods. Some highlight cultural contrasts, and others address students' personal values and focus on increasing their cultural competences, while still others concentrate on social justice and equitable practice. Yet learning is likely to remain on a hypothetical level if course content does not offer intentional opportunities to practically apply social justice pedagogies for achieving equitable outcomes for students (Gorski & Dalton, 2020). Teacher educators in multicultural and social justice courses need to apply such pedagogies that encourage and promote social change (Souto-Manning & Winn, 2017).

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Educators at all school levels in Iceland are becoming increasingly aware of the need for multicultural pedagogies to meet the needs of all students. Teachers (in-training and in-service) report a lack of pedagogical training and practical support for responding to the increasing diversity of their classrooms (Gunnþórsdóttir et al., 2017; Sinkkonen & Kyttälä, 2014). A growing presence in the classrooms are students with immigrant backgrounds: first- or second-generation students with one or both parents and/or grandparents being of foreign origin. They need to learn Icelandic as a second language to the level of their peers while their plurilingual identities are nurtured and their linguistic repertoires are built upon. That requires inclusive, multicultural pedagogies (Emilsson Peskova, 2021).

According to a recent Icelandic study, university students of immigrant origin tackle additional linguistic and cultural challenges (Benediktsson et al., 2018). Parmegiani (2019) argues that university educators committed to social justice should validate immigrant students' cultural and linguistic capital, seek to create supporting structures, trust, and safe learning spaces, in which students and teacher learn from each other. University-level teacher educators thus play an important role in developing teachers' professional practices regarding (dis)empowerment, (in)equity, (in)justice, and (non) participatory learning of their students (Freire, 2005; Gorski & Dalton, 2020; Nieto, 2010; Souto-Manning & Winn, 2017).

This study was conducted in conjunction with a university course, *Teaching Language in the Multicultural Classroom*, at the School of Education, University of Iceland. The aim was to explore the impact of students' experiences in a diverse, highly international classroom, as learners and (future) teachers in pluralistic societies, while engaging with multicultural theories and practices. Particular emphasis was placed on students' micro-level learning experiences within the classroom by mapping the development of their perspectives in the learning process by accounting for the interconnectedness of cognitive and affective experience on students' perspective. The course was designed to develop students' knowledge about the value of cultural diversity and plurilingualism as an educational asset and as a pedagogical resource. Specific objectives of the course included:

- Enhancing students' respect for differences: cultural, ethnic, linguistic, spiritual, gender/sexual orientation, socioeconomic, etc.
- Promoting understanding of varying life choices and life experiences in a variety of educational settings.
- Emphasizing the role of language and language pedagogy as a powerful tool for conveying culture and influencing principles of multicultural education.

In their typology of approaches to reflection in multicultural and social justice teacher education, Gorski and Dalton (2020) identified three

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main categories: conservative, liberal, and critical. While the conservative approaches essentialize and thus contribute to "othering" cultures, the liberal approaches reflect on personal identities and differences without considering the implied power differences and social injustices. Teachers applying a liberal approach reflect on teaching diverse learners in relation to their identities and life experiences, yet this approach can limit reflection on teachers' and students' roles as agents of change. In contrast, critical approaches aim at equitable and just school pedagogies in which teachers reflect deeply on their agency for achieving those goals in their practice. The "highest" level in this typology is the ability to reflect on social transformation outside of the school, in broader contexts of their communities and societies (Gorski & Dalton, 2020). The primary research question driving this study was: *What are the prominent pedagogical insights and learning gains reported by students at the end of the course?*

Methods

Participants

All participants were students attending the abovementioned course during two consecutive academic years—the fall semesters of 2017 and 2018. All students were invited to participate in the research: a total of twenty-six students permitted use of their essays. Nine out of twenty-two students signed and returned the requested consent forms from the 2017 cohort, and the international composition consisted of students from Iceland, Ghana, Spain, Italy, Poland, Finland, Germany, Ireland, and Denmark. From the 2018 cohort, seventeen out of twenty students signed and returned consent forms, with an international composition comprising students from Iceland, Austria, Germany, Peru, Spain, Finland, United Kingdom, Serbia, the Philippines, Denmark, and Canada. For the sake of anonymity, all participants' names have been changed.

Data

Textual data was derived from students' reflective essays, which were submitted as part of the final portfolio assignment to complete the course. The guidelines for the essay asked students to explain what they learned in the course and how it relates to their future practice. Suggestions regarding content included the following: providing clear references to course content and resources that they found meaningful; describing how the course supported them in their studies and as future professionals working in multicultural contexts; specifying teaching methods, activities, and ideas that

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were particularly applicable to their teaching practice; and offering critical feedback on the course to improve the course for future repetitions. Thus, the essays were intended to encapsulate students' learning experiences from the start to end of the course by allowing them to emphasize learning gains in their own words, based on their own understandings.

Initially, these essays were collected for purposes of course assessment—it was an a posteriori decision to analyze this data for research purposes. Our decision to analyze the essays was motivated by the breadth of learning, insight, and new understandings expressed by the students in the 2017 cohort. At the end of each semester, students were invited to participate in the study and were requested to provide authorization and consent to use their reflective essays to investigate prominent learning themes related to the course. Considering the increasing call for inclusive, multicultural pedagogies in the Icelandic context, we sought to identify prominent focal points and other elements of learning that could benefit both teachers and teacher educators in the long effort to improve their teaching practice.

Data Analysis and Code Development

Thematic analysis is a common method for analyzing and interpreting patterns of meaning—themes—in qualitative text-based data (Braun et al., 2015). As such, it was well-suited for identifying themes present in student essays in response to the research questions, as this approach involved multiple, iterative, reflective phases. The process of developing codes to analyze the essays and extract relevant themes followed a series of sequential steps, described later, and consistently relied upon consensus coding between two trained coders. In cases of uncertainty, consensus was reached between three coders.

The first phase involved data familiarization. Two coders, both instructors of the course, read all essays from the fall 2017 cohort and divided them for segmentation and coding. The second phase involved code generation, and both coders engaged in multiple rounds of collaborative open coding. To begin, each coder read four essays and began by constructing descriptive codes related to students' learning gains, values, and attitudes toward multicultural education. These codes supported the third phrase, which involved searching for themes. Both coders shared their code lists, reviewed each other's codes, and began sorting individual codes into clusters. After additional review and discussion, general concepts (themes) specific to each cluster were identified, labeled, and ultimately grouped as core themes with corresponding codes. In the fourth phase, we reviewed and discussed all themes and codes extensively, focusing on defining boundaries between particular codes and clarifying distinctions between the larger themes around which

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the codes were organized. In phase five, we refined the code lists by merging themes that were similar, eliminating overlapping codes, and constructing clear titles and definitions for all codes. Once the codes were finalized, each essay was segmented into meaningful units—often one to several sentences in length—and coded for meaning by achieving consensus between coders. The sixth and final phases involved summarizing all themes, codes, and code frequencies after coding all essays from both iterations of the course, fall 2017 and fall 2018. The results are reported below in more detail, concentrating on students' voices, as expressed in their essays, to provide meaningful answers to the research question (Bergmark & Westman, 2018).

Results

The coding process resulted in the following eight themes: (1) Learning about Multiculturalism through Direct Experience, (2) Pedagogical Knowledge and Techniques Acquired, (3) Teachers' Roles in the Classroom, (4) Participants' Personal Development, (5) Expanding Awareness about Diversity and Inclusion, (6) Challenges to Working in a Multicultural Context, (7) Language Learning in Context, and (8) Course Feedback. The Course Feedback theme is omitted from results and discussion because, although useful when coding, it was neither relevant nor informative in terms of the research question.

To visualize the cumulative results of the coding, table 12.1 shows the overarching themes along with corresponding codes, including definitions and frequencies per code. Themes and their corresponding codes are presented in order of frequency of occurrence: the most salient themes and codes appear first, concluding with the least prominent. As the research question focuses on frequently reported learning gains expressed by students, each theme is interpreted within the context of the course.

Pedagogical Insights and Reported Learning Gains: Themes

Learning about Multiculturalism through Direct Experience

The theme that was most represented in students' reflective essays was *Learning about Multiculturalism through Direct Experience*. This theme relates closely to the course philosophy and design along with the structuring of activities. The teachers influenced the experience of the students via the structure of topics, presentations, assignments, participation requirements, and models of learner autonomy. In that sense, learning outcomes depended on a combination of choices made by the teachers and those of the students.

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TABLE 12.1
Themes, Code Labels and Code Definitions, Including Total Code Frequencies per Theme and Per Code

Theme (and Frequency)	*Code Labels (and Frequency)*	*Code Definitions*
Learning About Multiculturalism through Direct Experience (115)	*Exposure (32)*	Exposure to different perspectives from students, teachers, and guest lecturers
	Gaining insights (30)	Gaining insights through participation in a multicultural group
	Inclusive practices (24)	Experience of inclusive practices through collaborative learning (i.e., peer learning, group work, projects)
	Communication (22)	Learning in an inclusive space through open communication and discussion
	Belonging (7)	A sense of belonging, personal attachment and affiliation through strong experience in the classroom
Pedagogical Knowledge and Techniques Acquired (113)	*Inclusive Pedagogy (44)*	Selective application of theories and practical approaches to achieve social equality and develop appreciation for differences in the classroom
	Inspiring Resources (31)	Reference to inspiring concepts, theories and resources encountered during the course
	Integrating Knowledge (19)	Integrating new pedagogical ideas and theories with prior knowledge
	Developing Partnerships (11)	Developing partnerships with communities and families to support students' learning
	Value of research (8)	Discovering the value of educational research for improving practice
Teachers' Roles in the Classroom (100)	*Going above and beyond (34)*	The actual or changing responsibility of the teacher in terms of going "above and beyond" teaching content to support students' learning
	Pertinence (22)	Pertinence of multicultural education for teachers
	Teacher positioning (16)	Linking one's own position as teacher to larger social issues (multiculturalism/ diversity/ society)

(*continued*)

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TABLE 12.1
(Continued)

Theme (and Frequency)	*Code Labels (and Frequency)*	*Code Definitions*
	Increasing complexity (15)	Increasing complexity of teacher roles
	Learning through feedback (9)	Reciprocal learning and feedback between teacher and students (for learning)
	Motivation and engagement (4)	Teacher motivates and engages through active involvement of learners
Participants' Personal Development (90)	*Future intentions (41)*	Intention to use acquired knowledge and skills in future profession
	Enriched experience (22)	Enriched understanding of one's own personal life/ learning experiences
	Autonomous learning (20)	Increasing (experience of) autonomous learning
	Self-growth (7)	Specific reference to self-growth and a feeling of empowerment
Expanding Awareness about Diversity and Inclusion (77)	*Valuing cultures and languages (24)*	Learning to understand and value own and other cultures, and languages, that is, mother tongues
	Opening eyes to diversity (22)	Opening eyes to the value of diversity, multiculturalism, and language learning in and beyond the classroom
	Prejudices (13)	Acknowledging prejudice: Reflecting on existing prejudice and considering prejudice reduction strategies
	Hardships (11)	Realization of the hardships faced by students and families from other cultures
	Recognising individual diversity (7)	Deepened understanding of cultural differences and recognizing individual diversity
Challenges to Working in a Multicultural Context (14)	*Challenges in developing empathy (8)*	Challenges associated with developing empathy toward the issues and struggles experienced by students and their families
	Difficulties in practice (6)	Difficulty applying concepts and methods of multiculturalism in classroom practice
Language Learning in Context (10)	*Improved oral skills (8)*	Improved English oral skills and increased confidence in speaking
	Improved writing skills (2)	Improvement of English academic writing skills

Source: Created by the chapter authors.

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The codes labels are as follows: Exposure, Gaining Insights, Inclusive Practices, Communication, and Belonging.

Pedagogical Knowledge and Techniques Acquired

The second most prominent theme identified in student essays was *Pedagogical Knowledge and Techniques Acquired*. Providing an array of theoretical resources and practical examples of their implementation was a key objective of the course, thus it is not entirely surprising that the codes corresponding to this theme were frequently reported by students. Inclusive pedagogy, Inspiring resources, Integrating knowledge, Developing partnerships, and Value of research. As the second most prominent theme, this theme reflects the intentional coupling of theory and practice. The five codes are as follows:

Teachers' Roles in the Classroom

The third most frequent theme referred as *Teachers' Roles in the Classroom*, comprised six codes. Throughout the course, students were asked to reflect on their personal philosophies as teachers, and to consider the affordances and constraints of their position within the educational system. Participation in the course thus required students to revise and extend their ideas about teachers' roles in the classroom and, in some sense, within larger social contexts. This theme conveyed students' considerations of the multiple, varied, and flexible roles that teachers must assume in their classrooms. The codes are as follows: Going Above and Beyond, Pertinence of Multicultural Education, Teacher Positioning, Increasing Complexity, Learning Through Feedback, and Motivation and Engagement.

Participants' Personal Development

The fourth most frequent theme extracted from the essays linked to *Participants' Personal Development*. This theme is indicative of unexpected outcomes of students' participation in the course, namely the personal impact that their engagement and openness had on their development as individuals. Students incorporated the newly learned theoretical underpinnings into their future plans, both as individuals and as teachers. They reported on self-growth and empowerment occurring as a consequence of being part of a multicultural group, through engagement, discussion, and collaboration. They also reported on self-growth which came about through the course emphasis on learner autonomy, for example, with topic selection and creativity in managing course assignments. The four codes captured within this theme are as follows: Future Intentions, Enriched Experience, Autonomous Learning, and Self-growth.

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Expanding Awareness about Diversity and Inclusion

The fifth most frequently referenced theme related specifically to students' *Expanding Awareness about Diversity and Inclusion.* The participation and engagement of students in the multicultural setting encouraged collaboration on projects and presentations related to multiculturalism. This structure led to increased awareness of the diversity and the relevance of inclusion. Students learned to understand and value their own cultural and language identities and they began addressing their own prejudices. They recognized that generalizations about culture are not compatible with the broad spectrum of experiences and backgrounds present in diverse classrooms. This was particularly pertinent in terms of addressing individual diversity in ways that acknowledge variation within and across cultural groups. Five codes fall within the scope of this theme: Valuing Cultures and Languages, Opening Eyes to Diversity, Prejudice, Hardships, and Recognizing Individual Diversity.

Challenges to Working in a Multicultural Context

The sixth most frequently referenced theme received very few codes. This theme represents students' shifting toward a more personal and emotionally charged awareness of power imbalances and the potential agency of teachers to address and learn ways of equalizing such imbalances. Intellectual, emotional, and social engagement in a multicultural context necessarily posed some challenges on the students who realized that it was hard to develop empathy and reach out to diverse students and their families. Students acknowledged that there are many issues and dilemmas that the teacher needs to engage with in their practice. Applying theories and methods in practice requires dedication and a clear personal and professional stance, and participants emphasized that teachers have the power to impose their own perspectives and beliefs within the classroom. The two codes that captured this theme are as follows: Challenges Developing Empathy and Difficulties in Practice.

Language Learning in Context

The least frequent theme referenced in student essays pertained to students' *Language Learning in Context.* This theme exemplifies an unintentional and unexpected learning outcome from the course. The focus of the course was on approaches to language teaching and learning, not on improving the language skills of the students. The two codes comprising this theme are as follows: Improved Oral Skills and Improved Writing Skills.

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Specific Learning Gains Reported by Students: Codes per Theme

Below is an overview of the meaning attached to each theme by providing an in-depth description of individual codes, accompanied by selected excerpts taken directly from the students' texts? (anonymized) that capture the students' point of view. Themes and codes appear in *boldface* to make them easier to identify.

Learning about Multiculturalism through Direct Experience

A key feature of the course design was to intentionally provide knowledge of and about multicultural teaching practice by experiencing activities directly. This dimension of learning was achieved through a blend of course content and interactive learning activities. Repeated *exposure* to others' perspectives facilitated deeper involvement in the co-creation of meaning through direct engagement with other points of view. According to one student, Petra, "the debates in class can be very constructive, because with them we reflect, and we can learn a lot from and with the opinions of others." Another student noted:

> During these three months, I have learned a lot from all the people in the course. Starting from the human aspect, which is one of the most important for me, I gained various opinions, points of view, positive and negative feedback, and multicultural perspectives. (Luca, 2017)

Exposure to different voices and perspectives linked directly to the use of collaborative, *inclusive practices* in the course, which provided practical support for student learning.

> Activities such as the multicultural experience questionnaire that we answered in the first week of study helped me reflect on my exposure to diverse cultures, and it demonstrated that it can be utilized by teachers and serve as a useful tool to analyze diversity and attitudes amongst groups of students. (Emily, 2018)

Applying *inclusive practices* in the learning process also made students reflect on the cooperative nature of multicultural learning. As Nora (2018) explains,

> The course . . . gives to each student plenty of opportunities to critically reflect on one's own attitudes and behaviors in relation to multicultural topics, both in teachers' practices and in the life outside the classroom. Moreover, it fosters construction of knowledge by inviting students to share the theories, methods, and strategies they are already familiar with and connect them to those presented throughout the course.

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Similarly, repeated opportunities for *communication* reinforced being able to express oneself openly and often within the course. Communication was instructive and supportive. As Eline (2017) summarized, "In this course . . . the teachers engage and encourage students to speak freely in the class. This made most students feel accepted in the class and their views were respected as well." Varying a direct, communicative approach stimulated students' engagement. As one student described:

> I really enjoyed the flexibility of the course, I loved that we were able to have so many classroom discussions and the sharing of ideas and thoughts on almost anything brought up in the class, whether it was dilemmas, approaches, or experiences. It is the ideal place for discussions and sharing, since we were in a multicultural classroom with different perceptions and views on the world and on teaching. (Matheo, 2018)

A particularly enriching outcome of learning through direct experience was a sense of *belonging* reported by some students. This was expressed through participatory approaches:

> Drama's natural environment is group work, and its creation is rarely created by one person because the performers all depend on each other. This kind of work needs trust, effort, and participation by everyone in the group, and with time they develop a community of learners, that is essential for the multicultural classroom. (Nicola, 2018)

Pedagogical Knowledge and Techniques Acquired

Students confirmed that the combination of the course design, resource selection, and direct demonstration of techniques and methods through in-class activities were a meaningful learning format for attending students and distance learners alike. The codes below articulate what students found most meaningful in terms of specific pedagogical knowledge and techniques.

Inclusive pedagogy in a multicultural environment created the necessary background for students to value specific theoretical frameworks and build practical activities to shape an inclusive classroom. Ingibjörg (2018) pointed out the value of interactive techniques:

> There are some drama activities which I prefer over others, and those I would use in my language teaching classroom are: improvisation, role playing, and reader's theatre. These three activities can be very beneficial in a multicultural environment as they are icebreakers, encourage

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> students to interact with each other which would help students learn about different kinds of cultures by putting themselves into others' shoes and not forgetting learning about popular media and literature of different kinds of cultures.

Many of the inclusive activities had practical value easily applied in the classroom, for management and formative assessment:

> Building positive relations with students is a fundamental strategy to obtain information about the students' lives, families and cultural backgrounds that can be used as valuable resources to integrate relevant content and apply different teaching approaches that promote equity pedagogy in a multicultural classroom. This course has taught me certain activities that I can use in my teaching practice to find out what students are, know and wonder. For instance, funds of knowledge questionnaire, identity projects, the poem, and the multicultural experiences questionnaire are useful activities that encourage students to express, discuss, share and illustrate diverse aspects of their lives and cultural backgrounds. (Helena, 2018)

Inspiring resources offer a necessary foundation for transforming pedagogical concepts. Students were intentionally encouraged to explore a broad range of theories considered relevant to multicultural education.

> Going back to narrowing what I have learned this semester. From a social lens, I believe that the theories of Bourdieu (capital), Hall (cultural iceberg) and Moll (funds of knowledge), can support a culturally responsive pedagogy in scaffolding language learners' past, present and future knowledge, in consideration to the aspects of multiculturalism and education equity. (Antonella, 2018)

The element of learner autonomy built into the course created ample space for students to integrate knowledge from their previous university studies, life, and teaching experiences with new content and concepts from the course. As Nora (2017) explained, this fostered theoretical development:

> Throughout the course, we were invited to define and redefine the concept of multiculturality together with other theoretical concepts that relate to it. Previously to this course, I was familiarized with the model of Michael Byram's intercultural communicative competence which is, from my point of view, essential for foreign language teaching. I used this previous knowledge and related it to the other theories that were presented through readings and discussion.

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Growth was not limited to theoretical knowledge—the development of teaching methods was also reported:

> I participated in a course about English language teaching methods, and I understood that there is a strong connection among equity pedagogy, multiple intelligences, and teaching methods. I understood that multiple intelligences are connected to equity pedagogy. These intelligences can be used by teacher to reach to every student in the class depending on one's intelligence. That method allows to learning in an equal way. (Tomasz, 2017)

Developing partnerships and relationships outside the classroom, with students' families and with the wider community, was emphasized as a strategy for stimulating students' learning.

> So, by including the parents, through homework activities involving the parent's experiences, viewpoints, or translations/analysis between the L1 and L2 we can create a more fruitful dialogue between students and parents. . . . This will most likely also give parents with foreign backgrounds a sense of being involved with their child, and transparency in their schooling, which will again urge them to invest more time in their learning, which ultimately will further strengthen their child's ability to learn in a multicultural classroom. (Matheo, 2018)

The *value of research* and its connection to teaching practice was discovered as a powerful insight by some students. As one student explained, "The best aspect for me from this course was to read and study the research that has been done so far in the field of education. It has shown me the significance of research-based teaching". (Maja, 2018).

Teachers' Roles in the Classroom

The roles captured in this theme were typically coupled with teachers' responsibility toward motivating and engaging students actively in the learning process. The idea that teachers must go beyond the usual professional expectations and be able to adapt to new complexities and social dimensions was emphasized repeatedly. Multicultural education requires teachers to remain ever ready to reexamine and revise their positions and practices in response to the interactions and feedback from within the classroom. Their roles extend to broader issues existing outside of the classroom. To this end, teachers who position themselves as multicultural practitioners are obliged to address social issues and incorporate social justice concerns in their pedagogical decision-making.

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The codes associated with this theme highlighted what students considered relevant teacher roles. *Going above and beyond* reflects the changing responsibilities of the teacher in terms of stepping outside of the traditional teaching of content and their obligation to support students' learning with all available means.

> To be able to move from our ideas to act, we need to inquire into our practice, the environment and culture to see things in context. We need to reflect on what we do in our classroom and why we do it. We also need to be open and get to know our students, their origin, culture, religion and so on. The language teacher has to keep in mind the needs of his students and what their aim is in their learning process and how they may get as positive results as possible. (Jana, 2018)

Internal reflection was linked tightly to (language) teachers' abilities and orientation toward action:

> Teacher as evaluators can have enormous consequences in students' sense of themselves as learners; therefore, teachers need to be aware of students' different abilities, linguistic skills, and social-cultural backgrounds to assess them effectively. Language teachers should also know a basic knowledge about the target language, such as the structure, history, changes over time or unusual spellings. Furthermore, when the culture of home and school mismatch, teachers' role as agents of socialization is significant to make the transition from home to school easier while simultaneously developing emotional reliance and flexibility for newcomers. (Helena, 2018)

Pertinence of multicultural education centered around the importance of multicultural education for classroom teachers in the twenty-first century.

> This is an important factor for teachers to know that immigrant learners have built-in assets. These resources can be utilized in scaffolding new knowledge. . . . In relation to the cultural iceberg, Hall (1976) explained as the tip of the iceberg is the external or the visible part of one's culture (behaviors and some beliefs), while the internal part is the invisible, the underlying factors that consist of values, thought and patterns. Hence, it is also important for teachers to understand why culturally diverse individuals may manifest actions differently, it might be brought by their own heritage values or culture. (Antonella, 2018)

Teacher positioning focuses on teachers' awareness and knowledge of their own position within the classroom and the larger social context. This

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understanding also encompasses recognition of the complexities of students' positions, within the classroom and the world at large.

> As a teacher working with multicultural groups, this course has taught me the social and cultural contexts of teaching and learning by acquiring the theoretical as well as practical approaches needed to design teaching strategies that help bridge the gap between what students already know and what they will be taught. (Helena, 2018)

Learning through feedback was considered an important aspect of the learning process. The feedback was described as coming from different directions, both from peers and from the teachers, and this multi-directionality enhanced the professional learning outcomes of everyone in the classroom.

> I understood that I need to develop my professionalism and constantly learn from my students. Learn their culture, customs and everything they represent as individuals to bring it out and make them feel proud about it. (Tomasz, 2017)

Motivation and engagement were linked to the active engagement of all learners to create challenging and inspiring learning environments. Misra (2012) pointed out that "it is important for teachers to encourage and motivate their students which will make them active in the class" (Eline, 2017). The impact of the learning environment on teachers and students was also mentioned:

> To be a successful language teacher is not only about knowing the language and various teaching methods. It is also about establishing a challenging and inspiring environment in the classroom. Getting to know your students, their needs and goals in their studies. (Jana, 2018)

Participants' Personal Development

While the learning objectives of the course concentrated on pedagogical content, a noteworthy outcome included reports of personal growth and development. *Future intentions* provided insight into the elements of learning that most students found directly applicable to their own classroom practice. Students specified different approaches, topics, and theories for framing their future goals and intentions:

> We also need to get them familiarized with autonomy in the school and build a positive communication in our classroom, so everybody gains as much as possible. I want my students to be sustainable and be able to criticize and discuss their ideas and others'. I think by giving them an

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> opportunity and educational environment for more critical thinking we make them more aware of what they are learning, how it can be done and why they should pursue it. (Jana, 2018)

A deeper evaluation of the impact of learners' mother tongues led to a direct goal in terms of reframing the practical value. "I will definitely use what I learned about this topic to my advantage in the future and involve and embrace students' mother tongues in the classroom. For example, by letting them write or present projects in their mother tongue" (Nora, 2017).

Enriched experience was referenced as an additional benefit of students' learning experiences, particularly when encountering new educational concepts. Such enrichment also demonstrated how students linked various elements of the course to personal experiences.

> Having the free choice to research and write about diverse topics, for instance, this clause should be revised to 'it is more personal and focused, which has helped me to be more effective and efficient academically. Additionally, citizenship education is an additional topic that can be included in the course to provide opportunities for discussion on ideas of equality, justice and multiculturalism. (Helena, 2018)

Autonomous learning, as a principle, emphasized the value of allowing the space, time, and exposure to concepts and approaches supporting students becoming independently responsible for their learning. The course was intentionally designed to enable students' learning autonomy while also exposing them to practical methods for facilitating this process with their (future) learners.

> On the other hand, something that I liked the most about this course is the pedagogical actions of the teacher in fostering the growth of learner autonomy. The teacher promoted responsibility and independence by delegating decisions and tasks, and by acting as a facilitator and manager of learning resources. The teacher's actions to encourage learning autonomy have helped me to be more reflective and engaged with my learning experience during this course. (Helena, 2018)

Promoting students' *self-growth* was not an overt goal of the course, as the learning objectives were more focused on educational content and pedagogical practices. Nonetheless, students specifically referenced how they had grown, changed, and felt empowered as individuals through their participation in the course.

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> The course is over and collecting all this together I realize how much I actually gained during the course. My knowledge considering multicultural education has grown remarkably and what I see maybe the most important thing I gained from this course is the courage I managed to grow towards myself. (Lea, 2017)

Expanding awareness about diversity and inclusion was a core purpose of the course, and its impact seemed most influential with students who gained learning experiences that were the opposite of their former school experiences. The code *valuing cultures and languages* captured students realizing the value of their own culture, as well as others' cultures, particularly in terms of welcoming and recognizing each child's background and mother tongues as assets within the classroom. The culture of the school and the representation of diversity were also identified as consequential:

> Every student deserves to have a good education and achieve academic success. Not only that but every child should be able to look back at their childhood and time in school with fond memories and enjoy the experience, not have anxiety because they are different either culturally, ethnically or speak a different language. Any diversities that exist should not be minimalized but identified as valuable assets for all members of the school. (Emily, 2017)

Another code, *opening eyes to diversity*, described forging new pathways toward valuing and utilizing the affordances of multiculturalism and linguistic diversity. These eye-opening experiences helped students draw links between the learning space of the classroom and the far-reaching sociocultural spaces outside the classroom. Students also explained how their personal stances and beliefs can influence their teaching practice and the learning experiences of their future pupils.

Prejudice was a course topic that emerged from a combination of readings and activities. Students acknowledged the uncomfortable truth that they themselves have prejudices. As Chloe (2017) emphasized,

> During this course I realized I had more prejudices than I thought I did. At first this was a frustrating feeling as I had always thought I was an open and accepting individual. However, this process even if uncomfortable is necessary for all teachers to go through. Once you have accepted your prejudice you can start working on it and deconstructing all the beliefs you had.

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Acceptance, in turn, related to the importance of working toward reducing prejudice within oneself and one's teaching practice.

> Right from the start of the course we were encouraged to reflect on our own attitudes and behaviors in relation to any kind of difference in people surrounding us. One of the activities that is quite powerful for this purpose is the "subtle prejudice activity" that was done in class. The first step in reducing prejudices and discrimination is becoming aware of them and understanding how they function. (Nora, 2018)

Learning about *hardships* gave students important insights for their pedagogical practice. They explicitly referred to the need to consider the obstacles that pupils and their families (could) have faced prior to coming to the current country of residence, and the hardships some have experienced in the new society and school system.

Recognizing individual diversity showed students' deepening understanding of individual differences within the larger culture. This was coupled with a recognition of the need to acknowledge individual diversity within the classroom. "We must take the time to meet individuals from that culture and interact with them. Only then can we discover the values and beliefs that underlie the behavior of that society" (Petra, 2017). Recognition, in some instances, led to broader perceptions of diversity:

> Before attending the lesson, I had a narrow definition of the concept. I believed culture was only the customs and traditions particular of a country. But I learned that it includes many other aspects of an individual such as gender, sexual orientation, etc. This gives me a different perception of students and people. I see them more as individuals and not grouping them into a certain box. (Chloe, 2017)

Challenges to Working in a Multicultural Context

Although this theme was not prominent, it draws attention to the complexity of merging cultures of learning with social concerns. The code *challenges developing empathy* captured students' preoccupation with acknowledging explicit issues and struggles faced by some learners and their families. Knowledge of pupils' backgrounds and circumstances was considered essential for teachers to develop empathy that facilitates meaningful interaction and multicultural learning in the classroom:

> De Waal and Serfontein (2015) added that parents are the primary caregivers, and little can be achieved unless they become and remain directly

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> involved in their children's development and learning. The children do not only benefit from that but the teachers as well. It gives the teachers opportunities to meet their student's family and discuss the necessary things to improve the performance of children. And doing this topic, I came to realize that some parents face challenges like poverty, lack of time to participate in their children's education. (Eline, 2017)

The code, *difficulties and practice*, addressed the complexity of applying concepts and methods of multiculturalism into many dimensions of classroom practice—multicultural education is not easily reduced to a single dimension of practice. This makes understanding and acting upon all aspects of multicultural education challenging for teachers who are beginning to implement multicultural pedagogies into their practice. As Frida (2017) explained,

> Banks (1993) describes that the integration of multiculturalism's five dimensions in the education of teachers often feels like mere "content integration" to the teacher students. I can recognize this from my own education as I have often felt that discussions and lectures on multiculturalism have had a tendency to stay at a very vague level where no solutions or actual teaching methods have been presented. Therefore, it has been difficult to connect it to an actual teaching practice.

Language Learning in Context

Due to the communicative language teaching approach in the course, students reported that their English language skills improved. With improved language competence and extended communication abilities, mutual understanding grew. This facilitated the process of learning language through communication with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Productive skills were mentioned, such as *improved writing skills:* "My academic writing improved tremendously through great support and mostly constructive feedback" (Nora, 2017). Additionally, *improved oral skills* were emphasized through dialogue-based interactions.

Discussion and Conclusions

Unpacking the Implications of Students' Learning Gains

The cumulative learning gains described in the results above naturally have broader implications. One might also consider: *How effective was the course in terms of promoting multicultural pedagogy and social justice in teacher*

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education? Gorski & Dalton's (2020) typology refers to the reflective scope of multicultural and social justice courses and the challenges therein, pointing out that "Most learners need carefully crafted prompts prodding them into deep reflection about power and oppression, especially around forms of injustice associated with their privileged identities; for most students, this does not come easily" (p. 366). Thus, supporting critical reflection within the classrooms involves preparing teachers with sufficient depth of understanding that it is possible for them to enact change beyond the confines of the classroom. This includes being able to discern issues/actions that support transformation as well as recognizing issues/actions that could (potentially) reproduce injustice (Fook & Morley, 2005; Freire, 2005; Nieto, 2010; Parmegiani, 2019; Souto-Manning & Winn, 2017).

The resulting themes and codes above expose critical insights into the transformative process depicted in students' reflective essays. As described earlier, the level of autonomy provided in the course combined well with explicit processes of discursive collaboration and critical reflection, prodding some students, but not all, into deeper, more critical reflection. Student viewpoints expressed internal, individual transformations as well as the possibility of transformative connections to broader multicultural and social justice concerns. Yet these were often expressed without referencing specific actions and/or teacher agency. Despite clearly reported benefits, the course was not highly effective at deliberately prompting deep reflection that could support students reaching beyond individual awareness to examine their "preparedness and willingness to be an agent of social justice change" (Gorski & Dalton, 2020, p. 363).

On the one hand, students constructed their learning within a multicultural frame. Their statements verified that they experienced multicultural methods as beneficial strategies, approaches, and tools for fostering multicultural learning communities. They described their learning experiences as those belonging to a multicultural group studying about multicultural issues, and they articulated developments in their knowledge, values, and awareness, as well as expressing the *potential impact* of these developments on future actions (Freire, 2005; Fook & Morley, 2005; Souto-Manning, 2013). On the other hand, their reflections voiced neither devotion nor determination to achieve social transformation in their schools or in society. As Gorski & Dalton (2020) have pointed out, this is not uncommon, as "Instructors generally have critical orientations, but face challenges that make it difficult to operationalize those orientations" (p. 366) when teaching about multiculturalism and social justice.

Conclusions

The course *Teaching English in a Multicultural Classroom* was designed to introduce and mediate multicultural pedagogies for prospective teachers by

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building knowledge and skills relating to contemporary issues in multicultural education, specifically language teaching and learning. The student composition was culturally diverse, and the course design made use of multicultural approaches, methods, and techniques intended to facilitate learning about multicultural pedagogy. Through participation, engagement, collaboration, and critical reflection, students were exposed to different teaching methods, pedagogical theories, and educational experiences from their co-students, teachers, and not least, from themselves.

By the end of the course, students wrote reflective essays in which they voiced their perspectives, narrated their learning experiences, and articulated internal transformations in their knowledge and awareness of issues explored during the course. Through an intentional course design based on a communicative facilitation model, students experienced open channels of communication; active forms of cooperative, group participation; and ongoing personal and professional reflection on the learning process.

The themes and codes indicate that the experience of using multicultural methods in a multicultural context while learning about multicultural pedagogies successfully supports the expansion of students' awareness in relation to diversity and inclusion. This was expressed along a spectrum of reflective outcomes ranging from conservative cultural reflection to more critical social transformations that align with larger societal concerns of social justice (cf. Gorski & Dalton, 2020). These are encouraging and desirable learning outcomes for preservice teachers, and they carry implications for teacher education programs. The reported learning gains of using multicultural methods in a multicultural context emphasize:

- The value of applying multicultural pedagogy as an approach that benefits and prepares teachers to implement multicultural pedagogies in their own classroom practice.
- The understanding that a multicultural composition in the classroom is an asset for improving the experience of teacher educators as well as preservice teachers.
- The recognition of the idea that a facilitation model supports knowledge growth as well as also social and affective elements of learning. Conveying content is not enough, classroom practice must include approaches that affect students' behavior and values and be structured to provide sufficient autonomy so that students can learn by doing and through collaboration.
- If aspiring teachers and the people who educate them want to influence society outside their own classroom, it is important to embed deliberate reflection about agency, power, privilege, oppression, and social justice into the learning process.

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The insights from the reflective learning experiences explored here may support Icelandic teachers and teacher educators in their endeavors to understand the complexities of their own classrooms. A common truth expressed by our students was captured succinctly: "We live in multicultural communities and therefore our classrooms are reflecting these communities. We learn how to teach in this challenging environment, but we can not only rely on yesterday´s lessons. We need to grow with our classrooms and their respective responsibilities" (Tomasz, 2017). The results highlight the necessity of exploring the assets and opportunities present within diverse groups of students, and emphasize the necessity of explicit, critical reflection about actual actions that can initiate transformations in students own teaching practice. Teachers and teacher educators alike must become better equipped at overcoming what was left out of yesterdays' lessons by enabling equitable, change-oriented learning contingencies.

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13

Opportunities and Challenges in Implementing Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices in Preschools in Iceland

Hanna Ragnarsdóttir

The languages, cultures, and religions of Iceland's population have become increasingly diverse in recent decades. The changing demographics have had an impact on society as well as on education at all levels. The aims of the study are to explore culturally and linguistically responsive educational practices in preschools in Iceland. Building on a qualitative study in preschools in three municipalities in Iceland, the study aims to answer the following questions:

- How are culturally and linguistically responsive practices implemented in preschools in Iceland?
- What opportunities and challenges do preschool teachers and principals experience in developing and implementing such practices?
- How are preschools supported by their municipalities when it comes to policies on diversity and implementation of these?

The article contributes to new knowledge as it presents and discusses findings from teachers and principals in the participating preschools. Previous publications from this study (see Ragnarsdóttir, 2021a, 2021b, 2023) have focused on other aspects, including family language policies and practices.

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Background and Context: Diversity and Education in Iceland

The diversification of Iceland's population is reflected at all school levels. Thus, in 2021, around 16% of all preschool children (Statistics Iceland, 2022a) and 12% of all compulsory school pupils had heritage languages other than Icelandic (Statistics Iceland, 2022b). Furthermore, compulsory school pupils in Iceland speak altogether around 100 languages according to a recent survey (Tungumálatorg, 2021). Countries of birth have been documented in national statistics, although heritage language groups have not been documented in detail. Thus, in 2022, 20,927 people whose country of birth is Poland lived in Iceland, which makes Poles by far the largest group of immigrants. Smaller groups are many and diverse and include both immigrants and refugees (for more detail, see Statistics Iceland, 2022c).

Preschools and compulsory schools in Iceland are operated by municipalities. Children start preschool on average at the age of one to two and most children in Iceland attend preschools. Educational policies and national curriculum guides in Iceland emphasize equity and inclusion (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, n.d.). The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (n.d.) issued National Curriculum Guides for preschools, compulsory schools, and upper secondary schools in 2011. These are based on six fundamental pillars; literacy, sustainability, health and welfare, democracy and human rights, equality, and creativity.

Icelandic is the main language of teaching in the Icelandic education system. Other heritage languages are generally not taught in Icelandic pre- and compulsory schools although there are exceptions to this. Some schools emphasize linguistically and culturally responsive practices (Ragnarsdóttir, 2021a, 2021b).

Theoretical Framework

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Educational Practices

James Banks (2013) and Sonia Nieto (2010) have both claimed that schools need to critically address inequalities and ensure voice, dialogue, equality, empowerment, and social justice for their individual students and teachers. Culturally responsive teaching entails building on the cultural knowledge and prior experiences of diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to, meaningful and effective for them (Gay, 2010). Culturally responsive teachers have a holistic approach toward the child rather than focusing on a limited ability of the child or his or her deficit. Related to this emphasis are approaches of bi- and multilingualism and linguistically appropriate educational practices which have been explored by many

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scholars (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012; Cummins, 2004; García & Wei, 2014; Ragnarsdóttir & Schmidt, 2014).

Cummins (2001), a prominent scholar on bilingualism, claims that schools need to develop ways to implement inclusive and socially just practices where diverse backgrounds and identities are welcomed to respond to the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse groups of children and their families. Chumak-Horbatsch (2012) has similarly argued that monolingual practices implemented in multilingual settings can silence immigrant children's voices with serious consequences as children may feel and understand that their language has no meaning and that their way of speaking is less important than that of the children speaking the majority language of the preschool. Chumak-Horbatsch (2012) has furthermore emphasized that inclusive linguistic appropriate practices (LAP) are needed to enhance the learning of all children in linguistically and culturally diverse learning contexts. García and Kleifgen (2010) have maintained that a meaningful and rigorous education for emergent bilinguals will always use the home language as much as possible. Quoting García from 2009, they argue that bilingual education is the only way to educate children in the twenty-first century. They maintain that all children, regardless of language background, need to develop bi/plurilingual abilities to meet the communicative challenges of the twenty-first century.

In his recent book (2021), Cummins elaborates on evidence-based instructional practices for linguistically diverse learners, namely "Scaffold instruction to support students' language comprehension and production. Activate students' existing background knowledge and build new background knowledge as needed. Teach academic language explicitly. Enable students to use their L1 as a cognitive resource either through bilingual education or within English-medium programmes" (p. 102).

However, Nieto (2010) points out that teachers often do not have a freedom of choice when it comes to developing innovative practice, as they are often victims of school policies and practices that restrict their freedom of choice or of societal contexts that are difficult to change. Mary and Young (2021) provide an example of such contexts in their research on a pre-primary education teacher breaking away from the monolingual norm in a French context by developing innovative and inclusive practices and supporting the language and personal development of her emergent bilingual pupils.

As culturally and linguistically responsive practices in schools build on children's backgrounds, knowledge and experiences, such practices also in many cases reach out to families. Cherry A. M. Banks (2013) has maintained that the diversity of parent and community groups can complicate parent involvement in schools. Reaching out to parents requires an understanding of the families' circumstances. However, parents' involvement is important as they can provide teachers with important views of their children. Both

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schools and families are likely to benefit from parents' involvement and active collaboration of schools and immigrant families are likely to counteract their marginalization (Ragnarsdóttir, 2018).

Method

The project is a qualitative research study. Data for this article was collected in 2020 in semi-structured interviews with principals in three preschools in municipalities in different areas of Iceland. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to elicit the views of the participants as clearly and accurately as possible (Kvale, 2007). All three principals were fluent Icelandic speakers, so the interviews were conducted in Icelandic. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed through thematic analysis (Creswell, 2009). Atlas.ti software was used for coding the interviews. First, the author familiarized herself with the data by reading the interviews. Second, the interviews were coded using the complete coding approach with researcher-derived codes applied to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). After obtaining an overview of the coding, the initial codes were reevaluated and refined, and thematically similar codes grouped into categories to develop the final themes. Excerpts from the interviews have been translated into English by the author.

The research was carried out in accordance with the Data Protection Authority; the Act no. 90/2018 on Data Protection and the Processing of Personal Data and the Code of Research Ethics for Public Higher Education Institutions (2020). An informed consent form was prepared and presented to the participants. An informed consent was obtained from all participants.

The Preschools

All three preschools have diverse groups of children and staff in terms of backgrounds and languages. Their main policies and visions are presented on their websites.

Preschool 1 (P1) is located in a small rural community in Iceland. It has three divisions and around 30% of the children have other backgrounds and languages than Icelandic. There are 15 employees, there of 30% of diverse backgrounds, other than Icelandic. The preschool policy emphasizes the well-being of all children, creativity, diversity, and multiculturalism. This includes close cooperation with parents and the local community. The school policy of the municipality generally emphasizes equity, but it is also emphasized that all children should feel welcome and part of the community, the home culture of all children and staff should be respected, children's use of heritage languages should be supported, children of foreign background should receive

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additional support in Icelandic and the participation of parents of foreign background should be emphasized.

Preschool 2 (P2) is located in a small town in Iceland. There are four divisions in the preschool and around 30% of the children have other backgrounds and languages than Icelandic. There are 28 employees in the preschool, including 35% of diverse backgrounds, other than Icelandic. The preschool policy emphasizes respect, play, and joy, with a particular focus on languages and language acquisition in diverse languages and cooperation with parents. A new school policy is being developed in the municipality.

Preschool 3 (P3) is located in the capital area of Iceland. It is a large preschool with six divisions and around 70% of the children have other backgrounds and languages than Icelandic. The heritage languages of the children are altogether 16. Around 50% of the employees have diverse backgrounds, other than Icelandic. The preschool policy emphasizes language acquisition in Icelandic and supports diverse languages, multiculturalism and close cooperation with parents and the local community (Ragnarsdóttir, 2021b). The municipality has a recent educational policy as well as a thorough policy on multilingualism.

Findings

The findings indicate that diverse educational approaches and practices are implemented in the preschools to respond to the growing diversity. Policies regarding diverse groups of children are in place or being developed in the municipalities, but some are not well developed or consistently implemented. Main themes derived from the data related to the focus of this article were the following: *Culturally and linguistically responsive practices in the preschools* and *Support from municipalities in implementing policies on diversity*.

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices in the Preschools

The principal in P1 explained that the emphasis of the preschool was respect, wellbeing, and friendship, but that they were discussing the importance of emphasizing self-identity as well. She noted that they were starting to use picture books in the youngest division as well as a wall with pictures of the children.

The principal in P1 explained that she had herself been teaching her staff about linguistic diversity. She noted:

> I am trying to emphasize that we should never forbid the children to speak their heritage languages in the preschool . . . to also take care how they are phrasing this, because for example there are more children at

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> the table, they do not understand, this has happened in the oldest division, there are children . . . two girls who have English as a heritage language and then there are more children with foreign background who also speak English and they all talk English together and then there are suddenly two Icelandic children who want to participate and they cannot because they don´t understand English . . . and then we of course encourage the use of Icelandic and say "do you want to speak Icelandic now so that everyone can participate and understand?" But we never tell them that they cannot speak their heritage language and this applies to the whole preschool. We can perhaps say that these are unwritten rules. (Principal, P1)

The principal in P1 explained that this approach was part of the preschool curriculum, which was being developed. She noted that the staff thought that this approach was very important and wanted to do this "the right way."

The principal in P1 described the practices as being inclusive for all children, including the children with foreign backgrounds:

> We are of course trying to have all the children together in their group, not have them separately, . . . in special teaching or something like this . . . we think it is important . . . this is not special teaching for children of foreign backgrounds, here they don´t need special teaching, perhaps just a little extra support in Icelandic, because we don't see this as special education, so here the material is very accessible and visible in the preschool divisions and our project leader has each group in the oldest division in a special assignment in her office, and has training, but this is not particularly for children of foreign background, they are together, this is just the group going there, to read books, there is a lot of singing too and talking during all group work. Letters and numbers are visible in the divisions. (Principal, P1)

The principal noted that they had a project leader in the preschool who worked with the heads of divisions in coordinating teaching methods and practices between the divisions. This project leader also developed material for the preschool divisions.

When describing practices related to the different heritage languages of the children, the principal in P1 noted that they did not work systematically with children's heritage languages, and that some parents did not support this. She explained:

> They just want the children to speak Icelandic in the preschool, they are very determined when it comes to this, but we have sometimes printed out words, for example table, and put this on tables in different languages

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> and of course there is also a person working in the kitchen who speaks Romanian and we have sometimes asked her to help in communicating with the children, particularly . . . when they are starting preschool . . . it is . . . difficult and we don't understand what the child is saying. . . . This person is really good, she is just kind and nice and she always does it, and we let her speak Romanian to the children who speak Romanian at home. (Principal, P1)

This principal in P1 described other examples realated to the approaches toward languages in the preschool. An English speaking mother in the preschool who was also working there was encouraged to speak English with her children there, rather than Icelandic which she did not speak very well. The principal said:

> Only when she is speaking directly to her girls . . . of course we only speak Icelandic in the groups, but when she is speaking to the girls, then of course she can . . . speak English, we just . . . acknowledge the language, it is not forbidden to use it. . . . Because we want for example when there are four children playing together or talking at the lunch table and . . . the children who enter, they can join, this is . . . what we are trying to do, we encourage them also to use their heritage languages at home, but of course it happens . . . that a girl which I know speaks only English, that you speak only English to her. (Principal, P1)

The principal in P2 described how they had been implementing ideas related to the LAP ideology. She had a long experience of working with bilingual children when she started her work as principal in P2 in 2015. She noted that she felt some negativity toward parents who had other heritage languages than Icelandic and started to work on positive notes with her staff. She explained:

> I was . . . emphasizing that we should regard this (diverse languages) as strengths but at the same time we should make more of an effort because children at this age . . . when the language acquisition is in more than one language, it slows it down, so it is . . . more work for us and then I . . . applied for additional staff in the preschool because of the number (of children). (Principal, P2)

She added that some of the children had very little Icelandic knowledge. She noted:

> They are very much speaking their own heritage languages and I emphasize very much that we respect all languages. . . . There is not a single language which dominates here, we speak ten or more languages here

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> in the preschool. . . . My opinion is that our heritage language is such a large part of our self-identity. (Principal, P2)

The principal also noted that they however needed to emphasize Icelandic as a language of communication to be able to include all children and to support their Icelandic learning. She noted:

> But what can we do, we must reach them and talk to them in Icelandic . . . connect . . . get other children to enter the play and put it like this, "ok what language will we speak now, now we are four and what language should we speak now so that everyone understands, then we must speak Icelandic" . . . and also at the lunch table and elsewhere. (Principal, P2)

This principal in P2 started to familiarize herself with the LAP approach (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012) and actively trying to change the attitude toward language diversity in her preschool. She noted that there were different opinions regarding this among the staff in her preschool and in the municipality more generally. She said that she was worried about the approach of emphasizing Icelandic only as it could prevent children from wanting to continue learning their heritage languages and damage their self-identity.

Describing the culturally and linguistically responsive practices in P2, the principal noted that they base their work on the fundamental pillar of literacy, working with all aspects of literacy but emphasizing vocabulary in Icelandic. She noted that in relation to this, they included the parents and collaborated with them:

> We are emphasizing, based on the ideology, getting the parents to collaborate with us and we do this partly for example when we are working with . . . vocabulary, to get the parents to help us . . . to tell us instead the same words in their heritage language. . . . We are . . . visible for the parents in the halls, so they know what words we are working with, and we also have closed Facebook groups so they can see . . . and we also emphasize that the parents speak their heritage languages at home and then they use these words. (Principal, P2)

The principal of P3 described her general vision in the following way:

> It is of course just that . . . the children of course enjoy themselves here from day to day, that they come (to the preschool) happy and are received here in a good way and greeted in a good way . . . that they come (to the preschool) happy and leave happy and that the staff feel good here and feel . . . that they make a difference. (Principal, P3)

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She discussed the practices in the preschool and emphasis related to diverse languages. She noted:

> Our main language here is Icelandic and we are also teaching the children that . . . they can speak their languages freely with their friends in the divisions, but . . . when perhaps a third child joins the group and it does not speak the same language as the other two, then they all switch into Icelandic so that they all understand. (Principal, P3)

The principal of P3 further described some examples of their practices in supporting diverse languages and cultures, including the visibility of words in different languages as well as other approaches to show respect to the children‘s diverse languages and cultures.

She explained:

> We often ask, if we are . . . perhaps learning new words or if they are curious about some strange words, particularly the older ones, of course, you know, this word means this in Icelandic, how do we say it in Polish? How do we say it in Spanish? So, you know . . . we use . . . the diversity in a positive way, to learn, you know, from each other, so that they feel that their language is important, it is . . . important that they also feel . . . I can speak Icelandic and Polish, it is rather great . . . . We want to emphasize that it is great to be able to speak many languages, but not that . . . the Icelandic children who speak only Icelandic feel . . . that they are less important. . . . You know it is this fine line that you have to find . . . all languages are welcome here . . . but our main language in the preschool is Icelandic and we are trying to learn this well. . . . So we can do well in compulsory school when we have finished here (preschool). . . . We also talk about this to parents when they start that they should speak their heritage language at home with the child . . . so that they will have a firm basis in their heritage language and learn Icelandic in the preschool . . . so that they . . . connect between . . . the languages. (Principal, P3)

While the principals emphasized the opportunities related to developing and implementing culturally and lingustically responsive practices, they also mentioned some challenges. The principal in P3 said that one of the biggest challenges in implementing culturally and lingustically responsive practices was the lack of educated staff. She noted:

> You know, to have two or three preschool teachers and one compulsory school teacher in a preschool of 100 children, it is of course sad. . . . But apart from that, I have a lot of other amazing staff, but then of course, it is not the same, so this is what we need badly, educated people and a

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> lot has of course been tried in order to employ (educated staff), but yes, perhaps, hopefully, it will get better with more people entering teacher education. (Principal, P3)

Another challenge which the principal in P3 mentioned was the different competence of the children in Icelandic. She talked about some examples of children who were born in Iceland but did not have any Icelandic when they started preschool, some at around three years old.

> Most of them are born in Iceland, most come to the preschool at around two years old, some not until they are three, but most of them are then entering a fully Icelandic language context for the first time . . . because they have been at home with a parent or with their grandmother or a nanny somewhere, with someone who speaks the same language as them. (Principal, P3)

She added that it could be very difficult to respond to the different competence of these young children, and that they emphasized visual schedules and messages in all divisions to help the children to understand the daily practices of the preschool. At the same time she noted that children who had the same heritage languages were very helpful to each other in the beginning:

> Most often there are other children, who speak the same language, so that they are incredibly good at helping each other . . . and we try to teach them that we need to help each other, you know, "Alex was starting today and he only speaks Polish, you know, we need to help him to learn how to be in preschool and you need to help us, we need to help him to learn the Icelandic so that we can all be here together" . . . and they are incredible, they take this role very seriously. (Principal, P3)

The principal in P2 discussed how they were constantly looking for ideas and good practices for working with diverse groups of children, particularly regarding their multiple languages, but that there was no magic solution. She noted:

> I sometimes think, because the numbers of Polish children are so high that it would be better to have a Polish school, . . . as there is in many other countries, you can choose what language you want your child to learn in, they would learn Polish and then Icelandic as a second language in this school. . . . The same as we are . . . just in Danish, English and German . . . it would then be easier for them to enter another school level. They would be ready for university and would continue to live here and we would benefit from having more educated individuals, but you

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> know, perhaps this is not right, but I think about it sometimes when I experience it and I watch all these children here, not speaking Icelandic, having difficulties adapting because they don´t understand, they cry more, we see that . . . so there is noone who can tell what is the rule. (Principal, P2)

The principal in P1 noted that they were thinking about different ways of working with the different heritage languages and cultures and slowly learning what would work in their municipality. She noted:

> It would of course be great if someone would for example have a reading session in a particular language, this would be very positive I think, but . . . it is a little difficult because there is no teacher, or noone who has an experience of working with children here, but we have sometimes discussed whether we should ask parents to read for the children. (Principal, P1)

She added that this could be difficult in this rural municipality as some parents were working quite far away and would not have the chance to come to the preschool to read for the children.

The principal in P1 also noted that they wanted to be careful and not overstep the parents' opinions:

> We don't want to go to far, we often feel this is a thin line . . . some people do not want to have anything to do with their former country, and although the parents speak another heritage language it does not necessarily mean that they were born elsewhere, they were born in Iceland. (Principal, P1)

She added that the preschool staff needed to be aware and informed about the parents, and that they needed to find out what would work in their rural area.

The principal in P3 talked about challenges related to various difficulties, such as children's learning difficulties. She described how in some cultures these are not accepted and that the response of some parents could be difficult.

Support from Municipalities in Implementing Policies on Diversity

While inclusion is a general educational policy in Iceland (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, n.d.), policies on diversity differed between the three municipalities.

When asked about a policy regarding diverse groups of children, the principal in P1 noted:

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> Of course the policy is simply that everyone is welcome here with us and this has been developed based on democracy and equality parts of the national curriculum guide and then of course the educational policy of (the municipality) . . . when I was starting to work . . . there was nothing about multicultural issues in the educational policy, so I managed to include a chapter there. . . . We emphasize that everyone feels welcome and part of the school community, we show respect towards the children's home culture, we want to promote the strengthening of children's heritage languages, children with foreign background receive extra support in Icelandic and there are the conditions to support parents of children of foreign background and to inform them about the children's progress, I managed to put this into the educational policy of (the municipality). (Principal, P1)

This principal emphasized that the preschool would need more staff to be able to support diverse groups of children and claimed that the municipality had supported this, and she was able to hire more people than are generally required in the different divisions of the preschool.

The principal in P3 talked about the support available in her municipality, particularly a service organized around helping parents to communicate with the preschools and understand the preschool practices. This service is available for preschools and compulsory schools in the municipality. The principal noted that she would organize a meeting with the parents and book this service next year.

The principal in P2 talked about difficulties in changing negative attitudes towards diversity into positive ones, and called for support from the municipality in doing so.

Conclusion

The findings reveal that all preschools are active in responding to diversity and developing inclusive culturally and linguistically responsive practices. The principals show an understanding of the need to ensure voice, empowerment, and social justice for the children in their preschools, as Banks (2013) and Nieto (2010) have emphasized. The principals describe various culturally responsive practices as Gay (2010) has maintained is a holistic approach toward the child rather than focusing on a limited ability of children or their deficit. Furthermore, diverse linguistically responsive practices as discussed by Cummins (2001, 2021) and Chumak-Horbatsch (2012) are described by the principals, although some of them emphasize how important it is to collaborate with parents on the children's language learning. The children are

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supported in using their heritage languages in the preschools. This is in line with García and Kleifgen (2010) who have maintained that a meaningful and rigorous education for emergent bilinguals will always use the home language as much as possible. However, the preschools are also responsible for teaching the children Icelandic to support their further education. Some of the principals claim that this is a fine balance and call for clearer guidelines.

The principals are all interested in developing culturally and linguistically responsive practices further in the preschools, but they face multiple challenges. One of these is most acute in the largest municipality, where the lack of educated teachers affects both the development of culturally and linguistically responsive practices as well as professionalism of staff more generally. This is in line with Nieto's (2010) writing about how societal contexts or other restrictions can affect school practices.

The municipalities differ in terms of size and resources, and this can affect the development and implementation of policies regarding diversity. While the largest municipality has the capacity to develop an extended policy and support its implementation, the smallest municipality lacks this capacity. However, more personal connections in the two smaller municipalities seem to make communication easier between the preschools and the education authorities in these municipalities.

In conclusion, diverse educational approaches and practices are implemented in the preschools led by dedicated principals, rather than being organized and implemented overall in the preschools (see Ragnarsdóttir, 2021a, 2021b). The principals report lack of educated staff which makes development of practices difficult, as well as training for teachers about relevant practices with diverse groups of children. Policies regarding diverse groups of children are in place in all three municipalities, but some are not well developed or consistently implemented.

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V

STUDENTS' AND PARENTS' ENCOUNTERS WITH DIVERSITY

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14

Locating Power

Polish Parents' Encounter with Norwegian Education

Agnieszka Iweta Rasmussen and Jonas Yassin Iversen

Within Norwegian education, parents have an essential role. The school is required to involve all parents in an active and equal collaboration based on mutual trust (Norwegian Directorate for Education, 2019). For example, before students are evaluated for potential learning difficulties by the educational-psychological service and before students are enrolled in special needs education, parents must consent to such actions (Norwegian Education Act, 1998). Home-school collaboration can be challenging under any circumstances, but the mutual trust can naturally be put to the test when the school initiates an assessment of a student for specific learning difficulties without providing parents with the necessary information about the reasons behind such an assessment or its potential consequences. In such situations, it is crucial that a respectful dialogue between the home and the school is sustained.

Considering the rapid increase in immigration to Norway over recent decades (Statistics Norway, 2022), a substantial share of the parents of students in Norwegian education currently have limited experience of the Norwegian education system and often limited proficiency in the Norwegian language. When the school is in dialogue with homes where the parents have limited experience of the Norwegian education system and limited proficiency in Norwegian, the school needs to provide even more information about the purpose and form of the home-school collaboration—in a

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language the parents can understand. Currently, students who have migrated to Norway themselves or who have been born in Norway to two immigrant parents continue to be substantially overrepresented in special needs education (Nordahl et al., 2018; Pihl, 2006). This raises a concern about schools' general competence to assess the need for special education in multicultural and multilingual settings, and particularly the degree to which schools are successful in providing parents with immigrant backgrounds with the necessary information and involving them in crucial decision-making regarding their children's education.

In this chapter, we investigate how six parents experienced the home-school collaboration when one of their children was assessed for potential learning difficulties by the school. All of the parents were of Polish origin, had limited previous familiarity with the Norwegian education system, and varying competence in the Norwegian language. Hence, we pose the following research question: How did six parents of Polish origin experience the collaboration with the school when one of their children underwent a pedagogical assessment? The research question was investigated through qualitative interviews with the parents in Polish and their responses were analyzed by drawing on the Bordieuan concepts of *habitus*, *capital*, and *symbolic power* (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984, 1991).

Background and Previous Research

Although the conditions for students with an immigrant background who receive special education has received limited attention from researchers, the existing research suggests that this group of students experience significant challenges in education (Jørgensen et al., 2021). Particularly, the collaboration between the school and the students' families has been identified as critical to ensure the necessary support (Caldin, 2014; Jørgensen et al., 2021; Oliver & Singal, 2017). For instance, parents could have difficulties to understand the teacher or the suggested interventions (Oliver & Singal, 2017). Unsurprisingly, researchers have also highlighted the importance of trust, communication and relationship between teachers and parents (Caldin, 2014). However, little is known about how home-school collaboration related to special education is experienced by parents with an immigrant background in Norway.

Section 1 of the Norwegian Education Act asserts that the education shall take place in "collaboration and agreement with the home" (Norwegian Education Act, 1998) and cooperation between home and school is described in the National Curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education, 2019) as

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a foundational principle for the practice of Norwegian education. Moreover, the National Curriculum establishes that it is the responsibility of the school to initiate and facilitate home-school collaboration:

> School has the overriding responsibility for initiating and facilitating for cooperation. This means ensuring that parents and guardians receive necessary information, and that they are given the opportunity to have influence on their children's everyday school life. (Norwegian Directorate for Education, 2019)

This political regulation of home-school collaboration is based on international research, which has repeatedly and consistently shown that close home-school collaboration promotes students' academic success (Alston-Abel & Berningen, 2018; Egelund & Dyssegaard, 2016; Jeynes, 2012; Mitchell, 2014; Weiss et al., 2006). Nevertheless, researchers have also pointed out important barriers to successful home-school collaboration. Mann and Gilmore (2021) found that both teachers and parents agreed that home-school collaboration was challenging when problems occurred at school. Parents also reported that it was challenging when the school did not take them seriously (Mann & Gilmore, 2021). This could lead to frustration on the parents' part. Teachers reported that they could be skeptical about involving parents and that they did not always value the parents' competence in their collaboration with the home.

Moreover, research has confirmed that home-school collaboration can be further restrained when parents have a culturally and/or linguistically minoritized background, such as an immigrant background. For example, Dahlstedt (2018) found that principals and teachers in a multicultural and multilingual suburb outside of Stockholm, Sweden, emphasized students' families as the main cause of social problems experienced by the students. Such deficit perspectives have also been described by Guo (2018), who pointed out that teachers and schools need to recognize and make use of parents' knowledge in home-school collaboration. However, Zhou and Zhong (2018) found that Chinese parents' involvement in school-based activities in Canada was limited by language barriers and unfamiliarity with Canadian school culture. For example, the parents often felt intimidated in talking to teachers, due to their unfamiliarity with Canadian school culture. Thus, teachers and school administrators need to provide the necessary support in order to facilitate parental involvement in school-based activities.

Poles constitute the largest group of migrants to Norway (Statistics Norway, 2022). Hence, the Polish community in Norway has attracted the interest of researchers in Poland and Norway alike. The Polish researchers

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Ślusarczyk and Pustułka (2016) found that Polish parents in Norway experience schools as placing high demands on them and that they expect the school to take greater responsibility for their children's education. The Norwegian researcher Wærdahl (2016) found that Polish children were rarely classified as "immigrants" by the school and that the students' challenges in school were seldom associated with their linguistic or cultural backgrounds. Wærdahl points out that, although there are significant differences between Polish immigrants, schools should take Polish students' backgrounds into account, especially when they experience certain difficulties in school.

Habitus, Capital, and Symbolic Power

In Bourdieu's writings, he presents three concepts that are particularly useful in the analysis of the Polish parents' experience with home-school collaboration in Norway. In the following, we will introduce *habitus*, *capital*, and *symbolic power*, and relate these concepts to our study.

Habitus is a key concept within Bourdieu's works. The concept describes the social and cultural experiences we bring with us from childhood onward, which contribute to shaping us into the individuals we are (Bourdieu, 1977). Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, p. 86) point out that the individual's *habitus* is "a subjective but not individual system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class." In the context of education, they argue (p. 161) that habitus is "the principle underlying the production of the most durable academic and social differences." Moreover, they hypothesize that the primary driver for inequality in education between children from different social classes, is that the productivity of all pedagogic work is a function of the distance between the habitus the pedagogical work tends to instill in the children and the habitus already instilled in the children (p. 72). Thus, when children enter school with a habitus significantly different from that of the school, the pedagogic work will necessarily be more challenging, and the children's academic attainment is likely to suffer. Likewise, when the children's parents encounter school staff, differences in habitus between parents and school staff is likely to cause tensions in the collaboration.

Capital is another key concept in Bourdieu's work. Bourdieu (1986, p. 16) introduces three forms of capital: economic, cultural, and social capital. Economic capital describes economic resources, such as money, property, or stocks. In brief, an individual's economic capital is the sum of their material resources. Cultural capital describes cultural resources, such as competence, education, and familiarity with social norms in particular social fields. Cultural capital can, under certain conditions, be converted into economic

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capital. The third form of capital is social capital, which is institutionalized through social relations and networks (Bourdieu, 1986). According to Bourdieu, the three forms of capital constitute the currency with which people fight for power within different social fields (Bourdieu, 1984). Each individual possesses different constellations of capital. As long as an individual possesses an equal amount of the different forms of capital, Bourdieu describes the total capital as symmetrical. On the contrary, if an individual possesses a disproportional amount of economic capital compared to cultural and social capital, the total capital is asymmetrical. An individual's total capital determines its role in the social field, which opens up for the possibility of advancing your position as the constellation of your total capital develops toward a more symmetrical capital (Bourdieu, 1984). If we translate this into the case of parents' encounter with school, it is necessary for parents to display sufficient amounts of capital—preferably, cultural capital. Unless the parents are able to do so, their role in the social field is at risk.

Finally, *symbolic power* is a concept used by Bourdieu (1991, p. 170) to describe the "power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe" the world in particular ways. Bourdieu explains that this power "enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force," although this form of symbolic domination is exercised in a subtle and often unconscious manner. The power to dominate another individual in this mundane way resides in the particular situation and in the relation between the individual exercising the domination and the dominated. Bourdieu (1991, p. 51) claims that it is the dominated individual's habitus that predisposes her or him to the domination. In a school context, one can easily imagine how parents will accept the teacher's assessment of their child's academic performance during a parent-teacher conference based on the specific setting (i.e., a parent teacher meeting) and the teacher's position within the social field (i.e., the school). Because of the nature of the setting and the teacher's position, the teacher could even unconsciously exercise her symbolic power in the given situation to dominate the parents into agreeing, for example, to a pedagogical assessment of their child or accepting special education classes.

Methods

Participants

The participants in this study were recruited based on their involvement in so-called pedagogical assessments, where the teacher suspects that a student experiences particular difficulties that might qualify her/him for special education and therefore initiates what is called a pedagogical assessment.

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Based on this assessment, the teacher might decide that the student can be supported through differentiated instruction within the ordinary instruction arrangements or that there is need for a more thorough assessment by the educational-psychological service (Norwegian Education Act, 1998). All of the participants in the current study had experienced one of their children being subject to a pedagogical assessment.

The first author of this chapter has worked as a mother tongue teacher of Polish and as a bilingual teacher in Norwegian public schools for 18 years and is therefore a well-known figure in the Polish community of her hometown. Through her network, she was able to get in touch with three couples of parents from Poland who had experienced one of their children having been through a pedagogical assessment by the school in Norway. The three families that were recruited are referred to here under pseudonyms.

The Kowalski family has lived in Norway since 2007. They have three children, two of whom were born in Norway. Both of the parents have a vocational educational background and work in Norway. *The Wiśnieski family* has lived in Norway since 2015. They have two children, both born in Poland. Both of the parents have a vocational educational background and work in Norway. *The Wójcik family* has lived in Norway since 2008. They have four children and the two youngest were born in Norway. Mrs. Wójcik holds a bachelor's degree from Poland, but her work in Norway does not reflect her educational background. Mr. Wójcik has a vocational educational background and works in Norway. The children who were subject to a pedagogical assessment were all primary school students at the time when the school initiated the assessment.

Data Collection and Analysis

All of the couples were interviewed together and in their own homes. The first author conducted the interviews in Polish based on a semi-structured interview guide we had developed together. All of the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and subjected to a critical discourse analysis. Inspired by Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model for critical discourse analysis, we analyzed the interview transcriptions on three levels: text, discourse practice, and social practice. The nodal point for this analysis was home-school collaboration.

In the textual analysis, we focused our attention on modality and nominalizations in the interview transcripts (e.g., Fairclough, 1992). Here, we used the original transcriptions in Polish in order to capture nuances in the participants' utterances. According to Fairclough, modality describes the participants' attitudes to what they describe or in the particular way (mode) the participants present an event or an individual (Fairclough,

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2003). Nominalizations occur when a verb is turned into a noun and consequently represents any given phenomenon as a "thing" rather than an action (Fairclough, 2003, p. 144). Nominalizations contribute to downplaying the actors in the event and to obscuring responsibility. Modality and nominalizations were selected for this first step of the analysis due to the prevalence of these phenomena in the interview transcripts.

In the analysis of discourse practice, we focused our attention on the parents' discourses about the collaboration. In this part of the analysis, we moved beyond the individual sentences and identified patterns across sentences—and even across the individual interviews (e.g., Fairclough, 1992). Through this analysis, we investigated how the modality and nominalizations in the parents' utterances contributed to the construction of a discourse about their experiences with home-school collaboration. Finally, in the analysis of social practice, we analyzed the identified discourses in light of the Bordieuan concepts of *habitus*, *capital*, and *symbolic power*. These concepts were identified as useful to explain the social practices that took place in the encounter between the parents and the school. In many of these encounters that the parents reported on, there were aspects of all forms of power in play: habitus, capital, and symbolic. In the presentation of findings, we will show how modality and nominalizations in the interview transcripts contribute to establishing certain discourses about home-school collaboration, which in turn can inform us about how habitus, capital, and symbolic power come into play in the collaboration between Polish parents and school staff when students underwent a pedagogical assessment.

Research Ethics and Limitations

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic under investigation, it was necessary to consider several ethical issues related to the study. In addition to the first author's long teaching experience in Norwegian schools, she was also trusted within the local Polish community. To secure the participants' and the children's anonymity, we have provided pseudonyms, avoided reporting the gender or exact age of the children, and omitted any specific information that could potentially identify the parents or their children. In the interviews, we avoided questions directly concerning the children and their challenges. Rather, we focused our attention on the *parents'* experiences of home-school collaboration. Any discussions about the children that arose during the interview are excluded from our analysis. The study was reported to and approved by the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research.

In this study, we have only interviewed the parents about their own experiences. When we describe the teachers' actions, these descriptions are based only on what the parents report. Since we have not interviewed the teachers,

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it is necessary to emphasize that we do not know how they perceived the same situation nor if they would agree with the parents' descriptions. Notwithstanding this limitation, the aim of the current chapter is to highlight the parents' experiences and perceptions of what happened in the encounter with the school. Thus, if the parents found that the teachers did not involve them when decisions were taken, it is fair to assume that the teachers did, in fact, not do enough to ensure that the parents felt that they were listened to and that their opinions were taken into consideration.

Findings

Through the interviews, it became obvious that the initial evaluation of the child is a sensitive period, where the parents need to understand why the teacher suspects any difficulties and what the potential consequences of an assessment are. Overall, the parents reported that there was insufficient information from the school and/or that the information they received was not provided in a comprehensible way. Hence, the process was characterized by mistrust on the part of the parents toward the teacher and the school. While the teacher often suspected learning difficulties, the parents sometimes felt that the teacher's concern was exaggerated, and simply caused by the child's bilingualism and/or a general disinterest in school on the child's part. There were, in other words, very different ways of interpreting the child's educational underachievement.

In Bourdieu's terminology, Norwegian education can be considered a specific social field, governed by particular social norms and conventions (e.g., Bourdieu, 1984). Within this field, particular forms of capital are valued by teachers. How these valuations are made is regulated by the teachers' habitus; their "system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 86). In the encounter with Polish parents, who have a habitus that is distant from the teachers', and who lack both the cultural and social capital valued by the school, the teachers can easily exercise their symbolic power over the parents and make decisions regarding their children without the parents' involvement. In the following sections, we will untangle the different components in the encounter through an analysis of the interview transcripts' text, discourse practice, and social practice.

Habitus at Play in the Encounter

The parents reported that, in Poland, they had not been used to regular conference meetings with the teacher. Hence, participation in such meetings was not a part of their habitus when they first moved to Norway. They did not know what to expect from such meetings, nor did they know what their role

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in such meetings was. The Kowalski parents explained how home-school collaboration was organized when they went to school in Poland:

Pani. K: Z tego co pamiętam (*wahanie*) to były wywiadówki, i na tym polegała współpraca z nauczycielem i na tej wywyadówce były poruszane problemy wszystkich uczniów naraz.
Badacz: A nie było innych idividualnych spotkań?
Pani. K: Nie.
B: Żadnych?
Pan. K: Nie. Chyba że rzeczywiście by się cos działo to wtedy rodzic, mógł iśc i wtedy rozmawiał z nauczycielem. Ale nie było utviklingssamtale jak tutaj w Norwegii, tak.

Mrs. K: The way I remember it (*hesitation*) there were meetings at school for all of the parents, where teachers gave information about all of the students' problems at the same time.
Researcher: Were there no other individual meetings?
Mrs. K: No.
R: None?
Mr. K: No. If there was an extraordinary situation, then parents could speak to the teacher alone. They were not like utviklingssamtale [individual parent-teacher conference] like in Norway (our own translation from Polish).

In this excerpt, the Kowalskis' description of individual meetings between teachers and parents as related to "extraordinary" situations and their use of the Norwegian term for individual parent-teacher conferences, confirm that such meetings were considered foreign to them. In other words, close collaboration between parents and teachers was not part of their habitus. Rather, the customary "wywiadówki" or parents' meeting would take the form of the teacher "informing" all of the parents about the progress or potential challenges of the class as a whole. This suggests that the "wywiadówki" would mostly take the form of one-way communication. Based on this information, it becomes clear that the parents would potentially find it difficult to understand what to expect from an individual meeting with a teacher.

The Wiśnieski parents, who had lived in Norway for the shortest period of time among our participants, explained how they sometimes got the impression that there were some things they were missing during parent-teacher conferences. Mrs. Wiśnieski explained:

> Mam jednak często uczucie że coś mi umkęło (*wahanie*) jestem tego pewna, że wiele rzeczy inaczej bym powiedziała—inaczej bym zrozumiała, gdybym poprosiła o pomoc jakiegoś tłumacza.

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> I often have the feeling that there's something I have missed (*hesitation*), I'm sure that if I had spoken my mind differently—I would have understood it better if I asked for help from an interpreter (our own translation from Polish).

Mrs. Wiśnieski's use of the phrase "I often have the feeling" suggests that she is insecure about how much of the information she actually understands or whether she has understood it correctly. Her hesitation further adds to the sense of insecurity in Mrs. Wiśnieski's experience of the conference meetings. As the Wiśnieski parents state earlier, there are of course linguistic reasons for why they gained the impression that they were "missing" something from the conference meeting. However, the parents' limited experience of Norwegian education might also have contributed to the experiences of "missing" information. Furthermore, the Wiśnieski parents' habitus seems to have compelled them to blame themselves for not speaking up and for not requesting an interpreter. Thus, they take responsibility for their own confusion. According to the National Curriculum (Norwegian Directorate for Education, 2019), it is the responsibility of the teachers to ensure that the collaboration between home and school is based on equality and trust. Nevertheless, the teachers' habitus might easily have prevented them from realizing that the customary way of holding the conference meeting, might not be as evident to the Wiśnieski parents.

The Wójcik parents generally expressed satisfaction with the home-school collaboration. Despite their explicit positive description of the interaction, it soon became obvious how the Wójciks had experienced this so-called collaboration. Mrs. Wójcik explained that

> Jeżeli się skontaktuję z nauczycielem to mam odpowiedz i że dziecko musi popracować nad tym i tym i na tym polega ta komunikacja. Odczuwam współpracę jako pozytywną.

> If I contact the teacher, then I'm told that my child needs to work on this or that; that's how the communication works. In my experience, the collaboration is positive (our own translation from Polish).

In the excerpt above, Mrs. Wójcik nominalizes both "communication" and "collaboration" and thereby transforming communication and collaboration to the impersonal and distanced. Moreover, the modality of Mrs. Wójcik's utterance suggests that the parents would contact the teacher with their questions and the teacher would answer. Based on the teacher's response, the parents would follow up on whatever the teacher asked them to do. This seems to indicate an unequal collaboration, where the parents are not at all involved in any decision-making regarding their child's academic development, more

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similar to a "wywiadówki" than a truly equal collaboration. Nevertheless, because of the parents' habitus, they were probably not sure about what they should expect from the collaboration and deemed the teachers' instructions satisfactory for the home-school collaboration.

Based on the parents' responses, it seems that the school did not sufficiently explain in a way the parents could understand how home-school collaboration is organized in Norway, nor what this collaboration should look like. The teachers could have summoned a translator to the meetings when they realized that the parents' Norwegian language skills were not advanced enough for understanding the content of the teachers' explanations, but they reportedly did not do that. As a result, the parents were unsure about their role in the meetings, and whether or not there were any opportunities to oppose the teachers' demands.

Capital at Play in the Encounter

The parents reported several instances where the teachers devalued the cultural and social capital that their child and they themselves brought to school. For example, Mr. Kowalski describes how their child's teacher completely disregarded the parents' concern for the child's Polish language skills:

> nauczyciele powtarzają w kółko to samo, że dziecko ma problem z czytaniem, że dziecko ma problem z czytaniem, żedziecko musi mieć norweską telewizję w domu, ja uważam że jest to totalna bzdura, dlatego że dziecko chodzi osiem godzin do szkoły, gdzie ma znajomych przyjaciół norweskich, porozumiewają się w języku norweskim i na pewno w swoim czasie przyjdzie mu to pisanie i czytanie i nie zgodzę się na zadną norweską telewizję, dlatego że uważam że język polski jest językiem który dostał gratis, ja musze go pielęgnować żeby nie zapomniał, bo norweskiego na pewno się nauczy.
>
> The teacher keeps repeating all the time that the child struggles with reading, that the child needs to watch more Norwegian TV. I think it's nonsense, because the child is in school for eight hours every day, there the child has Norwegian friends, they speak Norwegian to each other, and I'm sure that the child will learn to write and read in Norwegian in a while. I won't allow Norwegian TV at home because I think that the Polish language is the language the child got for free and needs to make sure to use it so s/he doesn't forget, s/he'll learn Norwegian anyways (our own translation from Polish).

Mr. Kowalski's use of the phrase "keeps repeating all the time" suggests that he disagrees with the teacher's opinion, and the use of the word "nonsense" about

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the teacher's advice confirms beyond any doubt his disregard for the teacher's advice. From this example, one can clearly see how the cultural capital, Polish language skills, is completely devalued by the teacher. Although it is important for all students to develop a high level of competence in the language of instruction, this ambition should never limit students' opportunities to preserve and further develop their heritage language. In the parents' eyes, Polish competence is not only an example of cultural capital. Rather, it might lead to economic capital in the future, in case the family chooses to return to Poland. This is what prompts Mr. Kowalski's description of the teacher's advice as nonsensical.

While the Kowalskis disregarded and even opposed the teacher's advice, the Wiśnieskis seem to have accepted that their cultural capital was devalued within the current field. This had led them to a sense of resignation:

Pani. W: Nie mam wpływu na to, czasami wydają mi się niezrozumiałe
R: Prosisz wtedy o wyjaśnienia?
Pani. W: Nie, po co? Oni i tak zrobią to co chcą.

Mrs. W: No, I have no influence over that, sometimes I can't understand their decisions.
R: Do you ask for an explanation then?
Mrs. W: No, what's the point? They will do exactly as they please regardless (our own translation from Polish).

In this excerpt, Mrs. Wiśnieski explains that she has no control over the situation whatsoever. She has understood that there is nothing she can do to influence the process. The cultural and social capital she would be able to capitalize on in a similar situation in Poland is rendered close to worthless in the current field. This seems to have even influenced her habitus: The phrase "I have no influence" and the rhetorical question "what's the point" illustrate Mrs. Wiśnieski's habitus, echoing the kind of teacher-parent interaction that reportedly takes place in a "wywiadówki" meeting in Poland.

The teacher's disregard for the value of Polish did not only affect the students. The parents also experienced the teacher's disinterest in facilitating a multilingual collaboration, where speakers of Polish could participate on equal terms with the Norwegian-speaking teachers. Mrs. Wójcik reported:

> Bariera językowa jest problemem we współpracy, i w komunikacji ze szkołą.

> The language barrier is a problem in the collaboration and in the communication with the school (our own translation from Polish).

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In this excerpt, Mrs. Wójcik nominalizes both "communication" and "collaboration" and consequently distances herself from the experience. In this way, what was potentially a humiliating or at least a frustrating encounter is presented in an impersonal and detached manner. Nevertheless, she conveys that the lack of support for participation in the meeting renders it nearly impossible.

Based on this analysis, all of the parents had experienced that language constituted a major obstacle to equitable home-school collaboration. According to the parents' reports, the schools' lack of understanding for the parents' limited Norwegian language skills, limited their own opportunities to participate in a collaboration with the school. While failing to provide the necessary support to the parents, the teachers reportedly also disregarded the students' Polish language abilities. Hence, the pedagogical assessments in the three cases discussed in this chapter would only be conducted in Norwegian and the teacher would only assess the child's competence in Norwegian. The parents' impression of the child's competence in Polish could therefore not be confirmed through the teacher's pedagogical assessment. What the parents reported in the interviews suggests that the teachers only valued the students' Norwegian linguistic capital. Although the parents could describe their children's competence in Polish, the teachers seemed not to value such competence within the field of Norwegian education.

Symbolic Power at Play in the Encounter

The parents' limited familiarity with the Norwegian education system and their limited Norwegian language skills rendered them vulnerable to symbolic domination by the school. The parents reported multiple instances of teachers exercising their symbolic power over them by disregarding their opinions in meetings, not informing them about decisions taken about their child's education, and even not receiving any response from the teacher when they tried to get in touch. Mr. Kowalski explained:

Pan. K: Współpraca jest dobra wtedy jeżeli, *(wahanie*) jeżeli komunikacja idzie w dwie strony, a nie że piszę do kogoś a ktoś mnie zbywa i nie odpisuje np na wiadomości (*wahanie*) i że w tej chwili nie ma czasu, tak.

B: Jak czujesz się wtedy jak ktoś cię zbywa albo nie dostajesz odpowiedzi na twoje widomosci?

Pan. K: Jestem wkurwiona

B: I co daej wtedy robisz?

Pan K: (*Podniesiony głos*)Wtedy jestem podirytowana i wtedy sama mogę zareagować złością w stosunku do szkoły, mogę (*wahanie*) być nie taka spokojna jak jestem na codzień.

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Mr. K: The collaboration works well when (*hesitation*) the communication goes both ways, but not when I write to someone and they ignore me and don't respond to my message (*hesitation*) but write that they don't have time now.
R: How do you feel when someone ignores you and you don't get a response to your messages?
Mr K: I'm furious.
R: And what do you do then?
Mr. K: (*Loudly*) Then I'm annoyed and can react with anger in my contact with the school, I can (*hesitation*) not behave as calmly as I usually do (our own translation from Polish).

In this excerpt, Mr. Kowalski started out by nominalizing "the collaboration", but soon becomes much more personal and emotional (e.g., "in my contact"). He was visibly provoked by the teacher's lack of response when he tried to contact her. Based on Mr. Kowalski's comment, it seems as if the teacher expects the communication with the home to only go one way. This, at least, was how Mr. Kowalski interpreted the teacher's silence when he reached out to her. The experience of being ignored, as in "they ignore me" and "don't respond", seems to instill a sense of being symbolically dominated in Mr. Kowalski. However, he would not let the teacher exercise her symbolic power. Rather, he responded with anger.

From the Polish parents' experiences, it became evident that the teachers they had encountered all expected the parents to understand all of the information in Norwegian. The teachers did not take into consideration that the parents might need a translator at the meetings. For instance, Mrs. Wiśnieski reported how the teachers were unwilling to provide an interpreter when the linguistic barriers became insurmountable:

> Język czasami sprawia trudności ale nauczyciele się tym nie przejomowali, bo po prostu nie brali pod uwagę że ktoś może potrzebować pomocy, czy na przykład tłumaczenia (*mmm*).
>
> The language caused problems, but the teachers simply didn't care about it, they didn't consider that some people need help to understand, for example from an interpreter (*mmm*) (our own translation from Polish).

In the excerpt above, "the language" refers to Norwegian and Mrs. Wiśnieski points out that despite her limited knowledge of Norwegian language, no interpreter was called to the meeting. Mrs. Wiśnieski's claim that the teacher "didn't care" about her problems in understanding suggests an experience of the teacher's symbolic power in the meeting. When Mrs. Wiśnieski added that "some people need help to understand," this illustrates how

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she felt subordinate in the encounter and in need of the teacher's support. Nevertheless, it seems that she was left to manage on her own. Similar to Mr. Kowalski's fury, the Wójcik parents also found that the school's symbolic domination infuriated them:

> i nagle dostaliśmy list, już od razu z kommunen, że jest jakieś spotkanie zorganizowane, i tu mnie szkoła nie powiadomiła, nie powiedzieli że to wysyłają, i no. Po tym zebraniu w szkole było powiedziane że będzie miał dodatkowe lekcje, dodatkowe zajęcia ktorych nie miał. Z tego powodu byłam trochę zła, byłam zła,
>
> szkoła powinna była mnie zaprosic, żebym jednak ja tam była bo to jednak rodzic ma coś do powiedzenia.
>
> And suddenly we received a letter, from kommunen [the municipality] saying that there was a meeting. The school didn't inform me, but it came directly from the municipality. The school didn't say anything to me about sending something to the municipality. After the meeting, it was decided that my child would receive additional classes, which s/he didn't use to have. Because of that, I got angry with the school, yes, angry. The school should have invited me to that meeting, after all, I'm a parent who has something to say (our own translation from Polish).

Similar to the Kowalski and the Wiśnieski families, the Wójciks have experienced being excluded from important processes regarding their child's education. This is an example of how the parents experienced what Bourdieu would describe as symbolic power, exercised by the teachers and municipality. The sentence "after all, I'm a parent who has something to say" is a way of asserting one's position within the social field and an exhibition of defiance against the school's decision.

The analysis of how the Polish parents experienced that symbolic power played out in the encounter with the school suggests that the parents experienced a lack of influence over their own situation and their child's education. While the Wiśnieski parents, who have lived in Norway for the shortest period of time, displayed resignation when they were faced with the school's symbolic domination, the other parents reacted with anger and defiance.

Discussion

Similar to the findings by Zhou and Zhong (2018), the present analysis showed that the Polish parents in this study had limited experience of home-school collaboration from Poland and that their Norwegian language skills

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prevented them from fully understanding the content of conference meetings with teachers. Rather than ensuring that the parents understood the process of pedagogical assessment, for example by providing a translator, the teachers often opted for a one-way communication or disregarded the parents altogether. Wærdahl (2016) found that Polish students in Norwegian schools were often not perceived as having an immigrant background. It could be that some teachers also disregard Polish parents' backgrounds and therefore fail to provide the necessary support. Nevertheless, the Polish parents' experiences are not in line with the ambitions for home-school collaboration, as described in the Norwegian Education Act, which maintains that the education shall take place in "collaboration and agreement with the home" (Norwegian Education Act, 1998, §1). What the parents describe is also in conflict with the National Curriculum's definition of home-school collaboration as "ensuring that parents and guardians receive necessary information, and that they are given the opportunity to have influence on their children's everyday school life" (Norwegian Directorate for Education, 2019).

When disagreements surface between the home and the school, researchers have confirmed that the collaboration becomes more challenging (Mann & Gilmore, 2021). Moreover, researchers have found that some teachers may be reluctant to involve parents when decisions regarding a child are taken (Mann & Gilmore, 2021). This also seems to be the case in the situations our participants described. However, the exclusion of parents from decision-making leads to mistrust and a feeling of being dominated on the parents' part, as described by our participants. Although Ślusarczyk and Pustułka (2016) reported that many Polish parents in Norway expected the school to take greater responsibility for their children's education, the parents in our study reported that they wanted to be more involved. The reason behind these diverging findings might be that Polish parents expect the school to take greater responsibility for their children's education on a day-to-day basis, while at the same time expecting to be involved if any major decisions are being made about their child's education. For instance, it is a significant change to remove the child from their ordinary class to receive special education or additional instruction in particular school subjects.

When we consider the parents' experiences from a Bordieuan perspective, it seems clear that the parents' habitus has not prepared them for the collaboration that the school expects (e.g., Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Caldin, 2014; Zhou & Zhong, 2018). As the parents were not able to express their opinions appropriately through the medium of Norwegian, the parents experienced that the teachers chose to disregard their opinion. However, if the teachers had critically considered their own habitus and how that might not match the habitus of the parents, the parents might have experienced that the teachers were able to identify the parents' needs and considered how they could have

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supported the parents in order to engage in an equal home-school collaboration. One way this could have been done could be by involving a translator for important meetings and considering translating key documents into Polish (e.g., Oliver & Singal, 2017). Since the teachers reportedly did neither, the result was a deep experience of symbolic domination, where the parents felt helpless. Even though the parents objected, there was nothing they could do about the situation and some parents realized that they lacked the cultural and social capital to successfully manage it to what they considered to be their and their child's advantage.

While the teachers where primarily concerned with the students' lack of Norwegian language competence, they reportedly did not involve the parents in order to assess or in any way investigate the students' language competence in languages other than Norwegian. This could potentially have provided the teachers with crucial information for the process of determining whether the students suffered from any learning disability or if the issues were strictly related to the students' competence in the language of instruction, in this case Norwegian (e.g., Guo, 2018). Had they met the expectations of the Norwegian Education Act and National Curriculum, the teachers would have ensured that collaboration between home and school is based on equality and trust, and that parents receive necessary information and have the opportunity to influence their children's schooling.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have investigated how six parents of Polish origin experienced the collaboration with the school when one of their children underwent a pedagogical assessment. Our analysis has shown that the parents received insufficient information from the school and/or were provided with information that they could not comprehend. Moreover, they did not experience involvement in important decision-making concerning their child's education. Consequently, the process was characterized by mistrust on the part of the parents toward the teacher and the school.

Through our analysis of six Polish parents' experiences, we have highlighted a need for greater attention to be given to home-school collaboration in multicultural and multilingual settings in teacher education. Teacher education programs need to be made aware that parents who have their schooling from another country will not necessarily understand the purpose of individual teacher-parent meetings and their role in them. Moreover, prospective teachers should be able to analyze their own habitus and how this influences their view of the cultural and social capital that students with a migrant background bring to school. Finally, we call for more research

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on parents' perspectives on home-school collaboration from multicultural and multilingual settings, where the data collection is carried out in the participants' preferred language in order to gain access to their particular perspectives.

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15

Negotiating Knowledge of Sexual and Gender Diversity

A Case Study with Migrant Students in a Swedish Language Course

Anna Winlund

In recent decades, Sweden has experienced a large increase in the number of migrant adolescents, many of whom arrive with little prior experience of school-based learning (Skolverket, 2016, p. 189). Learning to read and write for the first time, and in an additional language, represents a great challenge to recent migrant adolescents who have little previous experiences of formal schooling. While engaged in the process of developing literacy in a second language, migrant students must also navigate their ways into, or learn to read, a new society (Franker, 2017). Therefore, learning a new language and developing literacy in a new sociocultural environment not only involves learning the grammar, principles of decoding scripts, and new vocabulary but also the ability to engage in new discourses. For example, teenage students may have to learn to talk about the body's anatomy and functions, as well as subjects related to relationships or sexuality, which might represent taboos to some students. As Alexander (2008) put it, "Learning how to talk fluently and critically about sex and sexuality composes a significant part of becoming literate in our society" (p. 2).

In this investigation, the analyzed interactions concern topics of sexuality and the constitution of families. Such topics might raise questions about heteronormativity, which, according to Cameron and Kulick (2003), can be

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defined as "those structures, institutions, relations and actions that promote and produce heterosexuality as natural, self-evident, desirable, privileged and necessary" (p. 55). Thus, this ethnographic study combines two fields of research that rarely meet, at least in a Nordic context (Milani et al., 2021); namely, the education of basic literacy in Swedish as a second language and discourses about sexuality. The aim of this chapter is to investigate how learning about sexual and gender diversity may enhance recently arrived migrant students' understanding of different cultural norms, including some that may be considered taboos, in the context of an introductory language course in Sweden. I will argue that this understanding can be enhanced not only through the teaching of tolerance toward others but also through examinations of different practices related to sexuality. Concurrently, this cross-cultural educational context presents challenges and pitfalls that places high demands on teachers when choosing their subject content and their ways to teach it.

Language Education for Language Socialization

Learning to understand and use the discourses of the mainstream society might enhance students' agency and possibilities to navigate and to act in this society (Baynham, 2006; Darvin & Norton, 2015; Gee, 2015). In other words, acquiring new languages and learning to read and write might lead to the empowerment of the individual who might gain independence through these practices (Freire & Macedo, 1987). On the other hand, Kramsch (2009, p. 6) suggested that language learners who try to adjust to the grammatical, lexical, and social conventions of a new language might be restricted in their language use, not only regarding what they *are able* to express but also regarding what they *are permitted* to express. Thus, learning an additional language might be connected to learning the values of the mainstream society. In that way, language learners can be encouraged, or obliged, to adapt certain ideologies, not least through print literacy (Gee, 2015). However, students might feel reluctant to engage in the literacy practices and discourses that are offered to them, or imposed upon them, in education (Norton, 2013). For example, involuntary participation in discussions about subjects that are considered taboo might represent a threat to the personal identity of the students, who might not feel comfortable speaking about these subjects (cf. Alexander, 2008, p. 2).

Learning a language implies not just communicating and understanding ideas, but also expressing identities and discovering oneself and the context in which one finds oneself (Kramsch, 2009). Not least, it is about "learning to interpret the situated social meanings of collective representations and to

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perform as expected in certain circumstances" (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2012, p. 8). School might constitute an important arena for negotiations about values and norms, as these are coded in school regulations and curricula, but also represented in societal discourses (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). For example, a recent study (Milani et al., 2021) in a Nordic context focused on the education of civic orientation to adult migrant Arabic speakers. The analysis of the ethnographic data indicates that this education is not just about making the migrants aware of laws and regulations in Sweden, but that "there is a normative element to this educational provision that clearly asserts what the correct lifestyle is" (Milani et al., 2021, p. 765). The authors concluded that, through this education, adult migrants are treated like children who do not know what is best for them. Thus, one goal of this education is to change the attitudes and the routines of these adult migrants, among other things, to encourage them to eat and drink differently, and to adopt "a different lifestyle through which they can become healthy Swedish citizens" (Milani et al., 2021, p. 765).

Another ethnographic study conducted in a kindergarten classroom (Karrebæk, 2014) investigates the meanings of food and food practices, which the author finds are "indexically linked to social models such as 'the good student,' 'the incompetent minority child,' 'the good Muslim'" (Karrebæk, 2014, p. 19). According to these Danish teachers, eating rye bread and meat, like pork, is good, whereas other food practices are not. These different sets of norms that these children of multilingual, and (often) Muslim, families are taught could appear confusing to the children. Therefore, the author argued that "what the child brings for lunch, and how this food item is linguistically evaluated and enregistered is consequential for the child's possibilities for positioning in social space" (Karrebæk, 2014, p. 33). The examples above originate from an education that touches upon different cultural norms. Against this backdrop, we now turn to a field that does not concern food or health issues, but attitudes to the education of sexuality and gender diversity in which the students' norms can be challenged.

Negotiations of Heteronormativity in the Language Classroom

Previous studies of interactions about sexuality and heteronormativity have often focused on students with more schooling background than the students in the current study. For example, Alexander (2008) described American students participating in a composition course focusing on sexual literacy. Through discussions, reading, and writing texts about the topic, the students get to analyze, deconstruct, and reconstruct linguistic dimensions of the medial or political debates about sexuality, which might have an impact on their views of themselves or of others. Other studies have focused on foreign

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language instruction at school. In a Swedish context, Simonsson (2017, 2018) provided examples from her field observations of the English lessons of an upper secondary school class. Simonsson (2017) noted that the heterosexual norm can be considered to be the default mode in discussions related to the reading of short stories and that the conversations run smoothly only as long as they relate to heteronormativity (Simonsson, 2018). These studies provide examples of the teacher building on the experiences or attitudes of certain students, while excluding others.

Also, within elementary language education, discourses about relations might be discerned, not least since a typical content of the basic language education often concerns personal descriptions and family relations. For instance, through his analysis of class interactions among beginner learners of Spanish, Liddicoat (2009) showed how an instruction focusing on language forms might reveal heteronormative stances. In one example, the teacher asks a male student about his girlfriend's appearance. This student answers by describing his boyfriend, using the masculine forms of the adjectives. The teacher does not seem to understand the relationship that is being described and perceives the students' descriptions as linguistic failures. These corrections could be interpreted as the questioning of a person's sexual identity, even though that might not have been the teacher's intention. Several examples from the observations show how students insist on communicating a correct content, instead of replying to display questions with focus on linguistic forms. Thus, it seems clear that language education is not only about superficial transfers of grammatical forms but about serious negotiations related to students' personal lives and emotions (Pavlenko, 2005). Besides, these examples show how language use can mirror ideologies and attitudes, not least those of the teacher, which is also the case in the present study.

A Pedagogy of Inclusion or a Pedagogy of Inquiry?

According to Nelson (1999), an LGBT[1]-friendly pedagogy is important to enhance the relevance of the work in the classroom to all learners (p. 372). Likewise, Alexander stated that most students would profit from an education that enlightens same-sex relations in order to better understand society (Alexander, 2008, pp. 1–2). However, it could be problematic that some teachers do not find this perspective relevant in their own teaching. Even if they do, they might not know how to go about it or have access to relevant teaching materials (Nelson, 1999, p. 373). Nelson (2010, p. 449) provided examples of teachers who do not encourage discussions about same-sex relations since they do not know how to handle the subject and do not wish

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to accidentally lend space to discriminatory comments from other students. Other teachers might voluntarily teach about LGBT topics but also disregard the fact that some students might identify as queer; for example, if the teacher uses dichotomic and excluding pronouns like "us" and "them" (Nelson, 2010, p. 442). Nelson (2010, p. 455) also remarked that teachers who work with migrant students need to be aware that sexual identity might be expressed implicitly and in ambiguous ways in some parts of the world, which requires them to pay attention to interpret any signal that students would wish to send.

Teachers also need to navigate among discourses related to sexual identity, which are not evident within queer theory: "Rather than affirming sexual identity categories, queer theory questions the need for them. Rather than legitimizing minority sexual identities, queer theory problematizes *all* sexual identities" (Nelson, 2002, p. 48). Using the concept of sexual identity might actually contribute to the binary opposition that was to be avoided (Nelson, 2002, p. 47). Therefore, teachers' eagerness to use a *pedagogy of inclusion* (Nelson, 1999, p. 376) to enhance tolerance toward others might contribute to the dichotomy between heterosexual or gay students. As Nelson put it, "Ironically, to legitimate one must first delegitimate—in other words, aiming for tolerance presupposes intolerance. Only two possible positions are created—to be either tolerant or tolerated" (Nelson, 1999, p. 377). Instead, Nelson advocated a *pedagogy of inquiry*, which is not aiming to enhance tolerance toward the other, but about analyzing how discursive and cultural practices create heteronormativity: "Whether the intention is to critique these practices or to learn them (or a combination of the two), the task is to investigate the workings of language and culture in order to make them explicit" (Nelson, 1999, p. 389). Thereby, Nelson meant that the admittance of differences, and the possibility to investigate them, are crucial for intercultural comprehension (2002, p. 48) and therefore for the possibilities to communicate in a certain society. This claim supports the use of this framework to analyze the education of this cross-cultural context.

As discussed earlier, this kind of education can imply a risk. If the gap is too wide between the students' norms and the patterns of thought embedded in the language that they are supposed to learn, it might lead to them experiencing a sense of alienation (Stanton, 2002). However, if the students believe that their opinions are valued, and at the same time learn to master new literacy discourses, this could empower them (Nocon & Cole, 2009). Teachers can contribute to students' possibilities to participate in negotiations about these topics, both to understand them and to make a stance. This chapter explores an education that is marked by this intention, but is also delimited by challenges and pitfalls in relation to these subjects in this cross-cultural context.

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Data Collection and Analysis

This investigation, which is part of a larger study, is designed as an ethnographic case study with empirical data collected in an introductory language class during the 2017 and 2018 school years. The students in this class were adolescents aged between 16 and 19, who had come to Sweden between six and 18 months earlier and who had little previous experience of formal schooling. Their classes took place in an inner-city school in a large town in Sweden, which exclusively offers courses for migrant students wishing to attain their elementary school diplomas and develop their Swedish language abilities in order to qualify for admission to high school. On arrival in their municipality of residence, the municipality arranges for migrant students to take part in introductory interviews concerning their previous schooling background and their level of print literacy and numeracy in their first languages (L1), or other languages, and Swedish. They are then placed in groups according to these interviews and assessments. Students with little previous schooling experience usually attend classes in this school for two to three years before continuing to another introductory school, or to adult education, since they seldom meet the criteria of the grades needed to continue in the national school system before they turn 19, which is the age limit.

I followed a group of ten students as a participant observer; however, for the purposes of this study I focused on six of them, since they seemed to be representative of the group. In the excerpts, the following students are represented: Maram,[2] Sumaya, and Hawa, who are girls from Somalia; Fouad and Zubeyr, who are two boys from Somalia; and Adam, a boy from the Gambia. Their teacher, whom I call Elisabeth, is in her sixties, has 20 years' experience teaching students with limited formal education, and appears to be highly valued as a teacher by present and former students. Her experience and high level of rapport with students and staff contributed to my interest in following her classes in particular. Most of the interactions in class took place in Swedish, but the instruction also occasionally connected to other languages, such as the first language (L1) of the students. In accordance with Swedish law, the class also had access to study guidance from tutors in Farsi and Somali for two to three hours a week. In the larger study, the analysis of the education indicates that the atmosphere in this classroom was generally good, characterized by humor, a caring relationship and mutual respect between the students and Elisabeth (Winlund, 2020, 2021, 2022). It was also clear that the language tutor of Somali, Mohammed, played an important role to help the students understand new school practices and this new society (Winlund, 2020). These students needed to learn Swedish, to read and write in Swedish and to study basic subjects like geography and civic orientation or the body's anatomy and functions. However, they were also

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taught about "mature" issues like relationships or sexuality, since these are all relevant topics for teenagers and are also part of the curriculum (Skolverket, 2011). Elisabeth was used to teaching teenagers about the subject called "sex and cohabitation" (in Swedish: *sex och samlevnad*), as well as topics called "common values" (in Swedish: *värdegrund*). She had taken extra courses to teach about these subjects and used material from *Riksföreningen för sexuell upplysning* (RFSU), an organization that runs projects to promote access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (RFSU, 2022), to complement the textbook. In this study, I focus on the education of civic orientation, and sex and cohabitation, which were always intertwined with the language lessons, to investigate the interactions about subjects that are foreign to the students.

I shadowed the group as a participant observer for two to three days each week for three to four hours per day, totaling 165 hours over the course of the school year. During observation, I would sit at the back of the classroom taking field notes and audio-recording interactions (totaling 40 hours). I would also move among the students to build researcher–participant rapport. In order to complete the ethnographic observations, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with eight of the students at the end of the school year, either in pairs or individually. These interviews focused on the students' language and literacy experiences before coming to Sweden and their thoughts on the instruction that I had observed. Mohammed helped me to interpret the interviews with the Somali students. Data were analyzed in two cycles (Saldaña, 2009). My repeated writing of conceptual memos (Heath & Street, 2008) revealed that discussions about normativity was a recurrent theme in the course as the interactions unfolded during the school year. Consequently, I went through my data in search of examples of this kind of interaction, which I investigated more thoroughly and present in excerpts that seem representative for this education. I also had the opportunity to ask follow-up questions to the teacher about her choices. She told me that some former students had walked out of the classroom when she had taught them about these subjects, but that the students in the present group did not do so. This made me curious to understand more about the students' attitudes to this education, which I asked them about in the interviews.

This study followed the ethical guidelines of the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). Prior to the students' participation in the study, informed consent was received with help from the Somali tutor. The students were repeatedly reminded that they could stop their participation in the study at any time, although I was aware that it might be difficult for them to do so. Because the students were over fifteen years of age, they did not need their parents' or guardians' consent to participate, according to the Swedish ethical guidelines. However, it is a complicated task to collect written consent from students whose second language and print literacy is not yet developed, which

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means that they might depend on the interpreters to understand the implications of participating in the project. Therefore, the collection of consent was organized as an ongoing process, much like the process described with children (Rogers & Labadie, 2018) or adult students with limited schooling (Ljung-Egeland et al., in press).

Findings

Some of the discourses that represent the values of the majority society, such as those described in the school curriculum, for example, are connected to descriptions about love, relationships, and family constellations. The instruction about these subjects was analyzed and the findings are presented in four sections, represented by respective headlines. The first section illustrates how discussions of normativity are introduced, followed by a section showing examples from interactions about respecting differences. The third section illustrates how the teacher focuses on the importance of being oneself. Finally, the last section contains examples of the students' point of view, concerning this education.

"In Sweden, this is a family": Discussions of Normativity

The interactions about normativity have been a recurrent issue in this class since the start of school. For example, they have discussed the idea that, in Somalia, boys generally do not clean their houses or cook food, but in Sweden it is the norm. These discussions about normativity reappears in the middle of the autumn semester, as the class works with issues concerning the family, in connection to a section in their textbook. At this point, the teacher and the class know each other well and their relation can be described as respectful, building on mutual trust (Winlund, 2020, 2022). As Liddicoat (2009) proposed, a recurrent task in language education is to be able to present oneself and one's close relations, which is also the case in this context. One day after lunch, Elisabeth showed images of various family constellations, using pictures and vocabulary in the material provided by RFSU:

> She starts the projector and asks the students, "What is a family?" She shows them pictures of different families, first two parents of different sex and two children. "Is this a family?" "Yes", the students respond. Then she shows them another picture: "Can it be a man and a child and a dog"? "No," the group answers. "Yes, it can," Elisabeth explains—"families can be in different ways." (Translation of field notes 2017-10-03)

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The example above illustrates how Elisabeth challenges the students' view of what can be defined as a family, to establish and underline the fact that we are all different and can live in different ways. The question of normality, or normativity, is emphasized as Elisabeth continues to show pictures of families:

> Then, Elisabeth shows a picture of two men kissing and reads the words above the picture aloud: "en bög—två bögar"[3] (Swedish slur for gay men) in order to give the students the plural form, as always. "Teacher, two men?" Sumaya asks. Hawa turns around to look at me in the back of the classroom, looking surprised and making a questioning gesture. Two men?

Elisabeth now says that this is a family. "No, not a family," some students shout. Elisabeth persists: "Yes, but in Sweden this is a family." "Not Somalia," Zubeyr shouts. Elisabeth then explains that there are gay people also in Somalia, but it has to be a secret there. She play acts locking herself behind the door, in order to show that it is a secret. Otherwise, the police will come. "But it is love. Love is always good. You can think what you want but you cannot say anything." (Translation of field notes 2017-10-03).

In the example above, Elisabeth continues to challenge the students' perspectives on what families might look like, explaining that some people live in same-sex relations. She also insists that love between people of the same sex exists everywhere, but that sexual practices can be played out differently, sometimes due to regulations in different countries. Finally, she concludes that we need to respect one another, or at least not show openly if we do not. In that way, she uses not only an education of inquiry, pointing out different practices linked to sexuality, but also a pedagogy of inclusion, reminding the students that we have to respect one another, despite our differences. At the same time, she might give the students the impression that this opinion of what a family can look like is generally accepted in Sweden, which might not be the case.

The next image illustrates two women holding each other in a loving way. Elisabeth asks: "Is this a family"? Some students say "no," while others say that it is. "It is called homosexuals," says Elisabeth while writing the terms *lesbian* (in Swedish *lesbiska*) and *gay men* (in Swedish *bögar*) on the whiteboard. The students write them down too. Apparently, this instruction at first leads the students not only to express surprise and to contest the concepts that are presented to them but also to write them down in order to learn the new words. This vocabulary activity can also be interpreted as an example of a dichotomic use of "us" und "them" (Nelson 1999), as the teacher introduces these persons as belonging to a certain category.

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"You Can Think It but Not Say It": It's a Question of Respect

As the teacher continues to explain how family constellations can look in different ways, some of the students, who first expressed surprised, now openly protest against these descriptions. At this point, Mohammed has joined the class to interpret the content of the lesson to the Somali students. Elisabeth rhetorically asks whether you can love each other even if you are divorced, and says that this does sometimes occur. Mohammed translates this and is then included in the conversation. Elisabeth says:

> "Now, I wonder: Mohammed and I are in love, but we live in separate apartments." Hawa reacts: "Aja baja" (which in English is equivalent to the expression "naughty, naughty"). The other students laugh since this is an expression that Elisabeth has taught them and which is used in Swedish to reprimand children who are doing wrong. Now Elisabeth wonders if *särbos* (non-co-habiting couples) exists in Somalia too. "No," the students answer with emphasis. (Translation of field notes 2017-10-03)

In the example above, Elisabeth explains that a couple can be together without being married and without living together, which is not accepted in Somalia according to Hawa and some of the other students. The students engage in a long and vivid discussion with Mohammed, apparently to decide what this phenomenon would be called in Somali. Elisabeth then writes on the whiteboard, girl + girl = lesbian and boy + boy = gay men, and then explains:

> "Two girls can get semen from a guy and they can have children." I hear some of the students utter "Haram Haram" (which in Arabic means forbidden). The teacher ignores them and then Hawa asks in Swedish: "One of the girls become a mum, but what do you call the other one?" Elisabeth answers: "also mum." Now Elisabeth tells the students that gay men and lesbians can give each other children. "They stay with their mum for two weeks and with their dad for two weeks." Everybody laughs. Elisabeth feigns to be surprised: "Yes, you laugh, but in Somalia a man can have several wives and you can have several mums too." (Translation of field notes 2017-10-03)

The above example illustrates how Elisabeth points to some similarities in the practices of same-sex families in Sweden and in polygamic families, like in Somalia, thus focusing on a pedagogy of inquiry. At this point, Hawa wants to say something. She turns to Mohammed and asks him to translate, which he does:

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> "She says that there are differences in every society. It's not strange that it is different in different societies." Adam objects: "Okay, there are lesbians also in the Gambia but not guys, guy and guy I don't like." Elisabeth objects: "No, but we are all different. We have to show respect. You can think but you don't say it. We like different food. We are different from each other." Zubeyr ends the discussion: "Okay, guy and guy no worries." (Translation of field notes 2017-10-03)

The above example illustrates that some students express their understanding that it is not surprising that different societies have different views of what is acceptable when it comes to family constellations, even if they do not necessarily approve of the arrangements in Sweden. Elisabeth then underlined that even though we are all different, we still have to respect each other. She adds that we are allowed to think what we want, but that we cannot say it. In that way, she opens up for the possibility that students might have a negative opinion about same-sex relations, or other practices that are foreign to them, but that they are not allowed to express their opinions openly, at least not in this classroom and in Swedish.

On a later occasion, Zubeyr again protests against the description. The teacher talks about what makes her feel good, like looking at beautiful men and women on the tram.

Elisabeth: Yes, I can look at girls too, some girls are really beautiful, you look at them.
Zubeyr: Homosexuals.
Elisabeth: And then come some beautiful boys, you look at them.
Since Elisabeth doesn't seem to hear him, Zubeyr repeats louder: Teacher, girls girls not good.
Elisabeth: Okay, but you know what, you can't say like this not good or good.
Zubeyr: Homosexuals.
Elisabeth: You cannot say like this, boy boy not good.
Zubeyr: I know I know, I cannot say.
Elisabeth: You cannot say, you can think, you understand?
Zubeyr: The head. Zubeyr points to his temples.
Elisabeth: But not say it because it is about love and respect.
Zubeyr: Respect.
Elisabeth: You can think what you want, but you don't say it. Okay? What did you say now, what shall I write?
(Translation of transcription of audio recording, 2018-01-16).

In the above example, Zubeyr is reminded that he can think what he wants to but that he is not allowed to say it out loud. This practice can be described as a

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recurrent dilemma for the teacher in this course: in order to avoid homophobic speech in this classroom (cf. Nelson, 2002), she has to stop the students from expressing their opinions, which is another goal in the curriculum (Skolverket, 2011). Thus, while this education seems beneficial for avoiding discriminatory talk, it is also problematic, since it risks silencing the students' voices.

"You Have to Be Strong and to Dare:"— Encouragement to Show How You Are

More than three months later than the interactions that have been described to this point, the discussion about people being different and respecting one another is repeated. Elisabeth now talks about certain Swedes who do not like it when Muslim women wear the niqab and try to pull them off them:

> "Is this good? No, you decide yourself what to wear—you have to be strong and to dare. To dare, how do you say that in Somali." The students use their translation devices on their phones. "To dare, you shouldn't be afraid. You see? Can you have a look in the dictionary what the word brave means in Somali?" [. . .] The students seem to negotiate the meaning in Somali.
> (Translation of transcription of audio recordings, 2018-01-25)

In the above example, Elisabeth stresses that we are different when it comes to religious practices and that we have to be brave and to stand up for who we are. Therefore, we also have to respect others who do just that. This includes people who dress in a way that might transgress the norms of society. At one point, the teacher brings up that some people might want to dress in a way that is traditionally associated with women's clothing, like miniskirts, or as in the example below, to wear make-up:

> A norm. Do you remember that we discussed what was normal and what was not? There was a guy, do you remember? She shows them a picture of a guy doing his make-up.
>
> *Zubeyr:* He gay.
> *Elisabeth:* No, he's not gay.
> *Zubeyr:* Eh, make-up.
> *Elisabeth:* Yes, make up, to put make up on. He wanted to put make up on, he's not gay.
> *Zubeyr:* All the children they come, they hug him.

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Elisabeth: Yes, he works at a kindergarten. All the children hugged him, they liked him, but what did the adults say?
Zubeyr: They say he not work here.
Elisabeth: Yes, he puts make up on, he works in kindergarten and the children like him. He decides for himself.
Samia: Absolutely.
(Translation of transcription of audio recording, 2018-01-25)

In the above example, the teacher again highlights an example of practices that might be considered as norm-breaking and therefore as an example of a pedagogy of inquiry. However, she concludes that we must respect each other, thus also conducting a pedagogy of inclusion. Zubeyr and Samia seem to agree that it is good to be able to show who you are.

"I Think That Is Good That We Have Such a Lesson": The Students' Perspectives

The interaction described so far raises questions about the students' opinions about this subject. Would they consider this instruction to be imposed language and topics that make them feel uncomfortable, or do they consider that it is instructive to talk about these subjects and that it might enhance their agency? During the interviews, I have the opportunity to ask them what they think. Zubeyr and Fouad are interviewed together, and they both claim that they find this instruction useful:

> Every country has its own rules and customs. Here, you shouldn't interfere with people's private lives. We are a free country. Everyone is free to do what they want to. (. . .) I think that is good that we have such a lesson, because if you come to a country that you have never been to, it is good to learn the laws and rules of that country in order to avoid making mistakes. (Translated interview, Fuad, 2018-05-21)

In the above example, Fouad underlines how this instruction helps him to understand and to navigate in this new society. Zubeyr agrees that it is good that the teacher warns the students so that they do not insult gay couples in the street, claiming that he does not know anything about this kind of relationships: "We are from the countryside, you know" (Translated interview, Zubeyr 2018-05-21).

As is always the case when interviewing people about their opinions, I cannot be sure that what these adolescents tell me and the language tutor Mohammed is what they really think. They might consider us to be their

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teachers or they might not be sure what their answers might lead to. Only one of the eight interviewed students says that she does not approve of this instruction. Maram tells us during the interview that she does not feel comfortable discussing these issues. The fact that Maram, who appears to be very shy, has the courage to tell us this enforces my belief that the other students might actually mean what they say. Maram's friend Sumaya declares that she thinks that this education is good:

> For me I don't think it is a problem because when she talks about [these issues] it can be so that we see these things that we have discussed and talk about in the class to see in the society and then there is no surprise, so we do not think it is strange for us. She prepares us for this. We should not stare at them outside but just continue walking. That's good. (Translated interview, Sumaya, 2018-03-28)

Sumaya, like several other students, does not particularly talk about having to tolerate relationships that are strange to her, but to avoid surprise when encountering these new phenomena. The answers of Fouad, Zubeyr, and Sumaya indicate that Elisabeth's teaching might have two goals: to make the students aware of the fact that these differences exist and to learn not to appear to be homophobic.

Discussion and Implications for Teaching

This chapter demonstrates how teachers may implement an inclusive-critical pedagogy in second-language courses to recently immigrated students in relation to developing literacy and knowledge of diversity, specifically sexual and gender diversity. The chapter has also highlighted some challenges and dilemmas in relation to this education. The analysis of the interactions in the classroom shows examples of a pedagogy which, with Nelson's (2002) terminologies, can be defined as inclusive, advocating tolerance to differences, as well as critical, through analyses of practices linked to sexuality. The teacher in this case study does not refrain from bringing up delicate issues that might be avoided by other teachers (Liddicoat, 2010; Nelson, 2010). Although this course raises questions about the students' possibilities to have an impact on the content of instruction, or to avoid topics that they do not feel comfortable talking about (Alexander, 2009), seven out of eight students in the group reported that this pedagogy contributes to their acquisition of cultural knowledge and the possibility to participate in discourses of the mainstream society (Baynham, 2006; Gee, 2015).

Examples from the data illustrate an education that does not seem to aim to change the students' opinions but to make them understand new practices

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that are different from those of their home communities. This outcome is contrary to that of Milani et al. (2021) who found that civic orientation in their study was not just about making migrants aware of different laws and regulations in Sweden, or to create a dialogue around these issues, but to make these adult students change their routines "by leaving behind what are constructed as bad habits from their countries, and instead approximate Swedishness not just in the mind but also in the body" (Milani et al., 2021, p. 768). These ambitions were also illustrated in Karrebæk's (2013) study of a multilingual and multicultural kindergarten, where some practices were favored over others, like eating rye bread. The education in the present study was characterized by an effort to discuss normativity and differences in several domains, without disqualifying the students' experiences. The teacher does not seem to focus on what the students should think, or at least not explicitly, but on making them understand that we are all different and that we should respect those differences. However, some of the examples in this study also illustrate how the teacher supports some practices before others, such as when she explains how same-sex relations are forbidden by law in some countries, and that she believes that this is wrong. She also emphasizes that it is important for the students not to appear to be homophobic; even if they do not respect different relational practices, they should not express this openly.

In one way, this instruction is ruled by conflicting principles within the curriculum; that is, to let everybody's opinion be expressed and at the same time actively avoid discrimination. Several examples illustrate that the teacher reminds the students of the fact that they cannot actually say what they think, since these utterances could be interpreted as homophobic, which the teacher wants to avoid. Instead, the teacher tries to encourage them to be themselves and to respect other people who are trying to do the same thing. Thus, the importance of showing tolerance toward differences appears to be valued to a higher degree than the freedom to express one's opinion. Also, it might appear to the students that the opinions expressed by the teacher, and through the school curriculum, are the general way to perceive these relations in Sweden, which might not actually be the case.

This form of education seems to contain several pitfalls, which are not easy for teachers to navigate. One of the dilemmas discussed concerns letting everybody speak their opinion and, at the same time, avoiding discriminatory talk. There is also another issue worth discussing connected to this LGBT-friendly pedagogy. According to Nelson (2002, 2010), it might be preferable to use a pedagogy of inquiry instead of a pedagogy of inclusion, since the latter form could actually enforce the dichotomy between same-sex and heterosexual relations, instead of avoiding it. The teacher in this study was careful not to mention anything about the students' own sexuality or relationships, which would not have been appropriate. At the same time, the us-and-them

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dichotomy, which is used to describe relationships that seem foreign to the students, risks excluding some students who might identify as queer. In a way, the default mode of heterosexual relationships, described in Simonsson's studies (2017, 2018) also applies in this classroom.

The teacher is eager to highlight that the school curriculum represents discourses of the Swedish state, even if these do not represent the attitude of all citizens, and that she is obliged to teach the students about these subjects. In that sense, the teacher could be considered a gatekeeper, deciding, and delimiting what content to discuss in the classroom. She could also be seen as a mediator, or a literacy broker (Brandt, 1998), in the sense that she tries to help the students understand, analyze, and use new discourses. In the interviews, the students express that they perceive her as the latter, with one exception—a girl who says that she does not wish to speak about these subjects. However, for the most part, the students seem to consider these subjects to be important, as a way of enhancing their agency. At the same time, these students are new to Sweden and try to understand how things work. Learning how to navigate in a society does not necessarily mean participating in it. Even if these students understand their new context, it does not automatically mean that they want to be a part of it, nor that the society would accept that they might have different points of view.

The education that has been described in this chapter not only contains good examples but also highlights dilemmas and challenges that can be difficult for every teacher. It is difficult to say what is right or wrong in different educational contexts, but some things can be learnt from this study. One thing is that a greater focus on a pedagogy of inquiry, rather than a pedagogy of tolerance, might be suited to explore differences, such as practices linked to sexuality, and to enhance the students' understanding of phenomena that are new to them. If the focus in the discussion is less on tolerance and more on exploring and understanding different practices, students might feel that opinions are not forced upon them, but that they are given the tools to understand their new surroundings, and may ultimately better understand themselves and the other. In other words, if the students find that their opinions are valued, and at the same time learn to master new discourses, that could empower them (Nocon & Cole, 2009), leading to enhanced agency rather than domesticating literacy (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Gee, 2015). One condition for this might be that the instruction is marked by a respectful atmosphere (Winlund, 2020, 2022), communication, humor, and even love. This can allow the students to trust that their opinions are taken seriously but can still be challenged, since the teacher has a certain opinion about what they need to learn in order to navigate in school and in society. This relationship between a student group and their teacher seems crucial to create a pedagogy for understanding.

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Notes

1. Acronym of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
2. The names of students, teachers, and tutors are pseudonyms.
3. This word can be described as a slur for gay men, which seems to be used in the material and also by Elisabeth in order to reclaim it. However, some teachers might not feel comfortable using it.

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16

Countering Narratives of Identity and Belonging

Multicultural School Events from a Student Perspective

Shpresa Basha and Thor-André Skrefsrud

In diverse societies, schools need to find appropriate ways of recognizing students' complex backgrounds. As noted by Banks (2015), Nieto (2017), and others, such recognition would imply that all students should experience educational equality in schools. To enhance an inclusive learning environment where all students feel supported and stimulated intellectually, socially, and academically, schools should challenge practices and curricula that create uneven outcomes for students with different cultures, languages, ethnicities, and social classes from those of the majority group. For teachers and school leaders, this is a continuous process that expands traditional approaches to teaching and learning, striving to help students experience a sense of belonging in the classroom, regardless of their identities and backgrounds (Banks, 2015; Nieto, 2017).

A common way for schools to address the presence of a diverse student population in schools is to organize so-called multicultural school events (Niemi & Hotulainen, 2016; Watkins & Noble, 2021). For schools, the practice of multicultural school events is often seen as a way to acknowledge and appreciate the presence of students belonging to diverse and complex family backgrounds. In addition, in our previous research on the topic in the Norwegian context, we found that school leaders interpreted multicultural

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school events more like an overall contribution of the school to realizing social sustainability as part of the United Nation's (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, hosting such events around the International UN Day in October (Basha, 2022; Basha & Kjørven, 2018; Dewilde et al., 2018; Dewilde & Skrefsrud, 2021). In the school festivals, many groups, such as students, staff, parents, and the local community, are involved. Typically, the week ends with a school celebration and an exhibition, which includes posters, food items, and traditional clothing related to different countries (Basha & Kjørven, 2018; Dewilde et al., 2018).

At a Norwegian primary school where we did our fieldwork for this chapter, the event lasted a week, culminating in a joint evening festival in a community hall close to the school. Throughout the week, diversity was celebrated through a number of activities, such as workshops on Somali fairy tales, Zumba dancing, and traditional Sami handicraft. Lectures of some immigrant parents were arranged during which they shared pictures from their countries, such as Romania and Burma. At the closing of the school festival, which was run by the school's parent committee in collaboration with a group of teachers, parents brought their traditional food items, and traditional folk clothing were displayed as part of an ethnic fashion show. Throughout the festival, the students made and displayed posters that showcased different countries.

While many schools consider the practice of multicultural school events a valuable and functional way of affirming and recognizing a growing population of students belonging to diverse backgrounds, such events have been found to play a powerful role in the mobilization of group-based identities, often in ways that promote cultural stereotypes and essentialist cultural identities (Ngo, 2010; Watkins & Noble, 2019). Hence, contrary to schools' intentions, multicultural school events can reinforce "us" versus "them" thinking that fails to see the diverse and nuanced composition of what is often framed as immigrants' communities. Nevertheless, as we elaborate later, it is noteworthy that the research has focused less on how multicultural school events are experienced by the participants, especially by the students. Against this background, this chapter turns attention to the participants of such events, elaborating on how students at a Norwegian primary school experience participation in a multicultural school celebration. Applying a theoretical lens of belonging (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2016) and identity (Hall, 1997, 2000), this chapter discusses how an event can help students feel "at home," build networks, and share common memories and experiences.

Prior to sharing and discussing the findings, the chapter introduces the theories and methods employed in this study. Subsequently, the chapter is concluded by reflecting on how students' counter-narratives about identity and belonging can inform teacher educators working with student teachers in the development of their intercultural competence.

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Theoretical Perspectives on Belonging and Identity

In recent years, owing to increasing globalization and multiculturalism, the issue of belonging has been increasingly becoming a relevant topic of much public debate (Christensen, 2017). Nevertheless, according to Yuval-Davis (2006, 2016), Antonsich (2010), and others, belonging often has a self-explanatory meaning, indicating the need for a more critical and analytical approach to the concept.

As Yuval-Davis (2006, p. 297) pointed out, belonging has to do with emotional attachment, feeling at home, and being comfortable. Thus, belonging can be described as "a personal intimate feeling of being 'at home' in a place" (Antonsich, 2010, p. 654), meaning that the concept has a personal and a social dimension. The personal dimension of belonging has to do with an individual's sense of closeness, nearness, and familiarity with a certain context. According to Antonsich (2010), such a feeling can be directed toward a geographical place, such as a city, a country, or another topographical area, or to "a symbolic space of familiarity, comfort, security and emotional attachment" (Antonsich, 2010, p. 647). The social dimension refers to the actual construction of places, including both geographical places and symbolic spaces to which people feel attached. Thus, the social dimension of belonging emphasizes the significance of relations when building networks and sharing common memories and physical and imaginary places or spaces.

Furthermore, according to Yuval-Davis (2006), belonging can be understood on three analytical levels: The first level concerns the social locations of individuals, referring to categories such as race, age, class, or nation (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 199). The second level refers to the identification of individual and collective identities, which are often reflected in dualistic narratives about who people are and who they are not (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202). The third level relates to ethical and political value systems, referring to attitudes and ideologies concerning where and how identity-related and categorical boundaries are being/should be drawn in more or less exclusionary ways. This level corresponds with what Yuval-Davis (2006) framed as a need for distinguishing between belonging and the politics of belonging, the latter "specifying political projects that aim to construct belonging in a specific way for specific groups, who at the same time are constructed by these projects in very specific ways" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 197). As such, Yuval-Davis (2006, p. 199) argued that, on the one hand, belonging (and even non-belonging) can be used as a critical concept to understand the relationship between individuals and groups, and on the other hand, their relationship with the communities, places, activities, and institutions in which they are involved.

An important point for both Antonsich (2010) and Yuval-Davis (2006) is that belonging should be conceptualized not as a static condition but as a

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process that is constantly being performed and negotiated through individual and collective practices. In this regard, Antonsich (2010) argued that "belonging should be thought of as a 'politics of relations' rather than as a 'politics of positioning.'" Here, we see a parallel to Skrbiš et al. (2007, p. 267), who point out that "belonging is not a static phenomenon but rather a set of processes that are central to the way in which human relationships are conducted." Another parallel is the work of Anthias (2013, p. 9), who relates the concept of belonging to the process of negotiating "to what" and "with whom" you are a member, "where" and "by whom" you are accepted and you feel attached to rather than "who you are."

Nevertheless, Antonsich (2010), Yuval-Davis (2006, 2016), and others have emphasized that belonging should also be seen in relation to identity, arguing that both terms should be understood as dynamic, fluid, relational, and multidimensional processes. Here, we see a parallel to the work of Hall (2000), who always considered identity as "multiple," and never "singular," which is constructed across different, often interconnecting antagonistic discourses, practices, and positions. Hence, according to Hall (2000), identities are constantly changing and transforming, making them overlapping, unstable, fragmented, and broken, and part of an eternally lasting discursive process. Thus, seeing the concepts of belonging and identity in relation to each other can help us understand how processes of making oneself at home are also about constructing a self-understanding. As noted by Yuval-Davis (2006, p. 203), both terms "become important dimensions of people's social locations and positionings, and the relationships."

Before discussing the students' experiences of a multicultural school event in light of these perspectives on belonging and identity, the chapter introduces the study and the methods used to collect the students' voices.

The Study's Design and Methods

The study presented in this chapter sheds light on belonging and identity from the perspective of students in connection with a multicultural school festival. This study is an offshoot of a larger umbrella project conducted by a group of researchers from the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences and the University of Oslo: *Multicultural events in schools and local communities from the perspective of the participants (2015–2022)*. It is a qualitative study of a single case (Stake, 2005), namely, the 2016 and 2019 school festivals at a multicultural Norwegian primary school located in a medium-sized city in southeastern Norway. The school has 450 students in the first to seventh grades (aged 6–13) and a staff of around 100 members. Approximately 20% of the students in the school come from ethnic minorities. The school is one of two

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municipal schools, each of which organizes an introductory class for newly arrived migrant students. The study is based on students' narratives collected at the school's multicultural school events in 2016 and 2019. According to Anthias (2002, p. 499), narratives have the potential to go beyond reproducing and remaking the social order and, rather, communicate the emotions and viewpoints of the narrators for which they seek our approval (Jørgensen et al., 2020). Furthermore, the narrative approach focuses on connections in people's life stories about who and what we identify with (Anthias, 2002; Kaas & Canger, 2018, p. 71). Such stories are also articulated in terms of notions of identity-making claims of the narrator to questions such as "who I am," which group "I identify with," and which groups "I participate within" (Anthias, 2002).

Data Collection

The three-hour school festival in the evening was designed to present the majority and minority parents' cultural activities. The school's sports hall was full of food stalls and cultural artifacts, and the events included an opening address by the headmaster and music and dance performances by some students. At the 2016 festival, many minority parents wore national dresses. In 2019, fewer people chose to do so. According to the data material of this study, the food stalls represented the main minority groups, including Somalians, Poles, Bosnians, and Kosovo Albanians. An American stand by a Norwegian student as well as Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish stands were also found. Some stands, including Italian, Sami, Indonesian, Vietnamese, and Syrian, had been sparsely decorated. These stands had no representatives and no food; they only had posters with little information about the countries in question. At the festival, people visited various stands, where they tasted traditional dishes, spoke to representatives, played games, and looked at maps, books, posters, and so on.

The primary data for this chapter consists of transcriptions of semi-structured group interviews with students of 10–12 years of age and those of the narratives based on photos taken by Ana (pseudonym), a 12-year-old student. In addition, field notes were taken when attending the school event. To gain insight into school events and the students' perspectives, Skrefsrud and colleagues focused on students from Grade 6, as they had experienced several school events previously and were available for interviews. In October 2016, Skrefsrud and colleagues distributed a short open-ended questionnaire to all Grade-6 students, which were 60 in number, and asked about what they particularly experienced and what they wished should have been different (Dewilde et al., 2018). Later, 20 of them gave their permission (as did their parents) to be interviewed in pairs (Dewilde et al., 2018). As a

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consequence of the anonymization, the students were given pseudonyms (see table 16.1 for the student's profiles). Semi-structured interviews with 20 students were recorded and transcribed. Consent was also obtained for the student's interviews to be recorded, informing them that all names would be pseudonymized.

Furthermore, in October 2019, the school event was revisited. Inspired by Rasmussen (2013), the photo method was used to gain insight from a different angle than through participant observation and semi-structured student interviews alone—an angle that both supplemented the other methods, and which, to a greater extent, methodologically actively included the children and engaged them in dialogue in a different way (Burke, 2008; Rasmussen, 2013). Here, one of the researchers (Basha) invited the student, Ana, to take pictures at the evening festival and share her experiences with the researcher. Ana was born and raised in Norway, to which her Kosovo Albanian parents fled in 1998 because of war. In October 2019, Ana was offered the opportunity to use the researchers' iPhone and take photographs to capture her impressions and experiences from the school festival. She made decisions about where the photographs should be taken. The student took a total of ten pictures that subsequently formed the basis of an interview, encouraging the student to talk about her reasons for taking the photographs, motives behind selecting certain situations to take photographs, and meanings of those photographs to her personally. She was asked to select the most significant subjects in her photo series. The photographs show the child's perspective on what interests her and what she wants to hold onto and communicate further (Rasmussen, 2013). The camera as a methodological tool in this study gave an insider's look, the child's look, at the school festival, which is different from the usual outsider's look that the researcher had (Rasmussen, 2013).

Inspired by Burke (2008), photo elicitation is the coupling of words and images, allowing for interaction between the two. In this method, the images may be found or made; in this instance, they were made by children who were invited to talk about themselves. The conversation could have been allowed with a completely unstructured, free-narrative approach or in a more structured context (Burke, 2008, p. 33). Inspired by Harper (2010), the use of photos can be framed as a participant-driven photo-elicitation method. Epstein et al. (2006) referred to this method as native, reflexive, or auto-driven photography. The photo-elicitation interview (PEI) is particularly relevant in connection with research involving child participants, as this method facilitates the study of a child's life world, and the child is allowed greater flexibility and freedom to discuss issues that matter to him or her as a student (Harper, 2010). A photograph can capture a look and ease communication, resulting in more detailed discussions and bridging the gap between a researcher and a participant. Hence, the PEI method was considered relevant for this study because it helped identify

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TABLE 16.1
Participant Profiles

Student's Name and Age	*Grade Level*	*Country of Birth*	*Parents Background*	*Semi-Structured Interview*	*Photo Elicitation*
Christopher (11)	6	Poland	Polish	2016	
Hermina (11)	6	Romania	Romanian	2016	
Ylva (10)	6	Norway	Norwegian	2016	
Ulrike (11)	6	Norway	Norwegian	2016	
Hanna (11)	6	Iceland	Icelandic	2016	
Nils (11)	6	Norway	Norwegian	2016	
Leandra (11)	6	Albania	Albanian	2016	
Nana (11)	6	Norway	Norwegian	2016	
Emilia (11)	6	Norway	–	2016	
Lea (11)	6	Norway	–	2016	
Luna (11)	6	Norway	–	2016	
Arian (10)	6	–	Kurdish	2016	
Sebastian (11)	6	Norway	–	2016	
Leo (11)	6	Norway	–	2016	
Sara (11)	6	Norway	–	2016	
Stig (11)	6	Norway	–	2016	
Sofia (11)	6	Norway	–	2016	
Nora (11)	6	Norway	–	2016	
Nella (11)	6	Norway	–	2016	
Ida (11)	6	Norway	–	2016	
Ana (12)	6	Norway	Kosovo Albanian		2019

Source: Created by the chapter author

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and reveal elements that could have easily been overlooked had the study been driven by a purely adult perspective (Harper, 2010; Rasmussen, 2013).

In the fieldwork design of this study, the researchers strived to be open and responsive to the contingency of the context, which makes research ethics a continual concern. The project was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data. All the key participants were informed about the aims of the study, and consent was obtained for observations and student's interviews to be recorded. To secure confidentiality, all names that appear in the chapter are pseudonymized, and the locality of the school has not been described in detail.

Analytically, our point of departure was what Alvesson and Sköldberg (2018) described as a reflective interpretation. In our study, this meant that we strived for an abductive interpretation, taking our starting point in the data, but at the same time acknowledging that our interpretations (and preunderstandings when collecting the data, for example, in the interviews) were theoretically informed. The analysis began by reading the transcripts and identifying themes across the data. For this chapter, we draw on the semi-structured interviews conducted in 2016 (Kvale et al., 2009; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015), and data collected by photo-elicitation in 2019 (Burke, 2008; Harper, 2010).

Central to the approach used was striving for a rigorous openness to the data and searching for connections and relations in the students' utterances rather than mutually exclusive categories with strict boundaries. Against this background, three significant and recurring themes were found in the data: (1) being happy and proud, (2) learning about diversity, and (3) enhancing friendships.

Findings and Discussion

This part of the study focuses on the experiences and meaning-making of the students at the multicultural school event. More specifically, it identifies how the students represent their experiences while attending the school event and how they construe, understand, and make sense of the event by engaging in different learning activities during the week, tasting food, and walking around with friends at the evening festival. In particular, the researchers were interested in how the students' experiences related to issues of belonging and identity.

Being Happy and Proud

In the group interviews, the students described (October 2016) the multicultural school event as an opportunity to have fun, join in creative activities that

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diverge from the ordinary school day, and make the diverse backgrounds of the school's students more visible in the school community. With reference to the evening 2016 event, several students mentioned the freedom they were given to walk around with friends and taste different kinds of food from the many stalls. Many emphasized the joy of seeing and listening to traditional music from different countries, although not all students appreciated the performances of traditional folk dances by their parents. Christopher, a student of Polish background, was born in Poland and raised in Norway. He expressed that he felt a bit uncomfortable when his parents were dancing.

> Christopher: I think folk dancing is quite an embarrassing thing. It is like we have to watch old people dancing. It would have been better if there had been a break dance or something organized by us students.

However, despite feeling embarrassed, Christopher started the interview by stating that the multicultural school event was "fun, in particular, the activities." Such an experience resonates with statements from many of the other students, expressing that the event "brought a lot of enjoyment" to them, and that they were "excited to participate." Although the evening festival was organized by the parent board and primarily engaged the parents in serving food and displaying traditional cultural practices, the students found joy in experiencing other cultures, although some of them, such as Christopher, expressed that they would like to see more student involvement in this part of the event. Moreover, Christopher and Arian, with Kurdish backgrounds, were not comfortable with highlighting their own cultural heritage on the scene, while simultaneously emphasizing that it would have been better if there had been "break dance" organized by students.

As feeling "embarrassed" is taken up and appropriated, a few questions inevitably arise: What does this feeling mean to the teachers, the majority students, and the minority students at the multicultural school? What kinds of opportunities are critical for taking care of the real issues of unequal access to "power" and "privilege" between minority and majority groups? For instance, Arian distanced himself from traditional Kurdish clothing. He wanted to cook food but not always to dance traditional dance. In this context, mainstream cultural expectations and perceptions about students with Kurdish backgrounds at times impelled him to make his background invisible to avoid being maybe an "other.":

Interviewer: Is there something you think you would have liked to show from your background?
Arian: I do not think so.
Interviewer: Maybe you would have liked to dance or . . .

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Arian: Yes, sure, but it would have been a bit embarrassing.
Interviewer: Do you think anyone thinks it is embarrassing when parents do things like that? Dancing, for example, . . . or?
Arian: For some, it is, for some, it is probably not.
Interviewer: What do you think they had shown, then? Could you imagine what they would do?
Arian: I do not know. Maybe Kurdish dance.
Interviewer: But it was great to see traditional clothing from the country where the family comes from, and to see it on stage.
Arian: Yes.

The minority students who grew up in Norway also seemed to have distanced themselves from their parents' homeland countries and more by focusing on their own lack of cultural proficiency. In their narratives, Christopher and Arian appear to construct "new identities." Their narratives demonstrated the students' efforts to position themselves by minimizing markers of difference from their Norwegian peers. As Hall (1997) argued, it is about the construction of "new ethnicities," or, as Yuval-Davis (2006) argued, constructions of belonging reflect emotional investments and desire for attachments.

In contrast, many students and their parents chose to participate with pleasure in school event. For instance, Stig, Nella, and Leo with Norwegian backgrounds reported all positive and enthusiastic experiences with the school event and its activities, such as dance, food, and friendship. Similar examples were found in most of the interviews. From the narratives of Emilia, Ida, and Luna, it appears that being "happy," "proud," and "fun" can be viewed as a "sense of belonging" (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Ten students discussed school events in their narratives describing that "it was fun"; "I have learned about Somalia and Poland"; and "I have tasted food from Thailand, Iceland, Somalia" and "as important for developing the sense of friendship and community across different grade levels."

Many students underlined that such a celebration of cultural diversity was a significant sign mark of the school, and that being part of the school event was highly important to them. Lea and Hanna, two girls with Norwegian background, told about how they considered the multicultural week an essential part of the school's profile, and how they would have felt if the school stopped arranging such a week.

Interviewer: Do you think that a multicultural week is important for the school?
Lea and Hanna in choir: Yes!
Interviewer: Why?
Lea: Because a lot of us are foreigners. Then, you learn quite a lot about other countries.

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Hanna: Yes, because it is very cozy, and it is great fun getting to know other countries. It is interesting to see how people of other cultures live and what they eat.

Interviewer: So, if the headmaster said that from now on, we will stop hosting such a week, what would your thoughts have been?

Lea: Very stupid!

As we can see from the excerpt, both Lea and Hanna expressed that the event made them proud of being part of a multicultural school community. According to the students, the event strengthened the overall relationship of the student body, but a certain level of "criticality" was observed, depending on how a student was positioned in relation to the event. As noted by Antonsich (2010), relations constitute an important aspect of belonging as something being performed and negotiated through collective practices, such as a multicultural school event. Based on the interviews, it was found that it was not primarily the school as a physical place that created relations and offered pride to the students; rather, it was the joy of being part of a diverse school community that built a collective identity about what the school should be, and who the students and families were (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202). However, one could assume that being part of a festival in a community hall, tasting, and smelling the food, and feeling the atmosphere contributed to strengthening the students' feelings of a geographical belonging to the local community as well.

Such a feeling of relationship was confirmed by Ana, who participated in the most recent part of the data collection. Based on the photos Ana took at the evening school festival in October 2019, she talked about the activities in which she had joined with fellow students from different nationalities, and how her participation at the event strengthened her sense of belonging to the school, taking particular pride in engaging with her family traditions.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about who you are, and why did you choose to take these pictures?

Ana: My name is Ana, and I was born and raised in Norway. I speak fluent Norwegian and Albanian. My parents are Kosovo Albanians from Kosovo. I want to show how great the festival looked from this angle. Everyone can see a lot of people from all sorts of cultures. I am very happy and proud of going to this school, where all kinds of cultures are mixed together. It is a great tradition that we have here at the school.

I wanted to show the flags representing different nationalities at the school. The community hall is packed with stands and tables for food and various objects. As you can see, the students have also produced a number of posters (see figure 1). We celebrate school festival every year. I think that these different cultures are making the school interesting. Everyone contributes with something: food or activities such as playing or dancing. People walk around, taste food, and talk to each other.

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Figure 16.1 "Different Stalls." *Source*: Taken by the chapter author.

When Ana was asked how her family had contributed to the event this year, she responded as follows:

> Ana: As I said, my mom prepared some traditional Albanian dishes. And we really wanted to wear the national dress again. It is well suited for events such as this one. But my parents did not contribute with traditional dancing this year because the students wanted to play a more active role at the festival. Look at this picture: We are dancing Polka in a ring (see figure 2). It is fine.

In contrast to Christopher (Polish background) and Arian (Kurdish background), who both felt embarrassed when being identified with their backgrounds, Ana seemed to be more than comfortable with her parents wearing traditional clothing. She even chose to wear traditional clothing at the event. In the interview, Ana elaborated on how the opportunity to engage with Albanian traditions at the event made her proud of her background:

> Ana: Also, this time I chose to wear a traditional Kosovo Albanian dress. I am proud of it. It is important to me to show Kosovo Albanian culture. I also brought a small bag that I had bought in Kosovo.

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Figure 16.2 "We Are Dancing, Polka." *Source*: Taken by the chapter author.

In the interview, Ana showed a picture underlining her strong feelings of a dual identity, dressed in the Albanian national flag (see figure 16.3).

Ana: I am emotionally attached to the Albanian national flag. I am Norwegian, Kosovo Albanian. I have a Norwegian passport, and I was born and raised in Norway, but my heart belongs to Kosovo.

From the interview extracts, it was observed that Ana spoke of herself as part of a "we" that consisted of all students in the school. Ana reflected upon the school festival as a multicultural place or space with many nationalities, and in this context, she felt at "home." Hence, such a collective identity is not defined by ethnic or religious boundaries. Instead, the "we" seems to be constitutive of an unspecific group of people with shared experiences, which echoes the social side of belonging and the significance that relations have for building networks, common memories, and shared physical and imaginary places/spaces (Antonsich, 2010).

The social side of belonging was visible in Ana's investment in the family and the Albanian community as part of her collective identity. With reference to Hall (1997, 2000), Ana cannot be said to have invoked a hybrid space for identity negotiations; however, she acknowledged her multiple roots and felt that the multicultural school festival allowed her to nurture and strengthen

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Figure 16.3 Albanian Flag. *Source*: Taken by the chapter author.

her belonging to both a Norwegian and Albanian community as she stated: "I am born and raised in Norway, and I have a Norwegian passport, but my heart belongs to Kosovo." In sum, the statements from Ana, both in the interview and through the motifs in her photographs, can be interpreted as an expression of emotional belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2016) to both the school community and the diasporic group of her family.

Learning about Diversity

With its wide variety of activities, both during the multicultural event and at the evening festival, both in 2016 and in 2019, the school arrangement was clearly learning-oriented. In the interviews, the students described how participating in the event gave them the opportunity to learn about what it was like living in another country, the cultural practices people may have, and what their food tastes like. Walking around at the evening event reminded some students of places they had traveled to for holidays. For some other students, such as Hermina, a girl of Romanian background, the event even gave them the possibility of tasting food they knew from home.

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Interviewer: What do you like about the multicultural week?
Hermina: I think it is very nice.
Interviewer: Any particular thing you like?
Hermina: To learn from other countries, since many of the students here come from other countries. It is nice to learn about Chile, Somalia, and countries like that.
Interviewer: Right.
Hermina: I have been a participant for many years. It is also funny to watch the show and walk around and taste food from other countries, and stuff like that.
Interviewer: Have you tasted Romanian food then?
Hermina: Yes (smiling).

Several of the other students underlined Hermina's view that learning through walking around was an essential part of the event. As shown in the following excerpt, two students of a Norwegian ethnic background elaborated on how the food and posters at the different stalls provided an opportunity for learning more about other countries.

Ylva: It was very fun!
Ulrike: We get to taste a lot of food.
Interviewer: So, is food important at the event?
Ulrike: It is the food that makes the difference.
Interviewer: How?
Ulrike: Like, to be able to taste so much different stuff.
Ylva: And there are a lot of different posters that talk about the different countries, or the things that are important in the country.

From the excerpt, it can be observed that Ylva and Ulrike described an active process of learning, where seeing the different stalls and tasting and smelling the food made them aware of cultural differences. In the same interview, Ylva talked about how such experiences inspired her to try making some of the food at home: "There was one dish that I will try at home, maybe. It is from Somalia. I know the recipe. It is a crispy triangle with vegetables inside!"

The selected interview extracts illustrate how the students were eager to learn about others, both through acquiring knowledge and information about cultural practices, histories, and traditions and engaging with traditions different from the ones they knew. The willingness to learn from others, and the joyfulness the students expressed when tasting food from all over the world can be interpreted as an openness toward other ways of life. Based on the interviews, the students' participation in the school event seemed to inspire them to enhance their cultural knowledge and ways of interacting with cultural diversity. Thus, drawing on the work of Yuval-Davis (2006), one can say

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that the students' cultural learning at the festival creates a common memory and experiences of a shared place or space. As such, belonging is performed and negotiated through the students' individual and collective practices (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2016).

The students' curiosity and openness to engaging in new traditions were also prominent in the photographs Ana had taken at the evening festival. One of the motifs from Ana's ten photographs was of her friend Veronica, who was serving American pancakes at the stall representing the United States (see figure 16.4). When Ana was asked what could be learned from attending the festival, she pointed to the picture of her friend and expressed that she herself would have liked to represent something other than the Albanian family background.

Figure 16.4 "My Friend Veronica and the American Stand." *Source*: Taken by the chapter author.

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> Ana: I have a lot of friends with different backgrounds, and that way, I do not feel lonely. But I chose to take a picture of Veronica and the American stall. She is Norwegian, and she made American pancakes and represented the USA, which I think is cool. The young people especially liked it. I also dream of representing American pancakes. I think there should be room for students who want to represent something different.

However, in the following section of the interview, she repeated what she had said earlier about the pride she took in being able to identify with her Norwegian and Albanian backgrounds:

> Ana: Together with my mum, I represented traditional Kosovo Albanian food and the national dress. When my mum participates, I want to be with her. My mum represented Kosovo Albanian food dishes. We also chose to wear the national costume. I think it is important to show where you come from. I also bought a pair of red tights that went well with my national dress. A lot of people commented on my dress and thought it looked good.

For Ana, attending the school festival was obviously more than getting to know other cultures, as it was also about relating and connecting to her family traditions and the cultural practices of the Albanian community. On the one hand, she was part of the school's multicultural community, and learning about different cultures and practices strengthened her sense of belonging to the school community. On the other hand, Ana negotiated participation and membership in her family background, resonating the understanding of Yuval-Davis (2006) that making oneself at home is also about constructing self-understanding. Ana endeavored not to distance herself from the cultural practices of her parents, and it seemed she was a part of multicultural discourses (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Enhancing Friendships

During the multicultural week, the school set the timetable aside and organized learning activities across grades. In the interviews, the students reported that such a way of organizing the week helped them to further develop already established friendships and make new friends, both with younger and older students at the school and students that, for different reasons, have been marginalized in the classroom. In one of the interviews, Leandra and Hanna, the former with parents from Albania and the latter with an Icelandic background, shared their thoughts about making friends at the school event.

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Interviewer: Do you feel that you get to know the children in school?
Leandra and Hanna in choir: Yes!
Interviewer: Children you would not have made friends with otherwise?
Leandra: Yes.
Interviewer: Because you work across grades?
Leandra: Yes, the teachers make groups consisting of students in different grades.
Interviewer: Do you like it?
Hanna: Yes, of course! You get to know most of the students at the school.

The experiences of Leandra and Hanna of mixing students across ages resonated with the understanding of Anthias (2006) that people belong together when they share values, networks, relations, and practices. Opportunities for building networks and improving relations were also prominent in another interview, in which Nils, a student of an ethnic Norwegian background, reflected upon how the multicultural week opened possibilities for building friendships with a classmate he had not known before.

Interviewer: Is it easier to be a good friend when you have learned about different cultures?
Nils: Yes, because we have one in our class who does not speak Norwegian, and all the boys tried to teach him football because he did not know football. But he knew another game to play. Then we tried to learn his game, and maybe he felt a bit more welcome. Instead of trying to teach him things we knew, we did something that he liked.

Here, we see that the student acknowledged his classmate's need to be an active participant in the school community. As such, the student implicitly questioned why minority backgrounds are so often undervalued in schools and society. Rather than seeing the cultural and linguistic resources of students as a positive and natural contribution to the curriculum, those who differ from the mainstream are often conceptualized within a discourse of deficit, meaning that the knowledge, skills, and competencies of many students are never recognized in the mainstream classroom (Skrefsrud, 2022), as Nils stated in his interview: "Instead of trying to teach him things we knew, we did something that he liked." In this way, the classmate in question of Nils was given an opportunity to connect and relate to others, possibly also enhancing the student's "personal intimate feeling of being 'at home' in a place" (Antonsich, 2010, p. 654).

For Ana, friendship was also an important issue, elaborating on and expanding the understanding of how the event created relationships. One of Ana's photos was picturing the headmaster, who was delivering her speech

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at the opening of the evening arrangement. In the interview, Ana explained the background of why she had chosen to document the speech. Figure 16.5

Ana: I have chosen to document this part of the school festival because our headmaster had given a very important speech. She talked about friendships and community. She encouraged all of us to find a friend, which I think is a very nice idea. She encouraged people to explore and taste the fine food that has been made by all of us and to meet a friend.

Interviewer: What do you think about it? What should people do to find a friend at a school festival?

Ana: I have many friends. I have a friend with a Bosnian background, one with an African background, and one with a Norwegian background. I love my friends. But my mother also talks to my friends' mothers. She also meets some new

Figure 16.5 "The Headmaster Giving Her Speech." *Source*: Taken by the chapter author.

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people here. She just talks to them, and they taste my mom's food. I do not know. My father walks around and sometimes talks to someone.

From the interview, it was observed that Ana's relationship with her parents was important to her, and so were her friendships. Ana was enthusiastic when she spoke about American pancakes, her diverse group of friends, and her dream of hosting the American stall—the way her friend did at the evening festival. In the previous excerpt, she elaborated on what her diverse group of friends meant to her. In addition, she underlined the networking that happens during food tasting at the evening festival and between parents from different backgrounds. In this way, the school event can help confirm identities, both group identities and the creation of a common "we." Ana's statement was particularly interesting in light of the research on home–school collaboration, which often reported challenges with regard to engaging parents with minority backgrounds in parent meetings and other collaboration forums (see also Dewilde & Skrefsrud, 2021). Thus, the multicultural school event created an arena in which the experiences of the diverse parent group were recognized by the school while building parents' trust in the school.

In sum, one can say that Ana's participation was illustrative of the interview data. The students described an arena that ascribed agency to families with a minority background, and not regarding them solely as victims of a majority-based practice, the way critics of such events often frame their argument (see, for instance, Ngo, 2010; Røthing, 2017; Troyna, 2012). Instead, the fact that the event provided an opportunity for students, teachers, and parents to meet and talk to each other might have had a positive effect on the whole school environment. As the analysis of this study shows, students' perspectives on a multicultural school event may provide important counternarratives when it comes to understanding how such events may strengthen the participants' sense of belonging.

Concluding Remarks and Implications for Teacher Education

In this chapter, we explored how students in a primary school in Norway reflected on their participation in a multicultural school event. We showed that the school event is important for the student participants as a way of enhancing their self-understanding and sense of belonging. As we have seen, for some of the students, belonging was directed toward the school as a multicultural space, while for others, the event was also reported to strengthen their relations to the family background and, in Ana's case, to the Albanian diasporic community. Thus, the findings may contribute to creating a more nuanced picture of prior studies claiming that multicultural school events

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are only representative of a superficial way of approaching diversity (see, for example, Ngo, 2010; Røthing, 2017; Troyna, 2012). However, these events need to be "taken to the next level" to help students build upon their experiences and identify issues of cultural diversity. In contrast, the present study proposes that such an event may ascribe agency to the participants instead of regarding them only as victims of essentializing school practices and category-based stereotyping.

Around the world, teacher education programs are increasingly designed to prepare future teachers for a growing diverse student population. As part of this change, many programs have placed a strong emphasis on student teachers' intercultural competence, including a stronger focus on multicultural education principles and the improvement of student teachers' overall cultural competence (May & Sleeter, 2010). While such a competence covers a wide range of skills, attitudes, and knowledge, it also includes the ability to critically analyze structural power relations and institutionalized inequalities. Thus, to enhance professional development and prepare teacher candidates for a diverse student population, teacher education programs should confront educational practices that continue to objectify otherness and construct cultural diversity as an object of encyclopedic knowledge (Hahl & Löfström, 2016; Liu & Milman, 2010).

As noted by Watkins and Noble (2019), Woodward et al. (2014), and others, schools' practice of multicultural school events can easily be reduced to a superficial celebration of diversity that overlooks unequal power relations and hidden hierarchies. When such events are held alongside the mainstream of education, the schools can fall into the trap of making multicultural school events a "box-ticking" exercise, reducing the event to an activity the schools perform more to serve the expectations of their surroundings than to accomplish any higher purpose of inclusion or multicultural practice. When this is the case, a multicultural school event may fail to address majority-dominated practices of injustice and reinforce problematic views of what it means to differ from the "neutral" mainstream, often contrary to the school's intentions.

Against this background, student teachers need to develop a critical awareness that allows them to evaluate and develop multicultural practices in ways that make diversity and multicultural content an integrated part of the school's daily work. Such critical awareness should also include developing multicultural celebrations in close relation to schools' overall policies and priorities with regard to diversity and inclusion.

At the same time, it is valuable for student teachers to recognize that multicultural school events are an important way for many schools to acknowledge and celebrate cultural diversity, both in the school community and in society at large. As noted, the students in our study actively engaged in the multicultural event and participated enthusiastically in the different learning activities. For

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the participants, the event clearly represented a practice that enhanced their sense of belonging and created an arena for establishing trustworthy relationships between the school and the families. Hence, instead of simply dismissing such events as tools for promoting cultural stereotypes and essentializing cultural identities, a critical approach may inspire student teachers to see beyond such a critique. For student teachers, developing critical awareness also implies critically discussing the potential of multicultural school events without falling into the trap of reducing the complex and diverse lives and cultures of people. Listening carefully to how students, parents, teachers, and other participants experience multicultural practices can prove helpful in this regard.

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17

The Roles of Migrant Parents in High School as Constructed by Teachers and Students

A "Double-Edged Sword"

Julia Melnikova

Parental involvement in their children's education has long been viewed as a resource that can contribute to students' school performance and well-being at all school levels, including high (upper secondary) school (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). Current parental involvement policies and practices, however, are a cause for concern among researchers for two major reasons. First, some practices can infringe on the autonomy of the families by bringing the dominant classroom culture into the home (e.g., Bendixsen & Danielsen, 2020; Vandenbroeck & Bie, 2006). Second, parents' positioning within the school context is unequal, as the roles they are allowed (or able) to play are influenced by class, ethnicity, and gender, which can create an imbalance of power in their encounters with school officials and staff (e.g., Auerbach, 2007; Goodall, 2019; Lareau, 1987). This study is placed in this critical tradition and focuses specifically on the encounter between migrant families and Norwegian high schools.

Social class and migration from specific regions remain significant factors for student dropout decisions and lower school performance in most countries, including Norway, despite its relatively high levels of intergenerational social mobility (Reisel et al., 2019). Migrant families constitute a

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heterogeneous group that brings to school a diversity of expectations and experiences, including knowledge of other school cultures. For the purposes of this study, I have defined the group broadly to include parents and guardians who have moved to Norway as adults, both as refugees and as workers. Based on a longitudinal study of children of migrants in Norway, Friberg (2019) concluded that migrant parents held high educational aspirations for their children, expecting them to work hard at school despite having lower economic and cultural resources compared to their non-migrant peers. Migrant parents may possess school-related cultural and social capital, including behaviors, knowledge, and attitudes institutionalized as high-status in the educational field (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). This capital, however, is seldom easily recognized and activated in the school context (Vincent, 2017).

Parental involvement in this study is broadly conceptualized as the family's various interactions pertaining to their children's schooling, including both school-based and home-based practices. According to Epstein's typology (Epstein et al., 2019), school-based practices encompass attending school meetings and activities, communicating with school staff, volunteering at school, and participating in decision-making at the school and community levels. Expectations regarding involvement at home include imparting high educational aspirations to their children, engaging children in extracurricular activities or learning at home, following their learning progress, discussing their academic or career plans, and creating a supportive home environment (Epstein et al., 2019). In Norway, policies endorsing parental involvement relate solely to school-based practices. A decade ago, policy was changed to make ongoing contact with parents obligatory at high-school level, mainly to reduce school dropout rates. Research still indicates that when students reach these higher grades, schools can allow contact with home to dwindle and tend to initiate communication only when problems are identified by teachers or parents (Melnikova, 2022; Vedeler, 2021).

In this chapter, I explore the teachers' and students' constructions of roles for involvement for parents of students between the ages of 16 and 19. Two questions are of interest here: What do high school teachers and students say about what migrant parents can and should do to support their children's education? How do constructions of parent roles differ depending on parents' economic and cultural capital and different school contexts? In addressing these questions, I draw on the data gathered as a part of a multiple case study and analyze it in the light of Bourdieu's capital and field theory (Bourdieu, 1990, 2000), connecting socialization to social practice after briefly describing the Norwegian high school context.

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Norwegian Context: Autonomous High School Student and Parental Involvement

The Norwegian school system has a declared function of promoting inclusion and equality of educational opportunity in a common school for students of all backgrounds and abilities, resulting in little formal use of tracking or ability grouping (Imsen & Volckmar, 2014). Interaction across social and cultural boundaries at the high-school level, however, is challenged because students are enrolled in general academic and vocational tracks based on their previous school attainment. This transition marks the first formal stage of selection in the Norwegian education system. Upper secondary education is not compulsory, but is free of charge to all students, and over 90% enroll in high school. The outcomes, consequential for college degree completion and trajectories later in life, are strongly associated with parents' education levels (Grendal, 2021). However, the central choices students make at this stage are culturally constructed as being made by the secondary students independently (Hegna & Smette, 2017). Gullestad observed that the role of parenting in the Norwegian context could be defined as "getting them to choose freely to manage themselves in certain ways" (Gullestad, 1996, p. 37), although these allegedly free choices are kept in check by the parents' indirect mediation.

This individualization of responsibility for life choices has been attributed to the culture of late modernity and is argued to be unlike the more explicit role of communicating specific values or ideas characteristic of parenting in more traditional, collectivist societies that emphasize family interdependence (Bauman, 2001; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Although not all migrants come from collectivist societies and not all parents from collectivist or individualistic societies are the same, some cross-cultural and cross-generational differences in parenting style can be expected. Nevertheless, Kindt's (2019) study of students with migrant parents enrolled in prestigious higher education programs indicates that they have experienced what would be considered as typical middle-class upbringing and were allowed to make autonomous choices.

This expectation of student autonomy at the high school level is in stark contrast to the high degree of parental involvement in the education of younger children prompted by schools' demand for intensive school-related parenting, or more specifically, mothering (Griffith & Smith, 2004). In a study by Bendixsen and Danielsen (2020), Norwegian primary school teachers expected parents to attend school activities, as well as help their children with mathematics and memorizing English words, while also reading or swimming with them, and organizing parties. This list of duties is consistent

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with the concept of concerted cultivation, a parenting style rooted in the premise that parents are solely responsible for their children's future (Lareau, 1987). In contrast, the requirements of the current regulation for what in the Norwegian policy context is referred to as "home-school cooperation" are rather humble. High schools are bound by law to organize regular general parent meetings and parent conferences, report on student academic progress, and send out warning letters if that progress or attendance is considered insufficient for graduation (Regulation to the Education Act, 2006). Maintaining "ongoing contact" with all parents is also required and is the responsibility of a contact teacher.[1]

The specifics of what ongoing contact entails, what the contact should contain, or how this contact needs to be documented, are not provided. There is no mention of the parents' at-home practices, albeit these are known to be especially significant for the academic progress of older students (e.g., Boonk et al., 2018). At this level, parents are no longer invited to participate in school governance, although the country's Education Act (1998, § 1) states that education in all schools must happen "in collaboration and agreement with the home." The policy's openness means that the quality of support and guidance for the involvement of migrant parents is largely dependent on the professional judgment of school leaders and teachers. In this context, studying teacher and student construction of parent roles is particularly relevant.

Migrant Family Capital Meets Field of Schooling

Bourdieu's (1990) theory of practice helps reveal mechanisms of reproduction of inequality that can go unnoticed in the schools' parental involvement practice. Social fields are demarcated from other fields by their relative autonomy in that they, over time, set their own constraints on what is doable, reasonable, and valuable. Bourdieu (2000) compared these limitations to those of a masterful "composer at her piano" (p. 116), who has unlimited and unpredictable creative possibilities, while also being constrained by the mechanics of the instrument. In her ethnographic study of parental involvement in the United States, Lareau (1987) described an example of such mastery in the field of education, denoting it as concerted cultivation in reference to the parenting style adopted by parents whose social and cultural capital is highly valued by the school.

Through numerous and varied organized after-school activities and the way they communicate with teachers and other professionals, these parents foster in their children reasoning skills, a sense of academic entitlement, command of time management, and self-confidence when interacting with various bureaucrats. The middle-class families that took part in Lareau's

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study were rich in economic capital (in the form of money and consequently time) as well as cultural capital (constituting relevant skills, knowledge, and credentials acquired over time) and relevant social capital (manifesting through networks involving other parents and professionals with relevant experience and knowledge). The combination of relevant capital and habitus orchestrated with the field gave these families privilege over working-class parents and migrant and otherwise minoritized parents, who were likely to be less familiar with the field. Studies conducted across Europe show that migrant families may have limited knowledge of the school system or face significant barriers when communicating with schools (e.g., Vincent, 2017). Under those constraints, even migrant parents who have relevant school-related cultural or social capital may fail to activate their advantage (Lareau & Weininger, 2003).

The link between habitus and field, as elucidated by Bourdieu (1990), shows the futility of investing in the intensification of migrant family practices without giving attention to the conditions in schools. Different forms of capital can be potentially activated when a field encounters a matching habitus, which is embodied history translated into behaviors, perceptions, choices, and evaluations of possible life trajectories of the person (Bourdieu, 1990). Habitus is made by and makes structural patterns as it is exposed to external forces, and those patterns are "enduring but not static or eternal" (Wacquant, 2016, p. 66). Bourdieu recognizes that habitus develops tensions and irregularities and transforms in response to new environments (Wacquant, 2016). Students' habitus evolves in their encounters with the school, but still the key aspects of their "self" formed at home often remain unchanged (Reay, 2004a).

Recent approaches to studying family educational strategies challenge deficit assumptions about the role of migrant parents in their children's educational experiences (Goodall, 2019). Several of these studies show migrant families can validate their cultural and social capital in education and point to the heterogeneity of minoritized family experiences and student outcomes (Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Modood, 2004). Research conducted in this domain also has advanced pedagogical approaches that seek to transform the educational field by making visible to schools what is valuable to the lived lives of students and their identities (Esteban-Guitar & Moll, 2014). The latter studies make a particularly significant contribution in terms of the pedagogical implications of parental involvement research.

Research Design: Materials and Methods

The work presented here draws upon the data gathered as a part of a three-year multiple-case study of three high schools: Park High, Fjord High, and

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Birchwood High.[2] I selected them after local teacher education programs indicated that these schools actively involved migrant parents, and the teachers expressed interest in contributing. All three schools had parental involvement practices in place before this became mandatory for high schools. Park High, an urban school with an academic focus where most students have a migrant background (comprising about 80% of student cohort in the general academic track), was chosen as the main research site, because it has provided access to the richest data. Here it was possible to collect interview data with students and, when students agreed to it, with their parents, and observe the school's practices. As high schools in Norway often specialize in vocational or academic tracks and recruit students from different social groups, to bring more nuance to the study, rural Fjord High featuring vocational programs and suburban Birchwood High were included, although the variety of data collected here was more limited (see table 17.1 for overview). Overall, I interviewed 15 staff (teachers and school leaders) and 12 students. The school

TABLE 17.1
Study Participants

School	*Participants*	*Migrant Status and Region of Origin*	*Available Educational Tracks*
Park High, (main site) Urban, 750 students	School leader (1 female)	Non-migrant	Academic General Academic Science Academic Business Sports
	Students (6 females, 2 males)	Eastern and Central Europe (3) Western Europe (1) Middle East (2) Asia (2) Eastern and Central Europe (3) Asia (1)	
	Teachers (3 females, 1 male)	Non-migrant	
Fjord High Rural, 400 students	School leader (1 male)	Non-migrant	Vocational Academic Preparatory for Migrant Students
	Students (1 female, 3 males)	Middle East (2) Central and East Africa (2)	
	Teachers (1 female, 1 male)	Non-migrant	
Birchwood High Suburban, 650 students	School leaders (2 females)	Non-migrant	Academic General Academic Science Sports Music & Drama Academic, adapted
	Teachers (1 one female, 2 males)	Non-migrant	

Source: Created by the chapter author

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leaders (two principals, an assistant principal, and a department head) also had teaching responsibilities, and each had over 20 years of teaching experience. Three teachers also worked as guidance counselors. Parents of students that took part in the study were economic migrants or refugees from Eastern and Central Europe, Sri Lanka, Central and East Africa, and the Middle East. None of the teachers were migrants, but some had experience working or studying abroad. Notes from observation of school-based practices, parent interviews at Park, and, for all three schools, relevant official documents are not directly cited in this chapter but provided foundations for the overall case analysis (see table 17.1).

Initially, to ensure maximum variation and include critical cases, informants were recruited through purposeful sampling (Flick, 2018). I invited students who have gone to school in Norway for at least two years and whose parents are refugees and work migrants. When recruiting, I informed the school principals that I wanted to talk to fresh and experienced teachers from different tracks and to families with much or little involvement with the school. Three students gave consent for me to talk to their parents. Further recruitment was inspired by the themes that emerged during the initial analysis of the first interviews with teachers and students. For example, students with parents from South Asia, a large group at Park High, came up as a recruitment category that could give additional dimensions to my data.

All interviews were conducted at school during school hours and typically lasted no more than 45 minutes to fit the school's schedule. Before inquiring into specific home-school practices and parental involvement roles and experiences, I asked informants about their backgrounds, job situations (for parents and staff), favorite activities, and plans and dreams for the future. The school and personal history and perceptions of change in the education system were also of interest to me. This interest was informed by theory but also affected by my positioning as an immigrant researcher, a teacher, and a mother to a bilingual student. In the first interviews, some of the teachers may have experienced that I sided with the migrant mothers in considering the consequences of school practices, but drawing on my experience as a high school teacher helped relieve some of the tension. In terms of reflexivity, I reminded myself to not mechanically impose my perspectives on the participants' realities. I have not interviewed parents or discussed students with teachers without first gaining informed student consent. The Norwegian Centre for Research Data has granted its clearance for the project and has provided guidance throughout the data collection process.

All students in this study felt that they had mastered Norwegian to a degree where they saw no need to use translators during the interviews, which were transcribed in Norwegian. Only excerpts used to corroborate the study findings were translated to English. Where this was deemed beneficial

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for capturing the essence of the message conveyed, I changed the sentence structure. This was also done to conceal the informants' identity and avoid making them self-conscious due to grammatical mistakes in their speech (Kvale, 1994).

When analyzing the data, I combined intuitive processing and some elements of more formal inductive coding, breaking down the data into segments and establishing and verifying patterns (Simons, 2009). In line with Stake's (2006) guidance, I started by writing up cases as descriptive narratives based on all data available from each case to ensure that "the issues of the individual Cases *not* merge too quickly into the main research questions of the overall multicase study" (p. 46). To support the more formal analysis in this chapter, I chose categories relating to the construction of parent role across cases. Notably, there are internal differences in the group "migrant parents," and their engagement with their children's education is dependent on social position, gender, time they have spent in Norway, and employment status and type. However, the scale of my study precludes any generalizations about the experiences of individual students as representatives for their parents' class, ethnicity, migration status, or language competency. This study's findings are also not meant to support any generalization claims about parent perspectives or voice, but focus on practices and beliefs that are formed by the field of schooling (Bourdieu, 2000). It was possible to track important and somewhat surprising commonalities across the data material when it came to socially constructed expectations for legitimate migrant parent roles and school practices. Thus, it is these commonalities and not comparison across categories of families or individual schools that were in the focus of analysis in this study. As a result, the Birchwood case analysis generated the overall theme of "care" as a parent role that later was discovered to be common across the three cases. The category "aspiration and expectations" also stemmed from the Birchwood case and was later merged into the "guides" theme. The themes "threat" and "academic instructors" were initially contributed by the Park High case and closely connected to the school's context.

Findings

The teachers expressed that parents can be good supporters of their children's academic progress but can also be unhelpful and difficult to deal with, irrespective of their migrant status. Most teachers emphasized that they have the same expectations and face the same challenges when engaging with students' parents irrespective of their background because what mattered the most was that parents "cared about school." I observed differences in practice, a lack of local written policy, and a deal of experimenting by individual teachers and schools.

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Parents Who Care about Life in School

Notably, teachers and students valued the subtle role of support and caring about school more than any direct parental engagement with subjects or teachers. Teachers specifically commented on the benefits of emotional support in the form of encouragement in difficult situations, serving as a positive role model by learning the Norwegian language, showing interest in what is going on at school, attending general parent meetings, and celebrating success together. As I am a migrant mother, during the interview with Catrine, a teacher and guidance counselor at Birchwood, I prompted her to offer me some advice for strategies I could adopt to make my child happy at school. She responded as follows:

> I wish that you are committed to your child, and that you see and listen to your child. Try also to get to know this specific school and its life. And I think about life in general, as the child should be living, [find out] what is it that is important for your child to be happy and to hold out—instead of focusing on what grade you got in math, or on how now you should become a doctor or a lawyer.

As indicated in the excerpt above, providing emotional support to the student was seen as reasonable in contrast to checking grades and discussing career choices. This parent role of caring about the school and the child's school life was seen by Catrine as paramount when a student reaches what she calls the "tipping point" and can either handle the difficult situation and persevere or give up. In a different context, at Fjord High, where some students are at a high risk of dropping out of school, different boundaries are set for parental interference. According to Eva, who is an experienced teacher, parents show that they care by asking, "How did you do on that test? What are you going to do at school today? What did you do at school?" or similar, but without being "preoccupied" with results and grades. The same role was described by Ray, a recently arrived first-year student at Fjord, who is attending an industrial vocational program. His father was a driver and his mother used to work in a shop in their home country. She is now learning Norwegian and is alone caring for his younger siblings. They talk about Ray's dreams, and she supports him in his school effort, according to Ray. When asked what she could do to support him, Ray explained:

> We have a Catholic family, she prays for me, she gives me advice, saying that I should not be afraid and should study very hard. [She also says that] sometimes you should work very hard to get what you want in life, because it is not easy.

From this account, it is evident that Ray perceives his mother as a caring parent that gives advice and encourages him. However, as, according to

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Ray, she never has time to attend general school meetings or parent–teacher conferences, she does not perform the practice that several teachers perceive as a central way for a parent to show they care. As further interview material shows, she also shares his ambitions that seem difficult to fulfill. Here, caring is just one of several roles that intersect in the mother–son relationship.

In my interviews with teachers, however, caring was often brought up not as one of many forms of involvement but, as in the above quote from Catrine, as an idealized contrast to other allegedly less reasonable and unreasonable roles. In what worked as a delimitation of the high school field's boundaries (Bourdieu, 2000), the role of caring was presented as available to all parents, irrespective of background. Building on Bourdieu's understanding of capital to conceptualize its affective aspects, Reay (2004b) does suggest that emotional investment made by mothers in their children's education was less class-determined: even though it may have at times cost them more emotionally, working-class mothers in her study did give their children encouragement and hope and may have demonstrated less anxiety about their children's future than middle-class mothers. However, it has been repeatedly argued that the success of mothers' emotional engagement in their children's education is dependent both on the time available to the parents and on their own emotional well-being and confidence, that is on the forms and volumes of dominant cultural, economic, and social capital they possess (e.g., Reay, 2004b; Vincent, 2017). In contrast to what appeared to be a "democratic" form of involvement as care, one of the roles seen as unreasonable for most teachers was parents intruding into the children's schooling through what the schools interpreted as exaggerated ambitions in the role of an educational guide.

Parents as Educational Guides

When it comes to this less welcome parent role constructed by the informants, for Birgitte at Park High, similarly to several teachers and school leaders at Park and Birchwood, the parents' ambitions to "select subjects for their children" to meet specific university program criteria were misplaced and inappropriate, as teachers believed that educational choices belong to students alone. Birgitte referred to the negative experience she had when she worked in a school in a more affluent area of the city where some parents wanted their children to have top grades in all subjects. She contrasted these attitudes to those of parents at Park High who, according to her, were "strict with their children, but they care, and at least they will not put the blame on us [laughs]" as the parents at the other school apparently did.

In suburban Birchwood, migrant parents were often seen to aim too high, and choose the hardest STEM subjects, as well as academic over vocational studies. The teachers and school leaders thus claimed that migrant parents

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put unnecessary pressure on students who, to them, were striving in vain after their highly competitive non-migrant classmates. In contrast, non-migrant parents were criticized for putting pressure on the school, not the students, acting as their children's "cheerleaders." As a result of these allegedly intrusive attitudes, Birchwood even had to establish a "chain of command" system to prevent non-migrant parents from repeatedly contacting the principal instead of attempting to resolve issues with contact teachers. Thus, in line with Lareau's (1987) findings on concerted cultivation strategies, teachers mostly experienced increased and intrusive engagement from non-migrant parents rich in economic capital, and not from migrant parents.

Nevertheless, according to Aage, a new teacher and school administrator at Birchwood who previously worked in the business sector, migrant students put pressure on themselves, rather than being pushed by their parents. He ascribed this pressure to "the high ambitions they have for themselves or, maybe, [the desire] to prove to those around them that 'Also here [in this new country] I've made it big.'" Aage observed that the parents who come to Norway from Europe for highly qualified work can be more demanding of their children's performance, but also in this group, no student seemed to him to be "strongly marked" by any pressure from home. Also, the four newly arrived refugee students at Fjord felt the responsibility, but not pressure, to help their families in Norway and their home countries. Aage generally appeared to be more accepting of his students' ambitions and their parents' demands. His attitudes may have been shaped by his habitus that was established outside the field of schooling, unlike that of other teachers and school leaders I interviewed. Aage's example demonstrates how the same parental involvement efforts may be recognized or not recognized as legitimate even within the walls of the same high school, making capital activation not a matter of parent, but teacher attitudes (Vincent, 2017).

In line with Aage's observations, students I interviewed at Park High displayed little concern about their parents' ambitions for them. As an example, Layla, the oldest of four children, could speak some Arabic and had visited her parents' home country as a child. She spent a semester in a vocational program at a different school (not her first choice) and recently transferred to Park when a space became available. When describing her first disappointment over her middle-school grades and her unsatisfactory experience in the vocational program, Layla did not mention any involvement from her family. She did, however, comment on her mother's surprise at her wanting to become a police detective, stating:

> At first, she was very . . . "no, don't you want to be a doctor or an engineer," because for some reason she thinks I am so good at drawing. And I do like to draw, but I just do it for fun, not for work.

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Yet, despite these misgivings, when Layla insisted on her choice, she met no resistance from her parents: "I said I wanted to be a police detective and that was it!." Layla also shared that her career choice was primarily driven by external factors, including her fear that having a "foreign-sounding" name could make it difficult to apply for jobs.

Generally, the students that took part in the interviews agreed with the teachers that migrant parents have little legitimate say in their educational strategies, showing that over their years of schooling the students have experienced a considerable degree of habitus orchestration (Wacquant, 2016). However, their views diverged with respect to direct pressure from the parents to make a specific choice, as none of the students felt that they were coerced into making any academic or career decisions. In the next section, further incongruities are revealed in the roles teachers and students believe parents should play in students' academic progress.

Parents as Academic Instructors

Staff at Birchwood and Fjord indicated that they meet their students' parents more often than in the past and recognized that a good parent was now expected to take more responsibility for their children's schooling. While these views align with the findings reported by Bendixsen and Danielsen (2020), they pertain to non-migrant parents. Extended academic involvement for those parents who have not attended school in Norway is not expected by any of the three schools examined in my study.

Brit, a leader at Birchwood with a long teaching and school leadership career, justified those lower expectations for migrant parents by noting that not being able, through language, to express oneself precisely, "understand the society you live in very well" and discuss this at home presents an insurmountable barrier for ambitious students with migration backgrounds. Some migrant parents that took part in my study have compensated for this lack of legitimate knowledge by employing tutors for their children, demonstrating what Bourdieu (2004) conceptualized as the conversion of economic capital into cultural capital. Helena, a student at Park, was struggling academically, especially with mathematics. During the interview, she stated that, if her family's financial situation permitted, she would have likely asked her parents to pay for a private tutor, but that was sadly not possible. She elaborated:

> I go to school [for extra hours] to get some help . . . but my results are not better. I just get so stressed out . . . [Interviewer: Can your parents help you?] My parents can't help much. They have always been there to

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> help. But perhaps the ones who help me the most are my older siblings [smiles]. But they have also had a lot to think about . . . they also [need to] study. So, I must do it on my own. I have to take care of myself.

According to our interview, Helena placed some withering hope in extra tutoring with her teacher, while a distance from her family was created not so much for lack of their care or academic ability, but because Helena saw her academic work and choices as her individual responsibility. As Bourdieu would say, the family and Helena are socialized to "make a virtue of necessity, that is, to refuse what is anyway denied." In this case, they do not interfere more in Helena's academic progress at school by accepting that this is the way schooling is organized. Teachers did not mention private tutors in my interviews and said they disapproved of the students that relied on retaking school exams as private candidates to improve their grade averages. This position may be interpreted as an effort to disguise the economic aspect behind the distribution of cultural capital by the school system by insisting that success at school should be based on hard work and natural qualities, not on the children's inherited capital and family investment (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 25). As it comes through in the four interviews with parents at Park, migrant parents, also those possessing high levels of dominant cultural capital seemed to view academic work as solely the school's territory.

Parents as Disciplinarians

Birchwood and Fjord have relatively few students with migrant parents, and most of those parents are not involved in school activities. In contrast, as migrant parents are in the majority at the urban Park, they were highly visible at the school during my observations and appear to have been assigned an extra role concerned with improving student discipline. Dagny, one of the school leaders that I interviewed, noted that students at Park High "are more considerate of the parents than the school." For her, it is "a little scary that you have to involve parents in some contexts for behaviors, for example, to get better."

Bent, a contact teacher for a first-year class at Park High, joined the school upon completing a one-year teaching course, having previously worked in the business sector. He was the only informant that spoke only positively, without any reservations, of parents and his communication with the students' homes, and it is the role of disciplinarians that he invited the parents to take on. Bent phoned the parents of his students almost every day and sent the parents a text message every time a student was late for class. He was also planning to send out a weekly summary of homework for all subjects,

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although other teachers were difficult to convince that this was necessary. He said that all the parents in the class were engaged, the students did not mind this, and the discipline was improving. He further noted on his recent contact with all parents of the class he administrates by telephone:

> I have never had such a positive telephone round in my life. They were so happy that I called everyone. And got really proud. . . . We have such parents who often . . . come from another country, where you may have and . . . What should I say? The whole school system may be more authoritarian, and things like that, right? So, it was at least enormous respect I got, I noticed right away. At least they were very, very, very positive about working closely with their children.

He also understands the parents' ambitions, even though they differ considerably, as some have high expectations for their children, while others simply want them not to drop out. Although other teachers at Park High may also rely on parents for improving student discipline, Bent is the only one of those interviewed who did not consider this problematic. Most students I presented with Bent's ideas as examples responded with some skepticism. They were generally not supportive of involving parents in school-related matters such as attendance, behavior, or homework, as they thought they were old enough to handle these issues themselves but agreed that discipline needed improving. The social context forces the teachers at Park to reconsider migrant parents' role, if only to help with behavior problems. This new power dynamic, however, causes discomfort as teacher and student habitus get unsettled by the change (Bourdieu, 2000; Wacquant, 2016). Interestingly, again, as in the case of Aage at Birchwood, this change is less disconcerting for a new teacher, Bent, whose habitus has not yet fully adjusted to the field's expectation of student autonomy.

Parents as a Threat

Several teachers in my study shared their concern that migrant parents were more likely than non-migrant parents to have little to offer in terms of their children's academic progress. It was, however, only at Park High that all teachers and the school leader, as well as several students, expressed that some parents made them apprehensive. They justified this view by stating that, in the local community (where teachers and leaders often lived or had previously lived), a teacher's call home can be perceived as a punishment for students, and may contribute to the already excessive social control, negativity, or neglect. School staff also concurred that parents could cause problems for the students. The more ambitious parents, in the eyes of the school, could be preoccupied with academic success and not allow their

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children the freedom to live more autonomous lives. On the other hand, those that lacked the economic and social capital could not offer their children adequate support and could even be feared to be neglectful or violent.

During her interview, Emma, a teacher and guidance counselor at Park High, shared that these concerns make her and her colleagues reluctant to contact parents with migration backgrounds:

> There are things that pull in the opposite direction [from involving parents more]. This may have to do with uncertainty about minority parents, such as how much Norwegian they can speak. And if a student comes to us and says, 'If someone calls and tells this at home, I'd get beat up . . .' We live in such a span, where you don't always manage to navigate correctly. Is it right to think differently about immigrant parents than Norwegian parents? Shouldn't one think exactly the same?

None of the students at Park High openly expressed that they were afraid of their parents, even though this was a topic addressed by several teachers, but some did come up with generalized examples of neglect similar to that shared by Emma. Many also admitted to withholding a great deal of information from their parents and setting boundaries to how much parents should know and be involved.

Boris, a quiet and relaxed student from Park High with no apparent risks for creating discipline issues or dropping out, with both parents holding PhD degrees from East European universities, struggled to define the right roles for parents in school education, as he viewed involvement as a "double-edged sword":

> Here, on the one hand, the school could, like in [his parent's home country], have had more contact with the parents and told them even more, almost everything—every grade you make—and they could even call home if you get an F, for example. But, on the other hand, this could create unpleasant situations, at least in some families. Well, I do not care either way—I have very good parents. But, still, I sort of, do not always want them to know everything.

After observing that parental involvement at Park High mostly means disciplining the student, he concluded that he was not eager to invite more of their involvement, even though he was aware that his parents were keen to know more about his school life. The school staff is also trying to strike the right balance, as parents could help them with discipline, but some could take this role too far and actually cause harm to their children. This apprehension may be partly caused by failure to recognize that many parents do possess school-related cultural and social capital beyond that of disciplinarians, because

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Park is only exploring new opportunities to meet parents outside crises (see Melnikova, 2022). The teachers may also unconsciously strive to maintain the field's professional autonomy, which is already under threat from the political and economic fields (Bourdieu, 1990).

In summary, across all parental involvement categories constructed by teachers and students, some parent roles were appreciated, and some were seen as unreasonable but still prevalent. Parents were welcome to care for their children's life and progress at school, while neglect and intrusive educational guidance were deemed unacceptable, though guidance was prevalent in some contexts. Most staff and students concurred that parents should not assume the role of academic instructor, deemed largely unachievable for migrant parents. However, several students at Park High were aware that lack of cultural capital could be compensated by involving tutors. The roles of parent as disciplinarian and as a threat were only identified by the participants from Park High, the first seen as ambiguous and the second as harmful and even as a reason to not involve parents at all.

Discussion

In the three schools in my study, migrant parents—irrespective of their capital combinations that largely remained invisible to the teachers—were primarily involved in their children's schooling by caring, showing interest, and guiding at home. This choice of strategies aligns with the findings reported by Antony-Newman (2020) and Schmid and Garrels (2021), indicating that school-based involvement by migrant parents is rare. These authors attributed these results to language barriers and lack of familiarity with the school system. Based on my analysis, I further suggest that, especially as children reach higher grades, teachers and students whose habitus is well-orchestrated may choose to exclude migrant parents from school life (Bourdieu, 2000). As a result, parents unfamiliar with the Norwegian school system met constraints to activating their cultural and economic capital (e.g., Goodall, 2019). It is even more problematic to note that, as described in interview accounts, the acceptable or unacceptable roles were assigned to different parent groups seemingly without any investigation of the specific student situation or open discussion involving school staff, students, and parents.

In addition, teachers mostly experience increased and intrusive engagement from non-migrant parents rich in economic capital in line with a trend similar to that found by Eriksen (2021). She observed that young Norwegians from the financial middle class experienced more direct pressure to perform well at school than students belonging to the cultural middle class whose parents had more subtle expectations. The present study findings further indicate

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that the non-migrant parents who were involved more than expected created discomfort for the schools, especially for Birchwood High, where they hold privileged positions and expect to be catered for. My study thus shows that the intersection of class and migration background complicates the analysis of educational strategies, where activating the more forthright competitive economic middle-class strategies may be reserved solely for non-migrant families.

On the other hand, in the situations when the parents did not take the initiative, their role was uncertain despite declarations that parents should not be held entirely outside the high school, as was the case over a decade ago. This unease in constructing roles for migrant parents in high school can be ascribed to the teacher habitus being unsettled by the recent changes in social conditions, as parents were previously not expected to be involved in high school (Bæck, 2017; Bourdieu, 2000). However, unlike the non-migrant middle-class parents, migrant parents and their children are mostly expected to accept the situation rather than challenge it.

Conclusion

At the secondary level, the students have much to say on how much and how their parents get involved in their school life (Deslandes & Barma, 2016). Boris's description of the involvement of migrant parents as a "double-edged sword" points to a paradox that lies in many present-day parental involvement practices. From the students' perspective, parental involvement is seemingly a necessary weapon to deal with discipline issues, but it can also infringe on individualized choices highly valued by the Norwegian middle-class parents rich in cultural capital, as described by Gullestad (1996). As viewed by the teachers at Park High, invitation for greater involvement may even result in excessive social control and violence at home. At the same time, as argued by Vandenbroeck and Bie (2006), favoring individuality over interdependency and emancipating children without taking their parents' voices seriously carries a risk of misunderstanding the student's contexts and objectifying them and their parents. Then it is only the middle-class non-migrant parents that take advantage of the changes that welcome more parental involvement in high school, as they are in position to legitimately create tension in the teachers' habitus (Bourdieu, 2000; Wacquant, 2016). Therefore, teacher candidates can be invited to discuss if there exists a potential to engage parents in roles that extend beyond caring and disciplining. For example, high school teachers could support students' autonomy development systematically in partnership with the parents, as suggested by Vedeler (2021). There could also be other ways to help transform the "weapon" of migrant parental involvement as

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an instrument for enhancing student well-being informed by exploration of diverse family experiences that are valued by the students (Esteban-Guitar & Moll, 2014; Yosso, 2005).

Another takeaway from this study that requires further professional discussion pertains to whether the idea of a self-regulated fully autonomous youth is essentially a late-modernity construction, as argued by Gullestad (1996). This view may not be familiar or acceptable to all families or relevant for all students' well-being and should be approached critically, especially at the time when students make choices about further education and career. The parental involvement practices adopted at any school have to be developed and implemented reflectively, taking into consideration the context and the respect for any tensions that may arise, as well as the inequalities associated with involving some parents more or in different roles than others.

Notes

1. The role of a contact teacher in Norway is somewhat similar to that of homeroom teachers in the United States and tutors in the United Kingdom, as in addition to regular subject teaching, they are expected to take responsibility for administrative issues, organizing special events, and maintaining contact with the home.
2. All school and participants' names are pseudonyms, and some personal details, including specific country origins, were changed or omitted to maintain confidentiality.

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