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## Holistic Quality Learning in *Musikdidaktik* from a Student Perspective: Where, When and How Does it Occur?

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*Editor's Note: This paper is presented in an English translation; however, statements by the subjects interviewed were originally in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Finish and English by non-native speakers. Their comments have not been edited or changed in any way.*

### Abstract

*Musikdidaktik is a central subject in music teacher education, where the students are expected to learn about teaching and related learning of music, from practical, theoretical and philosophical perspectives. As part of a larger study of educational quality, six student groups were interviewed about teaching and learning quality in the subject of musikdidaktik. They answered questions on learning, identity, and choice of content. In this article the author concentrates on student perspectives of holistic quality learning, which include those activities or processes that lead to stable knowledge and useful competence. In order to grasp the phenomenon of holistic quality learning in musikdidaktik the focus group participated in 90-minute interviews that were recorded and transcribed. Data were analyzed by applying phenomenological methods. Three questions provided the structure for the analysis. They were: Where does quality learning in musikdidaktik occur? When does quality learning in musikdidaktik occur? How does quality learning in musikdidaktik occur? Analysis revealed that holistic quality learning occurred in different educational rooms and were defined by music-educational authenticity, communication, reflection and meaningfulness. The results are important at any institution responsible for quality developmental work in relation to music teacher education.*

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## Holistic Quality Learning in *Musikdidaktik* from a Student Perspective: Where, When and How Does it Occur?

*Musikdidaktik* is a central part of music teacher education<sup>1</sup> and addresses the practical, theoretical and philosophical perspectives that inform music teaching and learning. Its roots are in the classical idea of *didactics* set out by Rathke and Comenius (Comenius, 1999), and concerns teaching and learning in organized settings, such as schools, and has been applied to teacher education (Kansanen 1995).

As a part of a larger study about educational quality,<sup>2</sup> six student groups were interviewed about the quality of their teaching and learning in the subject of *musikdidaktik*. Specifically, the interviews addressed learning, identity, and choice of content. In this article I will concentrate on holistic quality learning from the perspective of the students and argue that knowledge of such learning should constitute a basis for developing theories and action plans for quality work in music teacher education.

Different kinds of teacher education institutions are the contexts for and function as the field of research in this study. Because institutions in the Nordic countries are regionalized, different institutions are organized in different ways, and therefore the students participate in different courses that could nevertheless be

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<sup>1</sup>The German *Didaktik* (didactica) was founded by Wolfgang Ratke and Johan Amos Comenius (1592/1670) at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Their idea was to develop a general method for teaching compared with the logical method, which at that time was thought to be the best way to present the teaching content in order to bring about learning. *Didaktik* was a practical and normative doctrine by nature (Lehrkunst) and the best-known presentation of its early characterization is *Didactica Magna* by Comenius. (For a more thorough description and discussion, see Kansanen 1995.)

<sup>2</sup> The large study was performed by Geir Johanssen, Norway College of Music, and myself.

grouped together under the general subject of *didaktik*. Some of them are conservatories, some are schools of music connected to teacher education in a university, and others are teacher-education institutions where the students may choose music as their specialization. All teacher-training programs in the study included education, music, and practical teacher-education courses (Campbell, 1999; Campbell & Thompson, 2007; Yourn, 2000). The *musikdidaktik* courses, which were the main interest for the research, were also organized in different ways, and the students spent varying amounts of time in the subject at different points of their teacher education curriculum. The common experience, which constitutes a case for educational quality in music teacher education, is the subject of *didaktik*, in which students learn about teaching and learning music. This includes teaching methods as well as theoretical and philosophical perspectives on music teaching and related learning.

Several scholars from the field of general teacher education, as well music education in higher education, made contributions to a wider and deeper understanding of issues concerning quality learning in music teacher education. For example, Mills and Smith (2003) studied teachers' beliefs relative to effective instrumental teaching in schools and higher education. Mills (2005) examined the concerns conservatory students have about music teaching. Hennessy (2007) addressed constraints and applicability in primary music teacher education, whereas Webster (2007) studied the role of music teachers as guides for learning. Campbell (1999), Edwards and D'Arcy (2004) together with Bjarnadottir (2008) focused on how future teachers developed competency in practical teacher

education generally, while Bendtsen, et al., (2008), Lindgren and Wennstam (2008) and Yourn (2000) studied the connections between pre-service education and in-service practice. Research discussed in previous studies that frame the point of departure for this article focused on the conceptions of pre-service and in-service music teachers relative to the quality of teaching and learning in music teacher education (Ferm, 2008a, b; Ferm & Johansen, 2008; Johansen & Ferm, 2007; Johansen, 2008a, b). However, studies that focus on holistic quality learning in *musikdidaktik* and its function in music teacher education are fairly rare.

## **Background**

### **Quality Learning in Higher Education**

Learning is always about learning something in specific contexts. The context for this article concerns the learning of *musikdidaktik*; in other words, the learning of how to teach music at methodological, theoretical and philosophical levels, as a part of music teacher education. Quality learning is a recognized concept in the Anglo-Saxon literature on higher education and refers to learning patterns, learning strategies, modes of operation, and of behaviors. Together, these four aspects of learning constitute preconditions of success for students in their studies. Studies of quality learning often aspire to provide insights into the circumstances that make learning successful (Pettersen, 2008).

Quality learning concerns the concept of teaching and learning in a dialectic field of relations that is also a field of tensions. Attending to learning and learning activities, in which professors as well as students are active, may be seen as an

educational concern with long historical roots. The double-sided view of teaching and learning is a fundamental component in the Student Approaches to Learning (SAL) tradition, a systematic, procedural, and contextual perspective on the relationship between teaching and learning (Biggs, 2003). SAL focuses attention on the competence of the professor and includes analyzing learning principles, experiences, and contexts as a basis for teaching methods (Bowden & Marton, 1998). In this tradition, cognitive psychology is central, as are concepts that include transformation, appropriation, and mediation. The abilities of students to analyze critically, to develop intellectual and cognitive skills, and to understand a subject's basic theories, principles and methods identify quality learning. Specifically linked to teacher education, are such skills as professional problem solving, the ability to use information in new situations, and development of professional values of the professional field (Bowden & Marton, 1998; Ramsden, 2003). In short, quality learning in higher education is about effective ways to approach abstract and general knowledge. Views of knowledge in higher education, not least in the Western tradition since the period of Enlightenment, have been based on assumptions that body and soul, as well as body and mind, are separate (O'Loughlin, 1995; Ferm, 2008a). But the double-sided view may also be seen as a basis for a more relational, holistic view of teaching and learning. Some scholars in higher education advocate a more holistic view of learning (D'Andrea & Gosling, 2005), and I would like to contribute to their research by offering a view based on life-world phenomenology, where the sharing of experiences is central.

## **Holistic Quality Learning**

The primary basis for holistic quality learning is that human beings are seen as whole bodily living subjects who are closely intertwined with the world. As a consequence, experience is seen as a verb, a way of being (Merleau-Ponty, 1945; Yorks & Kasl, 2002).

From an experiential perspective, learning may be a temporally elongated insight; from a behavioral perspective, a temporally elongated process leading to competence; and from an existential perspective, a person's acquisition of confidence or beliefs in her/his capabilities to do something (Georgi, 1999). "The ultimate goal of learning is to be able to understand various phenomena of the world so that one can move about in the complex world in a competent way" (p. 78).

Quality learning from an holistic perspective consists of all three dimensions and can be described as ending in an "I-can-feeling" or in a set of "I cans" (Sheets-Johnstone, 2000; Ferm, 2008a). From a life-world-phenomenological perspective, which constitutes the basis for the view of learning in this article, human beings are always directed towards something at the same time as something always shows itself to them (Husserl, 1970/1913). This "turning towards" may be seen as a prerequisite for learning. Consequently, people are prepared for the generation of meaning through their directedness (Sheets-Johnstone, 2000). In interaction with the world, learning becomes meaningful.

In this article, the world is seen as inter-subjective, which implies that individual beings are closely intertwined with other human beings. Because the world consists of things and other human beings, we are also directed towards other

human beings at the same time as they show themselves to us. In learning situations we are directed towards others in specific ways depending on our earlier experiences of learning situations, which in turn shape the way we view ourselves, others and what we expect will happen in the learning situation (Kroksmark, 2007). One precondition for holistic quality learning is that we see ourselves as learners, both in terms of openness to learning and of an awareness of the ability to learn in a social context (Giorgi, 1999). The willingness to share experiences is another precondition, (Meyer-Drawe, 1986), which Yorks and Kasl (2002) call learning-within-relationship, a process in which persons strive to become engaged with both their own whole-person knowing and the whole-person knowing of their fellow learners. The one and only way to develop knowledge and understanding about the world is through the experiences of other human beings, and consequently the sharing of experiences is crucial for holistic quality learning. A final precondition is the possibility to be active and to interact, because meaning is shaped through interaction with the world. The common experiences create the basis for what is possible to imagine, and what is possible to learn (Adams, 2001; Ferm & Thorgersen, 2008). Thus, a variety of experiences are important for holistic quality learning (Kroksmark, 2007).

The willingness to learn and to share experiences also refers to the teacher (Ferm Thorgersen, 2008 a, b; Giorgi, 1999). The teacher must see that his or her task is to organize for and to be curious about the students' learning, inter-activity, and sharing of experiences. Teaching may, from this perspective, facilitate mutual attunement – being present for each other in the mode of feeling, by some form of



interactive mediation (Satina & Hultgren, 2001; Yorks & Kasl, 2002). The teacher is responsible for letting the student grow into a colleague and for nurturing self-responsibility.

When it comes to professional education in general, and music teacher education in particular, holistic quality learning seems to be a process of growing from a student into a music teacher, in which the process of imagining oneself as a music teacher, “playing” at being a music teacher, and the goal of being able to say “I can teach music” (Ferm, 2008a) are essential elements. Through perception, imitation, production, expression, reflection, and communication in specific contexts, student teachers learn to teach music.

### Learning Objectives

As initially mentioned, *musikdidaktik* is a subject in music teacher education in which students are expected to learn how to teach music on practical, theoretical and philosophical levels. In an earlier investigation of the teaching content in relation to the experience of *musikdidaktik* among *musikdidaktik* teachers, nine content areas emerged and are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

#### *Objectives of Learning in Musikdidaktik*

Learning objective	Education	Teaching and learning (music)	Music
Practical	-experience of educational systems -experience of education -experience of being part of a	-methods -tools -teaching material -experience of teaching and learning	-how to play -how to be a musician -how to communicate in and through music

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	professional community		-genre knowledge
Theoretical	-educational theories -psychological theories	- didactic tools - didactic theories - theories of teaching and learning	-music history -music theory -musicology -theories of communication
Philosophical	-educational attitudes -maintenance and change -communities of practice -identity development	-motives for choices -commitment	-musical values -existential values -aesthetical values

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### Aim

The aim of this study was to investigate when, where and how holistic quality learning of *musikdidaktik* takes place from a student perspective.

### Methodology

The study was based on life-world-phenomenological assumptions, which imply that lived experience constitutes the will to acquire knowledge of different phenomena. Other people's lived experiences of and reflections on the same phenomena are "borrowed" to be able to grasp an aspect of human experience (van Manen, 1997). The experiences of other human beings constitute the will to acquire knowledge of different phenomena. To grasp holistic quality learning within the context of *musikdidaktik* and from the unique perspective of the students in the classes, the researcher collected data from focus group interviews with music

students preparing to be music teachers. Such group interviews provided a familiar social context for students to share thoughts and experiences related to teaching and learning (Wilson, 1997) with the researcher. In order to generate rich information, a structured sample of student teachers was selected according to a maximum variation sampling strategy (Lindlof, 1995). The sample consisted of six focus groups at institutions of higher music education in Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark, comprising a total of 24 student teachers. All in the third and final year of their studies, the participants represented different genders, played different instruments, and came from varied music and cultural backgrounds. The interviews, which lasted for about 90 minutes each, were conducted at the institutions where the subjects were students. They were recorded on mini-disc, and subsequently transcribed.

To uncover and expose the essential meaning of the phenomenon of holistic quality learning of *musikdidaktik*, I collected data relative to when, where and how quality learning of *musikdidaktik* occurs. In the initial analysis a theme emerged that related to the rooms in which *musikdidaktik* occurred. Concepts of authenticity, communication, reflection, and meaningfulness were revealed. For example, students stated that the learning took place in different rooms, situated within, and beside one another, raising the question of how those rooms were connected to each other. In a later phase of analysis, other questions were generated to ascertain the characteristics of the rooms, what was required in the rooms and how the rooms were related in time and space. As a result, thirteen themes were identified, which

were then reduced through variation and simple reduction to a smaller number of themes that could describe the phenomenon clearly and in all its complexity.

## Results

Quality *musikdidaktik* learning, that is holistic in nature, takes place in several different educational rooms. In the following, I will present the findings relative to how those rooms were constituted, and how they were related to one another in time and space. Upon analysis of the data, I concluded that *Musikdidaktik* learning occurred in separate rooms for teacher preparation, working life, and everyday life. Additionally, connections among them partly determined the quality (Johansen & Ferm, 2007). Of the numerous rooms for learning *musikdidaktik* in teacher education, the two most prominent were institutional courses and practical teacher education. The courses *per se* can be seen as rooms, and in the course rooms there were rooms inside rooms, perhaps best visualized as a set of nesting Chinese boxes. The interviewees characterized the rooms of quality learning in *musikdidaktik* in various ways, often touching on the theme of closed-open rooms, specific characteristics of the rooms, students' strong earlier experiences, and their goals for, ideas about, and connections to their future profession. In the interviews, the student teachers also thematized the role of the teacher to include commitment, role modelling, and sharing experiences and feedback as well as connections among the rooms, and the aspect of time.

## Closed and Open Rooms

What constitutes a room for quality learning in *musikdidaktik*? The data underline the importance of “closing the door” and creating a milieu for concentration and security, as well as the significance of both the connection to other subjects and of practical teacher education.

Now we close the door, and this is what we are doing. I think that is a wonderful feeling in a way, because then I get focused, concentrated and effective.

This can be a subject that just concerns the learning of theories, and reading about what different authors say about this and that, or it can be a subject that links that to what you do in other subjects.

In the rooms where elements of *musikdidaktik* were taught, the students experienced holistic quality learning as an opportunity to be part of a structured social setting involving all senses--to “live” the educational room. The rooms became important states of being where the participants learned as pupils while at the same time they were in the process of becoming teachers; they developed an understanding from “both sides of the desk” (Lavås & Handal, 2000). The walls of the room were seen as clear frameworks and goals. The student teachers asked for clear headings and structures that described what would happen in the rooms.

If I were the teacher, I would give them a daily plan: What are we going to focus on? And if that would change then; that would change, but the students would know that I am prepared and this is what we study and also if there is one thing that they already think they know very well, they could stay at home.

Some student teachers also expected that what happened in the rooms of learning should to some extent be kept within the walls of learning.

## Specific Characteristics

The specific prerequisites of *musikdidaktik* learning were expressed both as a subject in which a student was directed towards others in the learning process, and as a practical-theoretical-artistic-philosophical subject. As *musikdidaktik* took place, student teachers had to consider the learning of other students. They realized that learning to teach music included becoming aware of how to guide and encourage others in their musical learning. The interviewees stressed the importance of being present, committed, and prepared in the social learning context, and compared that to an improvisational musical setting, where all senses were activated. They cited connections to mood, curiosity, and feedback as links between learning *musikdidaktik* and musical improvisation. They also underscored musical knowledge as a prerequisite of teaching music.

And also, the teacher has to--we are talking about *musikdidaktik*--they have to know what music is and who are musicians, because if I am a musician and I am trying to study *musikdidaktik*, I cannot take something just as didactics. Because I think in everything the basis is always music. And didactics is just a tool.

According to the student teachers, knowing the subject made it easier to grow as a teacher, to internalize didactics and to “make it your own.” They saw artistic learning as an important part of *musikdidaktik* learning. Specifically, teaching music required knowledge of musical function and how it was learned. At the same time the students underlined that knowledge about music made *musikdidaktik* easier to learn. The philosophy of music and the philosophy of teaching were tightly intertwined and together made up a basis for teaching music and for learning *musikdidaktik*. This condition forced the artist and the teacher to meet all the time,

and the educational room for *musikdidaktik* learning offered opportunities for such meetings.

### **Strong and Earlier Experiences**

The interviewees stated that quality learning in *musikdidaktik* demanded emotions and strong experiences, together with the active use of all senses.

Deep learning needs something that you have an experience in--you can always go back into that experience.

The statements by student teachers made clear a connection between deep quality learning and the use of all senses. They realized that using the whole body, as well as pictures and drawings, were necessary when learning to teach music. The interviewees claimed that earlier experiences were important for further learning and mentioned that grasping new issues was easier if the learner had some experience that connected to those issues. Consequently, the importance of remaining in contact with one's own experience and of fostering mutual interest between students and teachers in the room of quality learning should be stressed. For the student teachers, attitude, interest, musical interest, and motivation were also important prerequisites.

To get a deep learning process, you really have to be interested in the subject. That you really go into it. That you see your own profit from that.

The informants talked about the importance of becoming aware of their views of themselves, both as music students and student teachers, and of being able to recognize and relate the content of teaching to their earlier experiences.

Of course the knowledge base is quite different if you are just a basic music student or if you are a student teacher. I think that the knowledge base reflects on the studies in didactics.

One student stressed that when he started to view himself as a music student who studied *musikdidaktik*, his opportunities to learn the subject clearly improved.

The subject has become much more understandable. Much more useful both as regards my own use of it, and the use in relation to pupils. I can't really explain what makes it feel that way, but that is how it is now. But of course it can be the other way around. That I have got a growing understanding of what the subject is all about and therefore can see it in relation to my music education.

Many student teachers had considerable musical knowledge, and their challenge was to combine that knowledge with both earlier and new experiences of teaching and learning. Another aspect was the awareness of how the student teachers themselves had learned, putting demands on the teacher. The *musikdidaktik* teacher had to encourage student teachers to draw on their own experiences that were related to music teaching and learning to foster their own learning processes.

### **Goals and Conceptions**

Goals are required for human beings to develop in a specific direction, and the creation of one's own goals in turn requires a conception of future scenarios. The goals and conceptions of different scenarios can make learning processes meaningful. In that regard, the student teachers stressed that it was important to imagine what would be useful, and to have an opportunity to direct their efforts toward that specific subject content.

Yes, I think that is shown through my engagement in the different subjects. Because there are some things I think I have more use for than others. I think I work a little bit more with the things I think I have use for. And unfortunately a bit less with the things I don't see as useful. The time schedule is so tight that you have to make some kinds of choices, and at the same time keep up to date. Because you are supposed to graduate. I think I used my instrumental lessons primarily as a performer, but also to some extent as a future teacher, as I used my instrumental teacher to complement my *musikdidaktik* teacher.

If teaching and learning are about sharing experiences, a mutual interest in the



conceptions of the student teachers and an interest in creating shared conceptions are important to the process of teaching and learning. In such a communicative setting, the content should be meaningful, because it is related to the conceptions of the student teachers. Obviously, this kind of learning demands varied teaching. Drawing on one's own interests and creating one's own motivation are crucial in this kind of learning. The student teachers said that learning *musikdidaktik* was easier when they could feel ownership of the subject content and when they could "put themselves on the map."

In the beginning *musikdidaktik* was hard to grasp as a subject. It was a very theoretical, dry, boring subject. But suddenly I found out what I wanted to do, and could value the usefulness. I started to read things not just because I had to, but to find something I could use. And then there was a lot to find. And there are lots of things that you do that you haven't thought through--and it took me a rather long time to find that connection.

Finding that connection in turn demands curiosity about their future profession that includes an interest in the student teachers themselves as teachers and in their pupils as learners. One possibility is to learn to be one's own teacher, which the interviewees underlined. In other words, learning to teach concerns forming one's own identity through "playing to teach music" (Ferm, 2008a) and moving from the periphery to the middle of a community (Wenger, 1998).

### **On Becoming a Music Teacher**

Imagination and acting in simulated teaching situations can connect student teachers to the teaching profession. The first step for *musikdidaktik* students may be to view themselves as future music teachers.

I think many people, when they start their studies here, they maybe think of themselves more as musicians, because that is what they have been their whole lives since they came here. And that was something that I thought when I came here,

that I was going to be a musician and I do not know how many months it took for me to be convinced that I wanted to be a teacher.

Furthermore, this research shows that student teachers appreciate a continuous connection to their future profession through individual and shared conceptions that allow them to be able to experience meaningful learning and to grow into their future profession. This can be done by working with case studies, peer teaching in simulations, or reflecting on what the learning objectives may imply in future practice. Moreover, the content of *musikdidaktik* should be useful in the practice for which student teachers are educated and with which they are interested in working. This research shows that student teachers also value doing things that are similar to what they will be expected to do when they graduate, both as musicians and teachers.

We have had these band courses, where we take some song and then we learn it and we play. And at the same time we go through how you can teach the kids to play--or how you would teach the kids to play this song and different instruments. And then you also do it yourself at the same time. So it sort of sticks to your head, when you have done it yourself.

The interviewees also saw acting as a music teacher to be an important aspect of quality learning in *musikdidaktik*. Strong experiences demanded activity to some extent; and to be able to get to know themselves as future music teachers, they had to live the role. All of the students who were interviewed asked for more relevant, practical experiences, especially when it came to learning situations that were age and genre appropriate. Not least, they wanted to be able to connect to and to try the objective of *musikdidaktik* teaching in practical situations.

We should have practical teacher education in compulsory schools and municipal music schools. We have most of our training in music schools, and there we meet very small groups of pupils, or teach just one pupil. I think that we should have more practical training, and also more theory about teaching in large groups of for example 25 pupils. Because if I suddenly get a job as a music teacher in a large class,

I will just have experience of teaching piano pupils one by one. And that is the only situation I think I can handle.

Overall, the interviewees stressed the importance of “doing” in being able to learn.

Allowing the student teachers to do, to use all senses, to use earlier experiences, and to connect to new situations placed new demands on the role of professors.

### **The Role of the Professor**

The professor is an important person in quality *musikdidaktik* learning. The results make clear that beyond the content of the subject, such learning only takes place in communication with a respected, committed, understanding professor who is an appropriate and nurturing role model.

Yes, an interested teacher, that is crucial, hence both as a *didaktik* student, when you have your training pupils it is important for me to be an interested teacher to succeed--and that you have a committed teacher that is really interested in the subject s/he teaches, as my *didaktik* teacher for example.

The value professors place on teaching, in connection with demands on themselves and the student teachers, sets the tone for learning *didaktik*. The student teachers based their respect for professors, which they saw as a prerequisite of quality learning, on their professionalism as teachers. In the room for learning, participants shared experiences and interacted with several different perspectives. Results from the interviews point to the fact that not only must professors encourage sharing among student teachers, but they must also share and develop their own experiences together with the student teachers.

It is important to be able to sit down and bandy ideas with classmates and teachers. It depends on the professors' experiences, though, if they can sit down and bandy, it depends on what they have been through.

In the interviews, the student teachers appreciated sharing the individual professor's experience as a part of good learning. As an example, they cited

situations where small groups concentrated on teaching one particular instrument as being especially helpful. Sharing methods and suggestions were useful in a familiar group setting, but the student teachers also stressed the need and desire to be seen as individuals. Moreover, sharing some sensitive experiences required an open dialogue. The attitudes of professors and their relationships with the student teachers and with the subjects were important, not only in relation to the learning by student teachers, but also to the individual professor's position as a role model.

I think it is important that the professor also uses the methods that he or she is teaching about.

For example, if professors wanted to mediate adapted teaching, they had to model and demonstrate those strategies in their own teaching. One might conclude that quality learning in *musikdidaktik* depends on actively observing role models and reflecting on perceived actions. To act as a role model, professors must be experienced teachers, with particular expertise in teaching music and *musikdidaktik*.

Yes, I also think that it is important that they have a good perspective of the real world, but also they have to be like, they have to have a good picture of many kinds of things. Like some teachers may have a very narrow point of view of schools if they have been teaching in only one school and that is a certain kind of school. And of course they have to have experience in didactics, which makes them think very much of didactical things.

The students had greater respect for professors when they exemplified a high level of professionalism. They appreciated professors that knew what they were talking about when it came to both music and teaching and learning, and who could find connections to different examples outside the classroom.

The student teachers stressed the guiding role of the professor as a prerequisite of deep and quality learning. The professor needed to confirm and challenge learning processes and the products of the students. Feedback required a

safe room that had a foundation in mutual respect and clear goals, which may contribute to the students' sense of safety. The student teachers worried about missing feedback on their actions, about learning outcomes not being clear, and about not really knowing when they had learned something.

When I first started here I had played my instrument for such a short time that I didn't feel competent for teaching. Now I have started to teach, but I am not satisfied with my *didaktik* teacher because I don't get any response to what I am doing, so therefore I don't know if I am successful or anything...So, I have not got so much back from teaching my pupils. I have had a nice time, but I don't know if I have learned anything.

The student teachers were also insecure when it came to how their abilities and knowledge in *musikdidaktik* were valued. When their practical teaching proceeded almost automatically, they felt that they had learned something. They agreed that teaching ability was a clear recipe for learning. "When you are to use the subject content you know that you have learned," they said. In the interviews, the students underscored several main ideas: teaching requires deep learning; progress is a big challenge and an important aspect of quality learning; goals for learning in different rooms should be related to one another; and in each room sub-goals should be formulated to make the intended progress clear.

### **Connections Between Rooms**

One student noted the importance of the connections among rooms: "To know if you have learned what is intended in one room, you often have to go to another room to try to use it." Although this demanded an openness among rooms, the student teachers sometimes experienced what might be perceived as thick walls between different rooms in their education and also between educational and

professional arenas. For example, they needed for things that happened in their practical teacher education experiences to be discussed to a greater extent in their *musikdidaktik* classes.

Especially after a period of practical teacher education, you had so much you would like to treat and talk through and we had a group discussion that was a really good solution, because it is good to hear about the others' challenges, but I feel that there still are things that I would like to...things that happened, why they did and....

The student teachers saw meeting experienced music teachers and going into other *musikdidaktik* rooms as very rewarding. An example of such a *musikdidaktik* room was where they engaged in more advanced instrumental teaching.

I observe when he teaches the others, and also when he teaches me. I have certainly mentioned that to him. To be able to develop towards being a better teacher, it is almost necessary.

I mentioned earlier that student teachers used their instrumental teaching as well as their spare time and temporary teaching jobs as rooms for *musikdidaktik* learning. The interviewees also mentioned the importance of getting insight into learning and teaching of music in other contexts. Different subjects in music teacher education contributed in different ways to *musikdidaktik* learning. The students selected bits from different "rooms" to fulfil their *musikdidaktik* learning. One concludes that in every room connections should be made between the views student teachers have of themselves and their future profession.

The student teachers suggested that reflecting upon the relationships among the various rooms, within each room, and on the connections to their other teaching and learning rooms were important parts of the *musikdidaktik* learning processes. Additionally, the actions of the professor were important in fostering reflection related to the student teachers' own learning and teaching in those rooms.

And the pure idea of *musikdidaktik* feels like reflections on how things could be done better and why they turned out to be the way they did!

Quality learning requires that students are encouraged to think. This thinking can take part in interaction with actions, reflection, reading, and discussion. The student teachers confirmed that and appreciated free tasks in which they could choose a theme themselves, but were encouraged to pursue it deeply, to act, and to reflect, because thinking about the self-generated theme leads to a deeper understanding.

## Time

*Musikdidaktik* learning is related to time because time provides an opportunity to delve deeply into the subject. All of the interviewees asked for more time for the subject of *musikdidaktik*, and also that it should be allocated more time in the curriculum for music teacher education. Time is also a factor when it comes to how the different rooms of learning can relate to one another. Several questions emerge in this regard. Which room comes first?

Maybe if we could have had an introduction course first and then had practical teacher education and had to live it through a bit, and then start a bit harder the next year, for example. That would at least have suited me.

Is one room is needed before another? Or is the key to success the ability to be in several rooms at the same time? Is that even possible? The student teachers underlined the value of being in the room of theory and the room of practice at the same time.

For me it is more important to get the content where you develop yourself as a teacher. For me it is more important because I am not very into, very much into research. But some people are and that is why it should be a part of the content.

The student teachers had differing ideas relative to the sequencing of their courses. Some argued for the ability to choose practical teacher education the first year and

to delay the study of *musikdidaktik* and education until they were further along in their studies.

### **Discussion and Implications**

Where does holistic quality learning in musikdidaktik occur? When does holistic quality learning in musikdidaktik occur? How does holistic quality learning in musikdidaktik occur? The phenomenon occurred in different rooms that may be related to one another in different ways and be defined by music-educational authenticity, communication, reflection, and meaningfulness. Music-educational authenticity should, according to the analysis, saturate musikdidaktik learning when it comes to the commitment and emotions of the participants. In addition, the content, the forms of teaching, and assessment, together with music contribute to music education authenticity. This includes the commitment of the professor, the experiences of the students, and the connections to their future profession. It also considers authentic assessment. Specifically, the more authentic the assessments are the more convinced the student teachers become that they “can teach music” and handle their future working life. The assessments connect to the music, and the students feel the music and use it as an expression, which in turn makes the context relevant and real. Authenticity seems crucial when it comes to professional quality learning because students value opportunities to do authentic things in authentic rooms with authentic feedback.

Communication was also prominent in the results. All education, including music education, takes place in communicative settings, and the challenge for the participants, and not least for the professor, is to “own” the communication. Music is



central in music educational settings, in a sounding, theoretical, practical, and philosophical manner; music also exists and is created in communicative settings. Therefore communication specific to music education can be used as a tool in holistic quality *musikdidaktik* learning, where the students can meet and develop as artists and teachers. The communication takes place in and between the rooms, requires security, commitment and clear goals, and constitutes a prerequisite of learning outcomes and an experienced identity as a music teacher.

The students compared the competence to teach with the competence to improvise and thought that presence, commitment, imagination, response, and curiosity were similar components in both. Using what one already knows in new ways in specific structured contexts is also a similar competence. Sawyer (2002) defines teaching as improvisation, as the interactive and responsive creativity of a professor working together with a unique group of students. Specifically, he underlines group activities in class as improvisational “because the flow of the class is unpredictable and emerges from the actions of all participants, both professors and students” (p. 13). The more experienced a professor is, the more she or he will be able to improvise. But the communicative situations could also function as training rooms for teaching as improvisation. Clear goals and serviceable curricula can function as chords and melodies do in musical improvisation (Sawyer 2002). Reflection on impressions, activities, and learning within and between *musikdidaktik* rooms seems to be crucial for quality, or whole person learning, just as it is in improvisation. Feedback from classmates, pupils, and professors as well as from the music education activities themselves are crucial. All of the above-mentioned

aspects generate quality learning in *musikdidaktik* that is meaningful and holistic. Connections among rooms and especially to the students' future profession, aided by conceptions and others' experiences, as well as authentic actions and reflections, also provide meaningful learning.

In what ways do these results inform music teacher education? They put demands on professors, as well as on organizational choices institutions make. Those making decisions must be deliberate and at the same time flexible in the ways they organize the rooms for *musikdidaktik* learning and in the ways they construct the relationship of one room to another. The organization has to offer clear goals and frames so that student teachers can have opportunities to meet and share experiences in relation to the multi-dimensional subject of *musikdidaktik*. Holistic quality learning requires committed artistic professors who are willing to share experiences, to work in a varied way with several modes of expressions, and to foster authentic connections to a student teacher's future profession.

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