

**Developing Expertise of
Popular Music and Jazz Vocal Pedagogy
Through Professional Conversations:**

A collaborative project among teachers
in higher music education in the Nordic countries

Developing Expertise of Popular Music and Jazz Vocal Pedagogy Through Professional Conversations:

A collaborative project among teachers
in higher music education in the Nordic countries

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Developing expertise of popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy
through professional conversations: A collaborative project among teachers
in higher music education in the Nordic countries

Eksperttiyden kehittyminen populaarimusiikin ja jazzin laulupedagogiikassa
ammattillisten keskustelujen avulla: Yhteistyöprojekti Pohjoismaisten
korkeakoulujen opettajien välillä.

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Abstract

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This doctoral dissertation investigates popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy in higher music education in the Nordic countries. The Nordic countries have included popular music and jazz to almost every type and level of formal music education for decades, and in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden these musical styles are today offered at most higher music education institutions. These countries provide this study with an educationally and culturally coherent but still varied context which is studied at two levels. Firstly, this thesis investigates the development of expertise of the teachers participating in a collaborative project in which they shared their expertise and addressed challenges of their daily work. Secondly, the study aims to increase knowledge and understanding of vocal pedagogy through investigating how the participating teachers articulate their pedagogical thinking and practices within the project. The rationale of this study arises from several challenges of the field, such as lack of academic research on pedagogy, scarce possibilities of content-specific continuing professional development opportunities for teachers, isolation of teachers, and formation of silos between teachers subscribing to different vocal methods or models.

This instrumental case study is interested in the development of expertise of the participating teachers as well as the pedagogy of popular music and jazz singing as socially constructed phenomena. The investigation is situated in the social constructivist understanding of learning by Vygotsky. It thus builds on development of expertise, collaboration, and conversational learning. The data was collected through a collaborative nonformal project consisting of peer-group mentoring sessions in which the participants engaged in professional conversations. The data originated from multiple sources such as interviews, face-to-face and online professional conversations, collaborative and individual reflections, an internet platform, and a researcher's diary. The data, collected during one academic year, was analysed combining thematic analysis and qualitative content analysis in both data-driven and concept-driven ways.

The findings of this study suggest that collaborative processes are an effective way of enhancing development of expertise and overcoming feelings of isolation among Nordic vocal teachers. Participation in the project resulted in improved teaching practices and assimilation of one's pedagogical thinking at all stages of the teachers' careers. The ways

the pedagogical thinking and practices of the participants are manifested in the data proposes that the participants have moved away from the master-apprentice model and applied several principles of learner-centered education in their work in a creative manner. This paradigm shift to learner-centered approaches reinforces the need for adequate continuing professional development programs designed for these teachers as well as more research on pedagogy to understand how to further develop this pedagogical orientation. The project organised in this study offers one possible structure for more extensive developmental project, which can be applied in any educational context.

Keywords:

music education; mentoring; professional conversations; collaboration; learner-centered teaching; student-centred learning; popular music; jazz; CCM; singing; vocal pedagogy; higher education; single-case study

Tiivistelmä

Mesiä, Susanna (2019). *Eksperttiuden kehittyminen populaarimusiikin ja jazzin laulupedagogiikassa ammatillisten keskustelujen avulla: yhteistyöprojekti Pohjoismaisten korkeakoulujen opettajien välillä*. Taideyliopiston Sibelius-Akatemia, Helsinki. Studia Musica 77. Väitöskirja. 214 sivua.

Tämä väitöskirja tutkii populaarimusiikin ja jazzin laulupedagogiikkaa Pohjoismaisissa korkeakouluissa. Pohjoismaat ovat sisällyttäneet populaarimusiikin ja jazzin opetuksen lähes kaikille koulutusasteille ja -muodoille jo vuosikymmenten ajan. Tämän seurauksena näiden musiikkityylien opetusta tarjotaan Norjassa, Ruotsissa, Suomessa ja Tanskassa suurimmassa osassa musiikkikorkeakouluista. Pohjoismaat tarjoavat tälle tutkimukselle koulutuksellisesti ja kulttuurisesti yhtenäisen ja toisaalta myös vaihtelevan kontekstin, jota tämä tutkimus tarkastelee kahdella tasolla. Ensinnä tämä tutkimus tarkastelee opettajien ammatillisen eksperttiuden kehittymistä yhteistyöprojektissa, jossa he jakoivat ammatillista osaamistaan ja keskustelivat päivittäisen työnsä haasteista. Toiseksi tämä tutkimus pyrkii lisäämään tietoa ja ymmärrystä laulupedagogiikasta tutkimalla miten opettajat kuvaavat omaa pedagogista ajatteluaan ja opetusmenetelmiään projektin aikana. Työn tutkimusintressi nousi useista tämän koulutuskentän haasteista, kuten vähäisestä pedagogiikan tutkimustiedosta, vähäisistä mahdollisuuksista osallistua omaa ammattialaa koskevaan opettajien täydennyskoulutukseen, opettajien eristyneisyydestä ja jakautumisesta leireihin laulumetodien tai -mallien perusteella.

Tämä instrumentaalinen tapaustutkimus on kiinnostunut ammatillisen eksperttiuden kehittymisestä sekä laulupedagogiikasta sosiaalisina ilmiöinä ja sijoittuu vygotskilaiseen sosiokonstruktivistiseen oppimiskäsitykseen. Lisäksi tutkimuksen keskeisiä elementtejä ovat eksperttiuden kehittymisen teoriat (*development of expertise*), yhteistyö (*collaboration*) ja oppiminen keskustelujen kautta (*conversational learning*). Aineisto kerättiin nonformaalissa yhteistyöprojektissa, jossa opettajat osallistuivat vertaismentorointitapaamisiin (*peer-group mentoring sessions*) ja joissa he kävivät ammatillisia keskusteluja (*professional conversations*). Tutkimusaineisto kerättiin monimuotoisesti sisältäen henkilökohtaisia haastatteluja, ammatillisia keskusteluja sekä kasvokkain että verkossa, yksin ja yhdessä tehtyjä reflektioita, internet-alustalla käytyjä keskusteluja ja tutkijan päiväkirjan. Aineisto kerättiin yhden lukuvuoden aikana ja analysoitiin yhdistäen temaattista analyysia ja kvalitatiivista sisällönanalyysia sekä aineisto- että teorialähtöisesti.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat että yhteistyöprojektit ovat tehokas tapa edistää Pohjoismaisten laulunopettajien ammatillisen eksperttiuden kehittymistä ja

vähentää eristyneisyyden tunteita. Osallistuminen projektiin edesauttoi opettajien opetusmenetelmien kehittymistä ja oman ammatillisen ajattelun syventymistä kaikkien uransa eri vaiheissa olevien opettajien kohdalla. Osallistuneiden opettajien pedagoginen ajattelu ja heidän kuvaamansa opetusmenetelmät viittaavat vahvasti siirtymiseen pois mestari–kisälli-mallista ja oppijälähtöisen pedagogiikan periaatteiden luovaan soveltamiseen heidän opetuksessaan. Tämä esiin noussut paradigman muutos kohti oppijälähtöisyyttä nostaa esille tarpeen tarkoituksenmukaisesta opettajille suunnatusta täydennyskoulutuksesta sekä lisätutkimuksesta ymmärtääksemme paremmin ja kehittääksemme tätä laulopedagogiikan orientaatiota. Tutkimuksen aikana järjestetty projekti tarjoaa lisäksi mahdollisen mallin tuleville laajamittaisille kehitysprojekteille koulutusalaan riippumatta.

Hakusanat:

musiikkikasvatus; mentorointi; ammatillinen keskustelu; yhteistoiminnallisuus; oppijälähtöinen opettaminen; oppijälähtöisyys; populaarimusiikki; jazz; CCM; laulaminen; laulunopetus; laulopedagogiikka; korkea-asteen opetus; tapaustutkimus

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Vantaa, April 2019

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Conference presentations relevant to the study

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Mesiä, S. (2017). *Interactive Workshop of Vocal Jazz Pedagogy*. Workshop presentation at the 2nd International Jazz Voice Conference (IJVC). Helsinki, Finland, 6.-8.10.2017.

Mesiä, S. (2017). *Learning from Each Other: Collaborative Expertise in Pop/jazz Vocal Pedagogy*. Paper presentation at the 9th International Congress of Voice Teachers (ICVT). Stockholm, Sweden, 2.-6.8.2017.

Mesiä, S. (2015). *Vocal teaching in higher music education*. Paper presentation at the 1st International Jazz Voice Conference (IJVC). Helsinki, Finland, 17.-19.10.2015

Mesiä, S. (2015). *Developing networked expertise in pop/jazz singing pedagogy – A collaborative project between teachers in higher music education*. Paper presentation at the 19th conference of Nordic Network for Research in Music Education: Activism in Music Education (NNMPF). Helsinki, Finland, 3.-5.3.2015

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1 Introduction

This qualitative study concerns popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy in Nordic countries' higher music education. The context is investigated through a collaborative project in which a group of teachers developed their professional expertise through taking part in a series of peer-group mentoring (PGM) sessions which according to Heikkinen, Jokinen and Tynjälä (2012a) is model of supporting professional development through a reciprocal relationship between the participating people. In these PGM sessions the participating teachers engaged in professional conversations and the researcher was positioned as the facilitator (Bens, 2012). The project was investigated at two levels. Firstly, the aim was to investigate how the participants articulated their development of expertise within the project. Secondly, the aim was to investigate how they articulated their pedagogical thinking and practices within the project.

Conceptually this study is situated in Vygotskian social constructivist understanding of learning (Vygotsky, 1978; 1986) and also applies conversational learning approach (Baker, Jensen, & Kolb, 2002) in its framework. Expertise in popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy is in this study understood as an ability to perform well in this specific context through mastering a well-organised body of usable knowledge and skills (Chi, 2006; Ericsson, 2006; Ericsson & Lehmann, 1996; French & Sternberg, 1989; Hakkarainen, 2013). The development of expertise is connected to Berliner's (1988) adaptation of the Dreyfus five-stage skill-acquisition model in teaching.

This investigation is an instrumental single-case study with an exploratory design (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). The data was collected through a collaborative project, in which the participating teachers engaged in professional conversations about topics they had themselves raised up for discussion, and within which they also shared their professional expertise with others. The project included six phases and the data was collected through multiple sources; individual interviews, professional conversations both face-to-face and online, collaborative and individual reflections, and a researcher's diary. As analysis methods, I applied qualitative content analysis (QCA) and thematic analysis (TA).

1.1 Rationale and significance of the study

Popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy has remained virtually understudied in academic research. While “the global shift in audience demand away from western classical music and jazz styles [...] to contemporary commercial music (CCM)¹ has added an extra dimension to the graduate outcomes discussion with respect to vocation preparation and musicians’ portfolio careers” (Bartlett & Tolmie, 2018, p. 197), this shift has not yet quite emerged in academic research.

The rationale of this study arises from several features of popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy in Nordic higher music education which I have identified within this fairly young tradition. Firstly, popular music and/or jazz departments are relatively small. If there is only one vocal teacher in a department, he or she has only scarce possibilities to discuss matters concerning the instrument within the institution. This condition has been discussed in literature as teacher isolation (Burwell, Carey, & Bennett, 2017; Cooper, 2013). This circumstance has led to the situation in which the teaching content and methods have been developed in isolation within one institution or even by just one teacher, as there often are no detailed national curricula of the content and outcomes of teaching. Even if the aim of this study was not to create a joint understanding of the content and outcomes, this study aims to enhance collaboration between teachers and provide opportunities to discuss instrument specific matters with colleagues.

Secondly, the motivation to investigate this context stems from my observations according to which there is meagre collaboration between teachers across the field. This can be seen as a result of isolation of teachers, but it also can be considered a consequence of the strong influence of vocal methods and models² in the field. Teachers subscribing to a certain method or model have tended to collaborate with equivalent teachers, and as a result silos of methods or models have emerged. Thus, vocal methods or models have generated their own terminology of different vocal phenomena which has led to a situation where teachers do not necessarily have a joint language within vocal pedagogy.

Thirdly, this pedagogical field carries particular interest because according my observations the teaching practices applied seem to have taken a different route than the traditional master-apprentice model often prevailing in music instrument teaching.

¹ Pedagogical literature of singing sometimes refers to popular music singing as CCM (see 1.2.1).

² The term method here refers to specific views of vocal technique and not to the general notion of method in teaching. The term model is used similarly to the term method by some authors, and therefore this study applies the expression vocal methods or models.

I wanted to understand how the content of instrumental teaching, such as acquiring skills and knowledge pertaining a musical performance, can be taught through other means than for example teacher modelling³.

The new research on voice science has been the fourth element raising my interest for researching the field (Bestebreutje & Schutte, 2000; Buescher & Sims, 2011; Caffier et al., 2018; Cleveland, Sundberg, & Stone, 2001; Eckers, Hütz, Kob, Murphy, Houben, and Lehnert, 2009; Edgerton, 2014; Sakakibara, Fuks, Imagawa, & Tayama, 2004; Sundberg, Cramming, & LoVetri, 1993; Sundberg & Thalen, 2001; Zangger Borch, Sundberg, Lindestad, & Thalen, 2004; Zangger Borch & Sundberg, 2011). According to Callaghan, Emmons and Popeil (2012) and McCoy (2014) this new research has had an extensive impact on vocal pedagogy. It is now possible to teach according to physiological facts as knowledge of alternative ways of voice production to classical singing continuously increases, and the teacher has an opportunity to use the latest technology in identifying different vocal phenomena in the classroom. This trajectory has created a need for appropriate continuing professional development programs in which teachers can meaningfully develop their expertise of specific subject matter.

Finally, the rationale of this study rises from the lack of research of the field. The pedagogy of popular music and jazz has been discussed in the context of school music teacher education, but there seems to be little research on the education of professional popular music and jazz singers in higher education, even if during the recent years some literature of this context has been published (Callaghan, Emmons, & Popeil, 2012; Chandler, 2014; Hargreaves, 2014; Hughes, 2014; 2017; Madura Ward-Steinman, 2014; Robinson-Martin, 2014). Also, the development of expertise of teachers in this particular field has not been investigated.

The general literature of vocal pedagogy, especially within popular music, mostly consists of guidebooks of how to sing certain musical styles or apply certain vocal techniques. It is quite common to brand and trademark one's understanding of singing as vocal methods or models, as many teachers do. The approach of such literature is often practical and lacks references to research of voice science or education. Moreover, scientific research has brought contradictory results to some claims of methods or models (Buescher & Sims, 2011). As most pedagogical literature of the field is based on individual practitioners' experiences of teaching, this study provides an insight to the field through a collaborative project, an investigation that is not built on my own preconceptions and understandings of singing. In research this approach is often referred to as *bracketing*

³ Teacher modelling is a teaching method in which the teacher provides the student with a model which the student imitates.

which Gearing (2004) defines as “a scientific process in which a researcher suspends or holds in abeyance his or her presuppositions, biases, assumptions, theories, or previous experiences to see and describe the phenomenon” (p. 1430). Such procedures in this study were for example positioning myself as a facilitator in the project and collecting the topics for professional conversations from the participants. Other procedures through which bracketing has been approached in this study are discussed in detail in section 6.6. While the new knowledge this study is interested in lies in the professional thinking of the participating teachers and means to collect data have been chosen accordingly, it must be understood that this knowledge is a social construction that evolves and changes in continuous movement within social interaction. Therefore, because of my involvement in the project, my personal assumptions and preconceptions cannot completely be suspended. On the other hand, my understanding of the field can also be seen as an asset in this study, as it enables me to understand deeply the content of the conversations and reflections.

I have been intrigued by the potential of development of expertise in teaching in this educational field, as it has in my experience transformed during the last decades. Still, considering how to investigate this context, the idea of practitioner research, to research myself working in the field, did not appeal to me. Instead, my interest turned towards collaborative processes, which are known to be successful in crossing boundaries and preventing teacher isolation (Cooper, 2013). According to Gaunt and Westerlund (2013) universities are considered to be concerned with extending pre-existing realities through reflection and challenging established forms of education and expertise creatively and constructively. As a study investigating a collaborative process taking place in the contemporary context of popular music and jazz in higher music education, this research reacts to “fast moving change, the imperative for networking and innovation, and the necessity of being able to negotiate cultural differences” (p. 1).

The development of expertise is in this study situated within the field of *continuing professional development* (CPD). Professional development and continuing professional development are used as broad terms covering all forms of learning “from courses to private reading to job shadowing” (Craft, 2000, p. 9). Interchangeably the terms are also used in referring to more formal professional courses. Bubb and Earley (2007) suggest that CPD “encompasses all formal and informal learning that enables individuals to improve their own practice” (p. 3). In this study the concept continuing professional development is understood as to describe “all the activities in which teachers engage during the course of a career which are designed to enhance their work” (Day & Sachs, 2004, p. 5).

The project organised by this study is situated between the informal means of professional development and formal continuing professional development, as the employers of some participants considered the project a professional development course and other employers assumed participation to take place in participants' free time. Heikkinen, Jokinen and Tynjälä (2012b) suggest that learning that takes place outside of the educational system, is intentional, and does not provide formal certification, can be referred to as *nonformal* learning. My aim was to conduct a CPD project structured according to the needs of adult learners, in which the vocal teachers address their subject matter. This can be seen as an alternative way to the existing CPD opportunities, which often include general pedagogical courses or continuing courses of administrative tasks of teachers in higher education. Presently, in order to get CPD in their own domain many Nordic teachers have to purchase attendance to courses, and often the only ones that are available are offered by proponents of different vocal methods or models. This project also provides an example of how to arrange applicable training for teachers in any field, in which a phenomenon is addressed deeper than surface level.

The importance and need of professional conversations with colleagues have been perceived within the field of vocal pedagogy. Different conferences and congresses organised by various associations have offered possibilities for vocal teachers to collaborate and share knowledge. Nevertheless, according to my experiences, many Nordic popular music and jazz vocal teachers are not active in participating in research-based conferences. Instead, nonformal meetings have reached these teachers more effectively. Some Nordic countries have national associations for voice teachers, that may offer professional development opportunities. In Finland, for example, the national association of voice teachers, Laulupedagogit ry, organises a two-day seminar twice a year with guest presenters and lectures. The founding of VoCon, a network of popular music and jazz vocal teachers of European higher education, within the popular music and jazz platform of The Association Européenne des Conservatoires (AEC) in 2014 is another example of such informal meeting forums in an international context. VoCon offers possibilities for sharing cultures and good practices, discussing methodologies, exchanging research findings, and developing future education of popular music and jazz singing among European popular music and jazz vocal teachers. Unfortunately, according to my experience and discussions with colleagues, many employers do not appear to see the importance and value in this network and refuse to offer funding for attending its meetings.

1.2 Research questions

The context of this study is popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy in higher music education in the Nordic countries. The study is designed as a *single-case study* (Merriam, 2009), and the case is a collaborative project conducted among five teachers. These teachers participated in a series of peer-group mentoring sessions (Heikkinen, Jokinen, & Tynjälä, 2012a), in which they were engaged in professional conversations concerning challenges of their work that they raised up for discussion. The participating teachers also shared some their professional expertise with others during the project. The case is in this study investigated on two levels, firstly through the notion of professional development of expertise of the participants and secondly through how their pedagogical thinking was manifested during the project.

The research questions of this study are:

- 1) How do the participating teachers articulate their professional development of expertise within the project?
- 2) How do the participating teachers articulate their pedagogical thinking and practices of popular music and jazz vocal teaching within the project?

1.3 Popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy in the Nordic countries' higher music education

The context of this study is formal institutionalised popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy in the higher education of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, with the exception of Iceland (see later in this section). These countries provide a culturally coherent, yet in some respects varied context for this study. Jazz was introduced to Nordic higher music education from the 1970s and 1980s, but institutions have “generally been slower in opening their doors for popular musicians and facilitating for their specific needs” (Karlsen, 2010, p. 36). Still, considering the situation globally, the Nordic schools “have long featured and been praised as sites for open-minded inclusion of popular music into almost every type and level of formal music education” (Dyndahl, Karlsen, Graabraek Nielsen, & Skårberg, 2017, p. 432). In this sense, Nordic countries differ from many countries; while in several countries scholars report of strong classical singing dominance in higher education both in performance and teacher education (DeSilva, 2016) and that CCM singing should not be taught according to the western classical tradition (Naismith, forthcoming), many Nordic scholars already are

at the stage of focusing on academic discussion and development of the content and teaching methods of popular music and jazz (Johansen, 2013; Zangger Borch, 2008).

As there is no systematic mapping of the history of popular music and jazz pedagogy, “the evolution of the field has to be largely traced through national-level guiding documents and local-level descriptions regarding how these directives have been enacted” (Kallio & Väkevä, 2017, p. 76). Denmark was the first Nordic country to introduce popular music into education, as “popular repertoire featured as part of Danish educational system as early as the late 1930s” (Kallio & Väkevä, 2017, p. 77). Rhythmic Music Conservatory, a higher education institution focusing only on popular music and jazz, was founded in 1986. Today higher music education is offered by six Danish Music Academies (Heimonen, 2004), out of which three, Danish National Academy of Music in Odense and Esbjerg, Rhythmic Music Conservatory in Copenhagen, and the Royal Academy of Music in Aarhus and Aalborg, offer studies in popular music and/or jazz (Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science, 2018).

In Finland, the first institution to offer formal popular music and jazz education was Oulunkylä Pop & Jazz School (*Oulunkylän Pop & Jazz Opisto*) which was founded in 1972. Later expanded to conservatory level (as Pop & Jazz Conservatory), this institution offered degrees which in later educational reforms were considered equal to bachelor’s degrees in popular music and jazz pedagogy. Today, conservatories in Finland offer only vocational music education. In 1983 a jazz department was founded at Sibelius Academy, Helsinki offering the first university degrees in the field. Popular music is considered an essential content of school music teaching in Finland (Westerlund & Väkevä, 2007) and some popular music pedagogy was included in school music teacher education already in the 1980s (Sibelius-Akatemia, 1986). Today, Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in music education are offered by three Finnish universities, University of the Arts Helsinki, University of Oulu, and University of Jyväskylä. At present, the option to study popular music is largely limited to other study programs and popular music is not offered as a major subject at these three universities. As an exception, Sibelius Academy (now part of University of the Arts Helsinki) has organised a Master’s degree popular music program at Seinäjoki University Center. In 2017 University of the Arts Helsinki has established a musical theatre study module for students completing Bachelor studies in other degrees.

In addition to Universities, Finland has an extensive polytechnic (a.k.a. Universities of applied sciences, UAS) network (Heimonen, 2004). Within the dual system of Finnish higher education, the universities are expected to focus on research and artistic activities, whereas the studies at universities of applied sciences are “practice-oriented taking especially account to the needs of the working life” (Heimonen, 2004). There are five universities of applied sciences that offer Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in popular

music and jazz performance and pedagogy: Metropolia UAS in Helsinki, Jyväskylä UAS, Centria UAS in Kokkola, Savonia UAS in Kuopio and Oulu UAS. In addition, Tampere UAS has a degree in musical theatre (Martinsen, 2016).

In Norway jazz and ‘pop’ were established as legitimate styles to be taught in Norwegian comprehensive schools in 1974 (Jorgensen, 2001). Jazz was first introduced to higher music education in Norway when a jazz department was founded in The Music Conservatory of Trondheim in 1979 (Dyndahl et al., 2017). When including new musical styles into other higher music education institutions “all the other Norwegian conservatories that established a non-classical education at that time chose a pure jazz education, while [University of] Agder chose a broader jazz/pop/rock profile” (Tonsberg, 2017). The educational system in Norway differs from other Nordic countries, as Bachelor’s degrees are today offered by several state universities, specialised university institutions, university colleges and public and private higher education institutions. Some state universities, specialised institutions such as The Norwegian Academy of Music, several university colleges and some private institutions also award the Master’s degree (Heimonen, 2004). According the Ministry of Education and Research of Norway there are no statistics of how many institutions offer higher music education degrees of popular music and jazz (M. Sparre, Department of Higher Education, Research and International Affairs, personal communication, October 4, 2018).

In Sweden, higher music education is provided by six institutions; Malmö Academy of Music at Lund University, The School of Music at Örebro University, Academy of Music and Drama at University of Gothenburg, The School of Music at Luleå University of Technology, Ingesund School of Music at Karlstad University, and Royal Academy of Music. Within these institutions, degrees in all musical styles, including popular music and jazz, are offered (Arstam & Carlèn, 2018).

The educational situation in Iceland differs from other Nordic countries as there is only one institution offering higher music education. The small amount of popular music and jazz vocal teachers in higher education would have compromised the anonymity of the Icelandic participants within the project (see 6.6) and therefore I decided to exclude Iceland from this research context.

According to the participants of this study, there is variety in how the content of teaching is presently defined in Nordic higher music education institutions operating at the popular music and jazz sector. In some institutions only jazz is taught, while in some jazz has remained in the name of the degree but popular music is taught as well. In other institutions, both popular music and jazz are taught officially. In one institution a shift has been made from defining the degree with a name of the musical style, and

instead the term *improvisation* has been adopted (Academy of Music and Drama, 2018). In relation to the present study, the participating teachers stated that they teach many musical styles within the rubric of popular music and jazz.

Several uniting features connect higher music education in the chosen Nordic countries. Firstly, every country has a comprehensive system of Art and Music Schools funded by the state and/or by regional and local authorities (Karlsen, Westerlund, Partti, & Solbu, 2013). The practical effect of this is, that the Nordic students entering higher education often have had years of formal music education in popular music and/or jazz. Such extracurricular music education is given in Denmark in Music Schools and preparatory courses (Hosbond, 2016), in Finland in Music Schools (Suomen Musiikkioppilaitosten Liitto ry, 2018) and Junior Academy of the Sibelius Academy (University of the Arts, 2018), in Norway in Culture Schools (Bamford, 2012) and Junior Academies (Barratt Due Institute of Music, 2018; Norwegian Academy of Music, 2018), and in Sweden in Art and Music Schools (Arstam & Carlèn, 2018; Di Lorenzo Tillborg, 2017).

Secondly, in all Nordic countries higher education is funded by the government and is free of charge for students. All institutions use a process of entrance examinations. In institutions with a high attractivity rate the acceptance percent of applying students can be as small as 4 % (Taideyliopiston Sibelius-Akatemia, 2016). On the other hand, in institutions with lower attractivity rate getting accepted may be easier.

A third feature uniting higher popular music and jazz education in the Nordic countries is the educational requirements of teachers. In most higher music education institutions teachers in full-time positions are required to have an applicable Master's degree and the pedagogical competence determined by the Ministries of Education of each country.

According to my insider knowledge of the educational and working life situation in Finland, supported by discussions with Nordic colleagues, popular music and jazz singing teaching has in many cases outnumbered the classical music singing teaching in demand. Supporting this claim, research has shown the increasing demand of formally educated popular music and jazz teachers. For instance, the final report of Toive-hanke, a survey on operational environment and demand for competence of music teachers in Finland, revealed that most teachers to be recruited in the near future are from popular music and jazz fields (Muukkonen, Pesonen, & Pohjannoro, 2011).

The context of this study must be considered in relation to the nexus of *formal*, *nonformal* and *informal* education (Werquin, 2010). By formal higher music education

this study refers to all the higher education institutions, be they organisationally public or private, that offer the minimum of Bachelor's degree in music or music education. By informal education this study means the many learning opportunities that can be identified in everyday life. The project organised by this study is situated in the third sector, nonformal education, because the project was organised and structured, but participation did not result in a degree (Heikkinen, Jokinen, & Tynjälä, 2012b). Still, formal higher music education is closely connected to the outcomes of the study because the participating teachers have been chosen due to their working life position in formal higher music education and the professional conversations focused on their work in these institutions. In all Nordic countries there is also a wide sector of private studios in which extensive amount of vocal teaching or coaching takes place, and many of the participating teachers work in this sector as well. It also must be acknowledged that a wide world of informal learning opportunities exists in singing (Folkestad, 2006) in which the participants may also operate. In this study no attempt has been made to differentiate the three forms of education from the participants' conversations and reflections, but the data does suggest that the participants mostly addressed issues of formal, institutionalised higher music education.

There are several pedagogical differences between the institutionalised music education and uninstitutionalised private sector in Nordic countries, which is why a demarcation had to be made between the two sectors. In formal higher music education institutions students are assigned to teachers and they must be taught according to a curriculum. In comparison, teachers in the private sector work as entrepreneurs and must acquire clients by marketing their expertise, while at the same time they are free to choose the content of teaching. Teachers in formal higher music education must be able to teach all students assigned to them in all musical styles taught by that institution. This is especially true if they are the only popular music and jazz vocal teachers within that institution. In turn, it is likely that in the private sector the clients, the students, choose a teacher based on his or her areas of expertise.

1.4 Terminology

There are several issues relating to terminology that need to be discussed in order for a reader to comprehend the context of this study. Firstly, there are several names under which the musical styles in question are discussed both in literature and within institutions. In literature of musicology and philosophy the context of this study is referred to as *popular music* and *jazz*, and these notions are mostly discussed separately. Out of the two styles, jazz has a more commonly agreed definition. In general, jazz is defined as

“a type of music of black American origin which emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, characterized by improvisation, syncopation, and usually a regular or forceful rhythm” (Oxford Online Dictionary, 2018). In US, the discussion often emphasises the ethnic background of jazz. The Preservation Act (JPA) in 1987 has discussed jazz as “a black American art form, thus using race, national identity, and cultural value as key aspects in making jazz one of the nation’s most subsidized arts” (Farley, 2011). As jazz has pervaded the world, it has also incorporated musical features of different countries leading to for example the evolution of *Nordic Jazz* (Silas, 2014). However, the content of teaching in Nordic higher education is not limited to Nordic Jazz, but different styles of jazz are taught.

Defining popular music and designating an appropriate term has been found challenging in literature. As a result, philosophizing about popular music generally sidesteps the issue of defining it (Gracyk, 2018). Firstly, *popular music* and *pop* must be distinguished. In general, popular music is understood as rubric including several different musical styles out of which pop is one particular style (Frith, Straw, & Street, 2001). In an attempt to define popular music Bowman (2004) characterises it to exhibit following tendencies: “a) breadth of intended appeal, b) mass mediation and commodity character, c) amateur engagement, d) continuity with everyday concerns, e) informality, f) here-and-now pragmatic use and utility, g) appeal to embodied experience, and h) emphasis upon process” (pp. 36-37). Shuker (2001) defines popular music as “commercially mass produced music for a mass market” (p. x) and suggests that it includes a variety of musical styles subsumed by terms such as rock’n roll, rock, pop, dance, hip-hop and R&B. While it has been proposed that popular music can be defined through being appealing to the popular taste (Oxford Online Dictionary, 2013), this notion has been debated by several scholars. For example, Smith points out that popular music for the most parts is *unpopular* if measured by relative public attention (Smith, 2016).

The popular music library of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) suggests that it might be preferable to use the term *light music*, because “this term would effectively cover music of a more transient nature, which would not be expected to have a lasting appeal except to the most diehard adherents of a particular style or form” (Wilson, 2018). The Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE (Yleisradio, 2017) uses the same term and it has spread to research in Finland. However, the use of this term has caused debate because of the etymological meaning of the word, as for example heavy metal hardly can be described as “light” music. In addition, many popular music artists, for example The Beatles, have had a lasting appeal in the history of music.

Historically, the term *non-classical* has been used for decades (LoVetri, 2008). However, defining the field through something that it is not is problematic, because it may refer to numerous musical styles, not all of which might not be judged as popular. The term *Afro-American music* has appeared in music education programs; for example, it is used at Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki (Taideyliopiston Sibelius-Akatemia, 2018). This term can also be found problematic as it refers to cultural tradition that does not fully cover the origins of all popular music.

As an alternative term, *rhythmic music* has been suggested and used in several Nordic countries; *rytmisk music* in Danish, *rytmimusiikki* in Finnish, and *rytmisk musikk* in Norwegian (Kallio & Väkevä, 2017; Rytimusiikki 2010 visio, 2005). It has been understood as an overarching term combining popular music, jazz and folk music (Rytimusiikki 2010 visio, 2005). Translating the Danish term *rytmisk musik* to English as *rhythmic music* has been objected (Pedersen, 2011) because in Denmark the term points towards a specific oral approach to teaching, which combines rhythm, participation, movement, improvisation and playing together (Christophersen, 2009).

Terminology within singing has developed apart from other instruments. In the United States the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) has decided to use the abbreviation CCM, *contemporary commercial music* (LoVetri, 2008). CCM has been seen as unbecoming in Europe because not all music within the field is commercially based (Smith, 2014). As an alternative, the term PCM meaning *popular culture musics* has been presented by Hughes (2017) which “not only encompasses the broad gamut of musical styles in popular culture, but also emphasizes the sociocultural and artistic underpinnings of contemporary singing practices instead of accentuating their potential commerciality” (p. 180). Challenges emerge as these terms are not used outside the vocal context and using them might sever literature of singing from the general literature of popular music.

The European Association of Conservatoires (2017) and many of its member institutions use the conjunctive term *popular music and jazz*. Because of the variation in terminology it is beneficial to make a definition for this study only. When talking about popular music and jazz this study means all musical styles and their subdivisions under the rubric popular music, such as pop, rock, rhythm & blues, hip hop, dance, and all styles of jazz. During the project organised by this study the abbreviation *pop/jazz* was used.

This study also makes a distinction between terms *pedagogy* and *teaching*. Pedagogy as a term is understood as an umbrella term consisting of learning, teaching practices and other related aspects such as development of curriculum. In this dissertation

pedagogy also relates to thinking of the participants, their skills and choices. Teaching is used when discussing the content and practices of teaching, the action. In discussing literature terminology is presented according to the reference.

Another term in need of definition in this study is instrumental teaching. The situation, in which only one teacher and one student are present, is in literature referred to as *one-to(on)-one tuition* or *teaching*. In some literature one-to-one teaching of singing is also referred to as *vocal studio* or *studio teaching*, but these terms are not commonly used Europe or in the Nordic countries. When used in this study, vocal studio typically refers to the uninstitutionalised private sector of teaching and not to tuition given in music institutions.

1.5 The researcher's story

My involvement with popular music and jazz dates back to my childhood when I was introduced to different musical styles. My father played saxophone and clarinet on his free time and my mother sang in a jazz band. Yet, I attended the local music school in which only western classical music tuition was offered. Through all those years I was involved in other means of music making in informal environments, learned how to play the piano by ear and sang popular music and jazz tunes on my own. An exchange-student year in Fairbanks, Alaska gave me the first experience of formal teaching in other musical styles than classical music. The choir conductor had added a *swing choir* to the curriculum, which offered me an opportunity to experience musicals, popular music and jazz through singing and playing the piano. My eyes were opened, and for the first time I started to consider music as a possible career.

I entered Finnish higher music education as a student of music education in the 1980's and to my disappointment the curriculum mainly included studies based on western classical music tradition, especially within instrumental studies. At the same time, I also started working as a musician performing popular music and jazz. After graduating from Sibelius Academy as a Master, I started teaching music in Finnish comprehensive school and the upper secondary school. I soon understood that I needed to learn popular music and jazz also in a formal context and was accepted to vocal teacher program at the Pop & Jazz Conservatory in Helsinki. Since graduating with a Bachelor's degree, I have focused only on popular music and jazz teaching and also continued my career as musician.

In the fall of 2018, I started my 16th academic year as a senior lecturer at Metropolia University of Applied Sciences. I have found Finnish higher education to be an inspiring

environment to work in, firstly because of the talented and motivated students with whom I have had the privilege to work, and secondly because of the remarkable development of knowledge and pedagogy within the field. I have had the opportunity to challenge myself by taking on new content and by updating my pedagogical thinking and action through different courses and during the last years through doctoral studies. I'm not a certified teacher of any vocal method or model, but I have attended several courses of different approaches. I have also had the opportunity to develop and implement new curricula, and above all – make music with people of all ages and skill levels.

The recent decade of my working career with the increasing amount of international collaboration with colleagues from all over the world has broadened my horizons and given me more opportunities to develop myself as a teacher, a musician and a researcher. International interaction always brings forth the concept of language. I have been using English as a professional language for decades and lived in an English-speaking country. Still, it is a second language to me.

During my over 30 years of being a music student, a musician, a school music and a vocal teacher I have witnessed how the formal, institutionalised popular music and jazz pedagogy has established itself as a prominent field of music education in Finland. My own vocal teachers belong to the group of progressive teachers who built the formal education of popular music and jazz at Pop & Jazz Conservatory during the 1970s and 1980s. As a representative of the second generation of popular music and jazz teachers, but the first generation to receive a formal education in this field, and being involved in educating the next generation as a part of my position as a teacher educator I felt, that it was my duty to advance this field further by conducting research on it. This doctoral dissertation is a result of that inner obligation and is inspired by my own experiences of working in the field.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

In chapter 1 I have described the context of this study, popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy in higher music education in the Nordic countries, and the rationale that led to conducting this research, the research task and my personal aspirations. The introduction also includes a section of terminology. In chapter 2 the theoretical underpinning notions of social constructivism, expertise, development of expertise, collaboration, continuing professional development (CPD), conversational learning, professional conversations, and learner-centered teaching are discussed. Chapter 3 presents literature and scholarly discussion of the educational environment in which the participating teachers of this

study work. The chapter also includes notions of voice science, master-apprentice model and one-to-one tuition.

The methodological choices, the data collection procedures and the analysis of the data are presented and discussed in chapter 4. The results of this investigation are introduced in several sections; the outcomes of participation in the project and the development of expertise (5.1), and the notions of popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy (5.2). Also, the results of popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy as a learner-centered practice are presented in section 5.3, followed by social constructivist notions growing out of the data (5.4). These findings are drawn together and discussed in relation to the theoretical and methodological choices of this thesis (chapter 6), and finally followed by conclusions (chapter 7), references and appendix.

2 Theoretical frame

Theoretically this study is situated in the *social constructivist* notion of learning presented by Vygotsky (1978; 1986). The general aim was to enhance understanding of development of expertise of teachers in popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy in higher music education in the Nordic countries. The investigation was conducted through a case, a collaborative project in which five vocal teachers participated. The project was built as a series of peer-group mentoring sessions (Heikkinen, Jokinen, & Tynjälä, 2012a) in which a conversational space (Baker, Jensen, & Kolb, 2002) was created within which the participants engaged in professional conversations.

In the following sections, the theories and concepts forming the framework of this study are discussed starting from social constructivism and continuing to expertise and development of expertise. The discussion then moves to collaboration, continuing professional development (CPD), peer-group mentoring (PGM) and professional conversations. Finally, the theoretical foundations and practical implications of learner-centered approaches are presented.

2.1 Social constructivism

Social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978; 1986) positions individuals as active participants in the learning process constructing and applying knowledge in socially mediated contexts⁴. Social constructivism proposes that the content of learning is not independent of how the learning is acquired and that it is not possible to separate learning from its social context. Palincsar (1998) suggests that in Vygotskian socio-cultural approach “mental functioning of the individual is not simply derived from social interaction; rather, the specific structures and processes revealed by individuals can be traced to their interactions with others” (p. 351), a notion that separates the thoughts of Vygotsky from the notions of Piaget, who proposes that “contradiction between the learner’s existing understanding and what the learner experiences gives rise to disequilibrium, which, in turn, leads the learner to question his or her beliefs and to try out new ideas” (p. 350). Indeed, what Vygotskian social constructivists mean by learning “is only part of a larger process of human change and transformation, the process called learning

⁴ The works of Vygotsky have been studied and interpreted by a variety of scholars, “some of whom prefer to use the term cultural-historical” (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 191). The term socio(-)cultural has also been adopted in discussing Vygotsky’s theories (Shabani, 2016). The terms are here used according to the reference.

by socioculturalists“ (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000, p. 239). On the other hand, as the cognitive constructivist research and practice is mostly oriented toward understanding the individual learner, several scholars suggest that sociocultural and constructivist perspectives are complementary and should be considered as connected and inter-dependent (Derry, 1996; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

Distinctions need to be made in relation to the notions of *social constructionism* (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 2003; Gergen, 1985; 2015) and *radical constructivism* (von Glasersfeld, 1995). Social constructionism emphasises purposeful creation of knowledge as “the focus is on revealing the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the creation of their perceived social reality” (Thomas, Menon, Boruff, Rodriguez, & Ahmed, 2014, p. 3). According to Burr (2003) the position of a social constructionist is challenging to define but she suggests, along with Gergen (1985), that such thinking often includes a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge, historical and cultural specificity, that knowledge is sustained by social processes, and that knowledge and social action go together. Radical constructivism presented by von Glasersfeld (1995) suggests that “knowledge consists of mental constructs which have satisfied the constraints of objective reality” (Hardy & Taylor, 1997, p. 137) and that the learner “constructs knowledge from his experiences in an effort to impose order on and, hence, make sense of those experiences” (p. 137).

This study is concerned with the development of expertise of the participating teachers through a collaborative process of learning of an individual in socially mediated contexts, a focus which directs this study towards the social constructivist approach. Therefore, in this study I rely on Vygotsky’s suggestion that

learning is not development; however, properly organized learning results in mental development and sets in motion a variety of developmental processes that would be impossible apart from learning. Thus, learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human, psychological functions. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90)

Several scholars propose that in Vygotsky’s writings three (Wertsch & Stone, 1985) or four (Eun, 2008; Moll, 2014; Shabani, 2016) interrelated concepts fundamental to understanding human development can be identified. The first concept, *social origin of mental functions*, explains “how the individual mental functions arise from specific social interactions and retain a social nature even in the most private spheres of human consciousness” (Eun, 2008, p. 135). As learners take part in and internalise the effects of a wide range of collaborative activities, “they acquire new strategies and knowledge of the world and culture” (Palincsar, 1998, pp. 351-352). This way of thinking indicates that

the origin of knowledge construction should be sought in the social interaction, and in the particular case of this study within the collaboration between individuals.

The second central concept, *the unity or integration of behaviour and consciousness*, “is at the core of Vygotsky’s developmental theories because this is precisely what constitutes human development” (Eun, 2008, p. 137). It is considered as internal activity arisen from external practical activity, which are not separate and retain the two-way communication (Wertsch & Stone, 1985). Lee (1985) proposes that in Vygotskian thinking “consciousness is the process that organizes behavior” (p. 70).

The third concept, which is held as one of the most important assets of Vygotsky (Daniels, 2016; Moll, 2014), suggests that construction of knowledge is *a socio-culturally mediated process*. Mediation as a concept concerns “the mechanisms involved in the transition between social interaction and individual mental functioning” (Eun, 2008, p. 136) and is affected by the physical and psychological tools and artefacts (Shabani, 2016). The latter refer to “both the tools that facilitate the co-construction of knowledge and the means that are internalised to aid future independent problem-solving activity” (Palincsar, 1998, p. 353). Vygotsky suggested that psychological tools, such as language, various systems for counting, works of art, and writing, can be used to direct the mind and behaviour, whereas “technical tools are used to bring about changes in other objects” (Daniels, 2016, p. 26). Thus, mediation may occur through symbolic systems or through another human being (Eun, 2008). Vygotsky argues that “humans master themselves through external symbolic, cultural systems rather than being subjugated by and in them” (Daniels, 2016, p. 25).

Finally, as the fourth key concept, *the formation of a new psychological system*, “consisting of new interrelationships among individual functions, is what is considered to be the best result of development in a Vygotskian framework” (Eun, 2008, p. 137). In addition, Moll (2014) suggests, that “active subjects create themselves through their social actions” (p. 30).

Shabani (2016) suggests that the emphasis of sociocultural theory is on human mental activity being a mediated process, “in which symbolic and socioculturally constructed artefacts, the most significant of which being the language, play an essential role in the mental life of the individual” (p. 2). This function of language can be seen as “a culturally organized knowledge that is distinguished from formally organized theoretical knowledge” (Daniels, 2016, p. 101). Such use of language goes against Vygotsky’s first notion of the double function of language, which states that language serves communication by enabling human beings to socially coordinate actions with others through the creation of meaning (Moll, 2014). Language as a concept has been

in the core of this study, as the point of departure was for the participants to engage in professional conversations. Language became an influential issue also because the participants did not share a first language and were obliged to use their second or a third language, a fact that created challenges to creation of meaning (see 4.5 and 6.6).

Development of expertise is in this study situated within continuing professional development (CPD), and indeed Vygotsky’s social constructivist theory underpins the professional development project of this study as he places emphasis on development taking place in social interaction. Shabani (2016) proposes that from a sociocultural perspective, learning is a socially mediated process influenced by different modes of semiotic tools, the most important of which is the language and that social mediation together with dialogic negotiation triggers higher forms of human mental functioning. Therefore, Shabani considers Vygotsky’s proposal about learning in the school setting to be applicable to the teachers as well. The developmental theories of Vygotsky “resting on the notions of social origin of mental functions, unity of behaviour and consciousness, mediation, and psychological systems can help more vividly understand the professional growth of teachers in their work places” (p. 1). The following table by Eun (2008) summarises notions of professional development within a Vygotskian theoretical framework:

Key theoretical concepts	Related professional development practices
Social interaction	Workshops, colloquia, seminars, mentoring, study groups.
Internalization	Individually guided activities (video assessment, journal writing).
Mediation	Continuous follow-up support that includes the three types of mediators: tools (material sources); signs (newsletters and journals); and other humans (professional networks).
Psychological systems	Development of professional development programs that focus on changing teachers’ attitudes as well as instructional practices.

Table 1: Professional Development within a Vygotskian Theoretical Framework (Eun, 2008, p. 144)

The chosen research methods of this study indeed focus on several professional development practices that can be connected to Vygotskian thinking. Peer-group mentoring and collegial work as practices enhance social interaction while individual reflection leads to internalisation. The project established a professional network allowing mediation through others. Thus, the project as a whole acted as a psychological system, even if the aim was not to change teachers’ conceptions but to offer possibilities for development.

Another notion connecting this study to Vygotskian understanding of learning is the concept of *zone of proximal development (ZPD)* (Vygotsky, 1978), originally discussed

by Wood, Bruner and Ross, (1976), which in literature has often been connected to mentoring models. The teacher's ZPD as a learning space can be identified between the present level of teaching knowledge and skills and the potential level of knowledge and skills to be attained with the support of others (Shabani, 2016). In this process, while providing assistance and guiding development to others, "both participants transform" (Eun, 2008, p. 142). Even if the roles of the mentor and the mentee were in this study shifted towards equal mentoring between peers, the foundations of learning for the participating teachers may indeed be seen as proximal levels of development. In addition, connecting Vygotskian perspective further to this study, "the group members can provide collective scaffold for each other to remedy their instructional problems" (Shabani, 2016, p. 6). The notion of ZPD also connects to development of expertise (Berliner, 1988; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980), which is discussed in the next section.

2.2 Expertise and development of expertise

Expertise as a phenomenon has been discussed by several scholars over the years, but there has been no agreed definition of the concept. Frensch and Sternberg (1989) have suggested "the ability, acquired by practice and experience, to perform qualitatively well in a particular task domain" as a definition (p. 158). Ericsson and Lehmann (1996) define expert performance as "consistently superior performance on a specified set of representative tasks for a domain" (p. 277). Expertise according to Ericsson (2006) refers to "the characteristics, skills, and knowledge that distinguish experts from novices and less experienced people" (p. 3). Hakkarainen (2013), along with Chi (2006) and Ericsson (2006) suggests that "expertise may be defined as mastery of a well-organized body of usable knowledge that a participant can (and does) utilize to focus selectively on the critical aspects of a complex problem" (p. 14). These definitions all point towards expert performance being domain specific, which in this study means expertise used in teaching popular music and jazz singing. In Nordic higher music education this refers to for example the ability to teach different musical styles, vocal technique, and interpretation as part of popular music and jazz programs.

Ericsson and Lehmann (1996) highlight reproducibility of expert performance by stating that expert performers of specific domain are able to "display their superior performance reliably upon demand" (p. 277). They also suggest that performers considered experts should be able to reproduce a performance under controlled laboratory conditions. On the other hand, they do acknowledge that creating tasks that capture the essential characteristics of superior performance in a domain is difficult. The task of teaching is never the same but changes with individuals and the environment,

which makes reproducing circumstances for an expert performance in teaching impossible. Ericsson and Lehmann (1996) also agree that expert performance is not highly automatised but instead involves planning, reasoning, and anticipation, and that experts “increase their level of performance by structural changes of performance” (p. 291).

Considering how to distinguish an expert of a specific domain varies, as in some domains there are objective criteria for finding experts, and some rely on peer-nominations by professionals in that same domain (Ericsson, 2006). Researching the manifestation of expertise Chi (2006) suggests two approaches, retrospective and relative. A retrospective approach suggests that by looking at how well an outcome of a product is received one can determine expertise. Indexes, measuring, rating, and examinations are suggested to belong to this approach. The relative approach studies experts in relation to novices, when “experts are defined as relative to novices on a continuum” (pp. 22-23). Expert performance may also be identified through varying representative features (Ericsson & Lehmann, 1996; Glaser & Chi, 1988). Berliner (2004) has addressed expert performance within teaching and suggests that expert teachers 1) develop automaticity and routinisation needed to accomplish their goals, 2) are more sensitive to the task demands and social situation, 3) are opportunistic and flexible in their teaching, 4) represent problems in qualitatively different ways, 5) have fast and accurate pattern-recognition capabilities, and 6) perceive meaningful patterns in the domain in which they are experienced. Although expert teachers may begin to solve problems slower, “they bring richer and more personal sources of information to bear on the problem that they are trying to solve” (p. 201).

The literature also suggests that expert performance may not only be a positive feature but that there are downsides to it as well. Chi (2006) suggests that experts may not be able to “articulate their knowledge because much of their knowledge is tacit and their overt intuitions can be flawed” (p. 24). In addition, Chi presents seven important characteristics of ways in which experts may fall short. Firstly, experts often are domain-limited, in that they do not “excel in recall for domains in which they have no expertise” (p. 24). Secondly, experts may thus be overly confident and overestimate their comprehension of the domain. As the third limitation of experts Chi mentions “glossing over”, “fail[ing] to recall the surface features and overlook details” (p. 25). According to Chi, experts are often also context-dependent within that domain, in that they “rely on contextual cues” (p. 25). The fifth possible limitation of experts is being inflexible in adapting to changes in problems with “a deep structure that deviates from those that are “acceptable” in the domain” (p. 26). Chi also considers giving inaccurate prediction, judgement, and advice as limitations of experts. Finally, as the seventh way to fall short Chi suggests having bias and functional fixedness. She considers bias as the most serious

handicap of experts, for example being “susceptible to suggestions that can bias their choices” (p. 27). By functional fixedness she refers to for example having “more difficulty coming up with creative solutions” (p. 27).

Expert teaching as a domain is in this study seen through the relative approach, as the successes of teaching and learning cannot be measured. The means that engaging teachers with high levels of expertise was in this study based on their position in working life. Still, the focus was not to identify the features of expert performance in the teaching of the participants, even if this notion underpins the selection of them in the project. Instead, a space was created for the development of expertise for the participants.

As stated before, many scholars suggest that expertise is domain-specific and acquired through lengthy experience (Berliner, 2004). Development of expertise in this research is considered to be closely related to the notion of lifelong learning. As Ericsson (2006) suggests, “with the rapid changes in the relevant knowledge and techniques for most jobs, nearly everyone will have to continue their learning and even intermittently relearn aspects of their professional skills” (p. 17). Ericsson also proposes that expert performers set an example by continuously striving to attain and maintain their best level of achievement. Along with this reasoning, Hakkarainen (2013) suggests that expertise is relationally connected to the role of the participant in the larger working community. Taking this thinking further, even experts will meet challenges in the future, because at the same time they acquire expertise in a specific domain over extended time, they “have to move repeatedly from one environment of professional activity to new ones, [...] thereby breaking boundaries of their earlier established capacities” (Hakkarainen, 2013, p. 13). Crossing the professional boundaries of earlier established capacities is indeed a relevant issue to popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy with the new emerging knowledge through voice science, the continually developing musical styles, and the new technology allowing teaching to be based more on physiological facts and measurable factors.

Development of expertise is in literature discussed with varying terms, but the most commonly used terms are *skill-acquisition* (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1980; 1986) and *proficiency scale* (Chi, 2006). The development of skill acquisition towards the stage of expert performance was first discussed by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980; 1986) through their *Five-Stage Model of Adult Skill Acquisition*. In their first version of the model Dreyfus and Dreyfus designated the stages as *novice*, *competence*, *proficiency*, *expertise* and *mastery*. Later these stages were redefined as *novice*, *advanced beginner*, *competent*, *proficient* and *expert* (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986). Also, the angles from which development of skills can be identified were developed by Dreyfus and Dreyfus from the previous version to *components*, *perspective*, *decision*, and *commitment*.

Skill level	Components	Perspective	Decision	Commitment
Novice	Context-free	None	Analytical	Detached
Advanced beginner	Context-free and situational	None	Analytical	Detached
Competent	Context-free and situational	Chosen	Analytical	Detached understanding and deciding. Involved in outcome.
Proficient	Context-free and situational	Experienced	Analytical	Involved understanding. Detached deciding.
Expert	Context-free and situational	Experienced	Intuitive	Involved

Table 2: Five-Stage Model of Adult Skill Acquisition (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, p.50)

Because of how the participants were selected, the relevant stages of skill acquisition in this study are proficient and expert. According to Dreyfus (2004), within the stage of proficient the positive and negative emotional experiences of an individual “will strengthen successful perspectives and inhibit unsuccessful ones” (p. 179) and the rules and principles related to the skill in question will gradually be replaced by situational discriminations. Dreyfus emphasises the assimilation of these experiences in an embodied and non-theoretical way. A proficient performer, when entering a variety of situations, is able to see certain aspects as more important without standing back and choosing plans or adopting perspectives. The proficient performer is already experienced, so goals and salient aspects are seen clearly, but not experienced enough to discriminate various outcomes of possible responses to situations. The proficient performer “simply has not yet had enough experience with the outcomes of the wide variety of possible responses to each of the situations he or she can now discriminate among to react automatically” (p. 179). Still, he or she has to fall back on detached rule to decide what to do.

The expert, according to Dreyfus (2004), is able to see what needs to be achieved in facing a task, and through the vast experience of situational discriminations also immediately sees how to achieve this goal. The ability to “make more subtle and refined discriminations is what distinguishes the expert from the proficient performer” (p. 180). In seeing the situations “from the same perspective but requiring different tactical decisions, the brain of the expert gradually decomposes this class of situations into subclasses, each of which requires a specific response” (p. 180). Characteristic of high level of expertise is the ability intuitively see what to do “without applying rules and making judgements” (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 2004, p. 253). In describing how this level of expertise is manifested in action, Dreyfus (2004) suggests that normally an expert does not calculate nor solve problems: “he or she does not even think. He or she just does what normally works and, of course, it normally works” (p. 180).

Critique towards the Five-Stage Model of Adult Skill Acquisition has been based on the notion that not all skill-acquisition can be described through these stages. Pena (2010) debates whether the model can explain the acquisition of clinical skills and also challenges the use of intuition in expert performance within the field. He suggests that “the complex nature of clinical problem-solving skills and the rich interplay between the implicit and explicit forms of knowledge must be taken into consideration when we want to explain ‘acquisition’ of clinical skills” (2010, p. 1).

The Five-Stage Model of Adult Skill Acquisition has been applied to different forms of professional expertise development such as nursing (Benner, 1984) and software engineering (Shinkle, 2009). Considering the field of the present study, education, the model may not well apply as such. Berliner (1988) presents critique towards the model by suggesting that “this general stage theory about the development of expertise is derived from speculations about how expert systems in the field of artificial intelligence can be created” (s. 6). Instead, he proceeded to suggest stages of the development of expertise in pedagogy. It is notable that Berliner in his model uses the term *stages of development* instead of skill acquisition, which better describes teaching which can be assumed to require a wider set of competencies than plain skills.

Berliner (1988) hypothesises that also within pedagogy the stages of development are novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert, although he recognises differences between the development of individuals. According to Berliner the time spent on each stage can be expected to vary, and he emphasises the importance that the stages make sense within the domain. He highlights the fact that an individual can show characteristics of other stages of development depending on the situation, and also that expertise is contextualised and that “it may not transfer from situation to situation very well” (s. 6). In describing how these stages manifest in teaching Berliner suggests that at the stage of proficient, intuition and know-how become prominent and wide experience transfers to holistic recognition of similarities, which enables predicting events more precisely and seeing things as alike. Still, a proficient performer is “analytic and deliberative in deciding what to do” (s. 5). In comparison, Berliner suggests that experts, in discerning the importance of pedagogical events, are able to respond to those aspects that are of importance, use routines, predict classroom phenomena, judge typical and atypical events, and critically and emotionally evaluate their own teaching performance. Experts provide richer, more analytic protocols, more principled kinds of thinking, and a greater facility in understanding students during interactive teaching, as experience has provided them with mental models of the students. Berliner categorises experts as “arational”, as they have “an intuitive grasp of a situation and seem to sense nonanalytic, nondeliberative ways the appropriate response to make” (s. 6). Experts do things that usually work, and even when they do not, they use deliberate analytic processes. Berliner

also considers the role of an expert teacher as a coach by stating that expert teachers may not be ideal coaches, but instead can be excellent models.

The notion of ascending or upward growth of expertise, a fundamental notion presented by Dreyfus and Dreyfus, and also other scholars applying the model, has been criticised by Allsup (2015) in his essay on music teacher quality. Allsup prefers to think that “expertise comes with curiosity and travel” (p. 10). He suggests that there are earlier and later stages, but no lower and higher ones. Allsup also proposes that “all aspects of [...] musical and pedagogical experiences are intrinsically valuable, and that deficit comparisons to veteran teachers or to external performance standards are often unhelpful, as when pedagogical and musical capacity is viewed as empty and needs filling” (p. 10). This critique may well be applicable for vocal teaching as well. The complex nature of the human voice production, the variety of musical styles and elements within them, and the amount of diverse approaches to singing and pedagogy creates such a large field that it is reasonable to assume that even an expert performance of an individual teacher cannot excel in all of its areas.

The case of this study, a group of teachers with high levels of expertise, was chosen with a preconception that discussing vocal education requires ability to analyse and perceive the bigger picture. On the other hand, trying to identify the level of expertise of each participant was not considered to be significant in investigating the outcomes of the collaborative project. Thus, supported by the literature of continuing professional development, this study understands expertise as a domain-specific developing feature of an individual at all stages of development including the level of expert performance. The literature indeed suggests that even if an individual demonstrates features of expert performance in some areas, it does not necessarily mean that this expertise transfers to other contents. The rapidly changing field of vocal pedagogy with its divergent content and new emerging research on voice production requires life-long learning even from the expert performers.

2.3 Collaboration

Instead of investigating the development of expertise as an individual process this study, being situated in the Vygotskian social constructivist understanding of learning, is interested in how the participants articulate their development of expertise in collaboration with peers. Many scholars indeed emphasise how expertise is embedded in sociocultural action. Hakkarainen (2013) proposes that experts’ knowledge represents cultural-historical evolution of the field and is embodied in social practices of expert

communities and networks. Renshaw agrees, that collaborative learning "is critical to developing, deepening and transforming shared expertise and understanding" (Renshaw, 2013, p. 237).

As discussed earlier, popular music and jazz vocal teachers in Nordic higher music education often work in an isolated environment (see 1.1), and indeed teacher isolation has been reported as a challenge within education (Burwell, Carey, & Bennett, 2017; Cooper, 2013; Heider, 2005; Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2010). This isolation can be identified both as a physical and mental condition. Burwell et al. (2017) for example discuss how the setting of one-to-one tuition as a physically isolated environment is not as accessible to research as a regular classroom in school. On the other hand, they consider it a convenient environment for teachers to "cultivate fine aural discrimination and technical control" (p. 2). The isolation of many instrument teachers can be considered even greater because of lack of colleagues in the same domain. Collaboration is used in this study as means of overcoming teacher isolation.

In educational and organisational literature collaborative processes are considered essential means of creating knowledge and promoting creativity. According to Renshaw (2013) collaborative learning is a powerful means of liberating creativity and bridging social and cultural divides in the arts, education and the wider society. Also, Barrett (2014) states that "human cognition, and by extension human creativity, is distributed materially, socially and temporally, and rests in collective, collaborative practices" (p. 9). Collaboration has been described to reach creative outcomes beyond the capacity of an individual, and to overcome limitations possessed by them (John-Steiner, 2006; Sawyer, 2008). Indeed, "new knowledge is co-constructed through dialogue, risk-taking and the shared exploration of ideas and meaning within the group" (Renshaw, 2013, p. 238). Accordingly, John-Steiner (2006) argues that "generative ideas emerge from joint thinking, from significant conversations, and from sustained, shared struggles to achieve new insights" (p. 3).

Literature of collaboration identifies several conditions under which collaboration can be vibrant and successful. According to Renshaw (2013), in order for the collaborative process to act as "a catalyst for development, it is essential to create conditions that are based on shared trust" (p. 237). Different contributors bring their varied profile of skills, knowledge and expertise to the collaborative process (Barrett, 2014), and the collaboration thrives on diversity of these profiles (John-Steiner, 2006). This diversity makes the group more creative because "the friction that results from multiple opinions drives the team to more original and more complex work" (Sawyer, 2008, p. 71), and also creates "opportunities for expansion" (John-Steiner, 2006, p. 189). In this study the

diversity of the participants within the profession has been one criterion in case selection (see 4.5).

Collaboration can also be described as complex, because it is charged both cognitively and emotionally (John-Steiner, 2006). Nurturing and supporting emotional connection among the participants requires a non-judgemental, trusting, emphatic and accepting conversational space, reflective listening to others and recognizing and valuing the cognitive and emotional dimensions of learning (Baker, Jensen, & Kolb, 2002). The capacity to work together requires an environment that is committed to such values bringing a measure of coherence to the work (Renshaw, 2013). John-Steiner points out, that a joint, passionate interest towards the aim of action is critical to success in collaboration (John-Steiner, 2006).

The concept *flow*, originally suggested by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), is emphasised in literature as an important factor in collaboration. In order for collaboration to be successful, the dynamics, chemistry and flow of energy within the group must be in balance (Renshaw, 2013). The diversity enhances performance only when the group flow factors including some degree of shared knowledge are present. These factors include “a culture of close listening and open communication; a focus on well-defined goals; autonomy, fairness and equal participation” (Sawyer, 2008, p. 71). Renshaw (2013) links flow to conversations by stating that the flow of a conversation has to draw on both cognitive and affective support from within the group. He emphasises that central to collaborative conversation is the capacity to make connections.

Gaunt and Westerlund (2013) suggest that the increase of research on collaboration in education happens “hand in hand with the increasingly accepted understanding of learning as a social endeavor, and of teachers being facilitators and co-learners rather than doorkeepers of learning” (p. 1). Several scholars have indeed studied collaborative processes as means of professional development among teachers. Rasku-Puttonen, Eteläpelto, Lehtonen, Nummila and Häkkinen (2004) report that teachers’ reflection on their practices in collaboration might result in increased awareness of their own practices and that establishing discourse communities which empower teachers to improve their practices is of importance. According to Gaunt (2005) professional isolation, meaning both one-to-one teaching practices, and communication between staff, creates a need for “development structures that are collaborative and involve staff sharing existing experience as well as assimilating new ones” (p. 268). Tillema and Orland-Barak (2006) discuss how professionals, when engaging in collaborative processes, bring to these processes their background of perspectives and beliefs about the nature of professional knowledge and suggest that “activity and participation in collaborative inquiry may play a more influential role in a team’s outcome evaluation than their underlying professional

beliefs brought to the activity” (p. 592). A research of collaboration within a network of teachers enhanced among many outcomes sense of community and a realisation of the key role of the network facilitator (Pharo, Davison, Warr, Nursey-Bray, Beswick, Wapstra & Jones, 2012). Gruenhagen (2009) has investigated collaborative processes as means of enhancing professional development of early childhood music educators. She suggests that “teachers’ perceptions of their own individual growth and how their participation in the conversations impacted that growth illustrate the importance of engaging with colleagues in collaborative work” (p. 125). The results of her inquiry thus suggest that “what they learned through participating in these collaborative conversations could be applied or adapted to other contexts” (p. 148). On the other hand, Neil and Morgan (2003) suggest that even if school improvement literature abounds with recommendations for collegiality it must be noted that “collaboration is not always easy either to establish or maintain” (p. 54).

The existing educational structures in Nordic higher education of popular music and jazz are not able to create a culture in which shared critical reflection “is likely to encourage the process of making inter-connections, of cross-fertilization of ideas and practices, [and] of exploring ways of learning in order to promote creativity and innovation” (Renshaw, 2013, p. 238), because such processes cannot live in isolation or in silos of conventions. The project this study investigates addresses the isolation and lack of professional conversation by enhancing development of expertise of participating teachers through a collaborative process. On the other hand, within the project I did not adopt the most common approaches through which collaboration is discussed, such as *Communities of Practice* (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), *Professional Learning Communities* (Hord, 1997; DuFour, 2005; Roberts & Pruitt, 2003), *Co-operative Inquiry* (Heron, 1996), or *Teacher Networks* (Pharo et al., 2012). Instead, I adopted the idea of promoting conversation and knowledge creation through peer-mentoring, which is discussed in the next section.

2.4 Continuing professional development and peer-group mentoring

Especially within education, a field of expertise which has faced rapid change and new demands for high standards, teachers have a need to update and improve their skills through professional development (Craft, 2000). In this study the development of expertise happens within continuing professional development (CPD), which I consider an umbrella term. CPD of teachers can be defined for example as “a career-long process in which educators fine-tune their teaching to meet student needs” (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004, p. 5). Another definition by Avalos (2010) describes it as “willingness to examine

where each one stands in terms of convictions and beliefs and the perusal and enactment of appropriate alternatives for improvement or change” (p. 10). This study understands the concept along with Hookey (2002) who expands the notion to several meanings:

- professional development as a process of personal professional change
- professional development as the set of activities designed to promote personal professional change
- professional development as a life-long project, and
- professional development as an overarching framework for professional change. (p. 888)

The element that separates CPD from general educational literature is the focus on the importance of adequate, situational developmental processes designed for adults. Indeed, the notion of learning taking place through an active intellectual process applies to all learners (Danielson, 2016). The special requirements for learning of adults is not a new notion. Adult education, or *andragogy*, was first discussed by Rosenstock-Huessy (1924) and Lindeman (1926) and later developed by for example Knowles (1970) and Jarvis (1995). Knowles’s andragogy received extensive criticism for being “theory, method, technique, or set of assumptions” (Davenport & Davenport, 1985, p. 152), or that it failed to present epistemological base (Hartree, 1984). Still, Knowles, Holton and Swanson (2012) in their revised version suggest that andragogy is a set of core adult learning principles that apply to all adult learning situations. These six principles are 1) the learner’s need to know why, what, and how, 2) self-concept of the learner, which can be described as autonomous and self-directing, 3) prior experience of the learner including both resources and mental models, 4) readiness to learn, which is life-related and developmental, 5) problem centered and contextual orientation to learning, and 6) motivation to learn with intrinsic value and personal payoff. Same elements can be identified in Diaz-Maggioli’s notion of *visionary professional development* (2004) in which “collaborative decision-making, a growth-driven approach, collective construction of programs, inquiry-based ideas, tailor-made techniques, varied and timely delivery methods, adequate support systems, context-specific programs, proactive assessment, and andragogical [...] instruction” (p. 6) are argued for.

Considering adult learning in the profession of teaching, Heikkinen, Jokinen and Tynjälä (2012b) suggest that often teachers have learnt the most important skills of teaching at work or in informal environments instead of formal education. Accordingly, Conway (2007) proposes that “informal experiences are often perceived as more valuable for professional development than formal ones” (p. 57). Heikkinen et al. (2012b) use the concept *lifewide learning* in describing continuing professional learning of teachers,

which means “learning that takes place widely in different life contexts, such as work, free time, and training” (p. 4). This notion suggests that it is not possible for teachers to acquire all relevant knowledge and skills in formal education, and therefore emphasises the importance of CPD at different stages of teacher’s career by different means.

It is generally agreed that formal education takes place within institutions and results in a degree, and that informal learning happens in day-to-day encounters. Heikkinen et al. (2012a; 2012b) apply the concept nonformal learning to mark learning that is organised outside of the formal educational system and consists of intentional learning but does not lead to formal certification. This kind of education “tends to be short-term, voluntary, and have few if any prerequisites” (p. 4). Typically, it has some form of curriculum and a facilitator to enhance participation. On the other hand, the boundaries between these three forms of learning have been reported to become lower, as Tuschling and Engemann (2006) for example report on informalisation of formal learning. Considering how the project in this study was constructed and executed, learning within it falls between formal and informal learning. The participants did not receive any degree of certificate of their participation, but the learning in the project cannot be seen as informal either, as it was structured and organised. The participating teachers were chosen based on certain prerequisites, the process was facilitated by me, and it followed a schedule. Therefore, the project organised in this study represents nonformal learning.

The traditional ways of supporting and organizing professional development have been criticised for being ineffective (Bauer, Forsythe, & Kinney, 2009; Bautista, Yau, & Wong, 2017; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Gregson & Sturko, 2007; Guskey, 2000; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Rhodes, Stokes & Hampton, 2004; Zwart, Wubbels, Bergen & Bolhuis, 2007). According to the critics, such programs or projects have not been related to needs of the participants, have had little impact on day-to-day responsibilities, have had very little follow-up, have been voluntary and disruptive of participants’ daily work schedules, or have been organised off-site. Also, Bolam (2000) argues that “the pendulum has swung too far in the direction of system-led training, and that we should reassert the importance of individual professional and career development” (p. 267). Instead, literature covers various ways in which different forms of mentoring, coaching, and other collaborative processes have proven to be effective in professional development (Burns, 1999; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; McCotter, 2001; Nguyen, 2013; Rasku-Puttonen et al., 2004; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002; Rhodes, Stokes, & Hampton, 2004). Zwart et al. (2007) state that professional development of teachers can be improved through experimentation, observation, reflection, the exchange of professional ideas, and shared problem-solving. Rhodes et al. (2004) and Bautista et al. (2017) suggest that provision of opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching and engage in dialogue about it with other teachers can help to build motivation and commitment. The processes

of professional development as well as discussion about it has shifted during the last decades towards collaboration between peers. Rhodes et al. (2004) thus suggest, that adult learners need to be involved in diagnosing, planning, implementing and evaluating their own learning, and that they have an inherent need to apply what they have learned. The leader's role in such processes as facilitator is to create and maintain a supportive climate that promotes the conditions necessary for learning.

Researches have begun to explore some of the issues related to the professional learning of music educators and there is "a stronger emphasis on professional development from both professional and personal perspectives" (Hookey, 2002, p. 887). In their literature review of high-quality music teacher professional development studies Bautista et al. (2017) have identified several critical features that allow professional development to be effective and transformative: "content focus, active learning opportunities, collective participation, duration, and coherence" (p. 465). Bauer et al. (2009) propose that a *one-size-fits-all* approach in general is not recommendable. They suggest that "when professional development is subject-specific and grounded in student learning, instructional practices, and the improvement of teacher's understanding of the content of their discipline, it will be most effective" (Bauer et al, 2009, p. 102).

Another condition to successful CPD mentioned in literature is for example sustained professional development as it "appears to have a greater impact on teaching practice than short-term sessions" (Bauer et al, 2009, p. 121). Conway (2007) suggests that within music education the participating teachers should be "from various parts of the country and in diverse music classrooms" (p. 57). Some studies report of the effectiveness of workshops in CPD of teachers (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007) and, as a contradictory finding among studies praising activities among peers, some bring forth the advantages of "ideas gained through the involvement of outside experts" (Guskey & Yoon, 2009, p. 496). According to Bolam (2000) the several studies suggest that "the focus should be on strengthening opportunities for individual teachers to meet their professional development needs" (p. 278).

There are several concepts under which collaboration between professionals within CPD can be considered; *mentoring* (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004), *peer-networking* (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002), and *peer-coaching* (Huston & Weaver, 2008; Robbins, 2015). In this study I refer to the collaboration between the participants as mentoring. Often mentoring is understood as "the action of advising or training another person, especially a less experienced colleague" (Oxford Online Dictionary, 2018). Rhodes et al. (2004) suggest, that mentoring implies an extended relationship involving additional behaviour such as counselling and professional friendship. Diaz-Maggioli (2004) defines mentoring as "a process of mutual growth, during which mentor and mentee engage

in cycles of active learning that result in enhancement of practice and empowerment of those involved” (p. 49). Many other definitions also suggest mentoring to have a more lasting effect than less formal professional relationships between individuals, which usually aim at resolving short-term issues. Even if mentoring in literature often refers to processes in which novice teachers are being helped to cope with work-related challenges through receiving guidance and support from more experienced colleagues, the more recent literature emphasises mutual development over simply giving advice. Indeed, the concept of mentoring has undergone a transformation over the past years, firstly in considering what is meant by mentoring, and secondly in “being associated with collaboration, collegiality, and interaction” (Heikkinen, Jokinen, & Tynjälä, 2012b, p. 13). This notion has drawn mentoring away from emphasizing authority and experience to equal professionals sharing their knowledge and opinions.

Literature reports various interpretations of mentoring among peers in order to enhance the professional development of teachers. McCotter (2001) and Zwart et al. (2007) report of positive effects and satisfaction of peer action among experienced teachers. Also, Bauer (2007) discusses professional development of experienced teachers, but his definition of an experienced teacher refers to all teachers beyond their first working year, a definition that raises some concerns on the understanding of experience in teaching. The application of mentoring has thus provided support in the professional dialogue between teachers of different ages (Heikkinen, Jokinen, & Tynjälä, 2012b).

It is notable that all literature of CPD or mentoring programs of music educators presented here (Bauer, Forsythe, & Kinney, 2009; Bautista, Yau, & Wong, 2017; Conway, 2007; Gruenhagen, 2009) concerns school music teachers or early childhood music teachers. In addition, Gaunt (2013) has reported positive results of collaborative reflective practices among professional musicians who also teach their instrument at conservatoires. There seems to be lack of research of mentoring projects between peers among instrument teachers.

The project under examination in this study is understood as series of peer-group mentoring (PGM) sessions, a frame presented by Heikkinen, Jokinen and Tynjälä (2012a; 2012b). Peer-group mentoring involves teachers in “sharing and reflecting on their experiences, discussing problems and challenges they meet in their work, listening, encouraging one another, and, above all, learning from each other, and learning together” (p. xv). Heikkinen, Jokinen and Tynjälä present PGM as a model of supporting professional development which is based on the idea that “the relationship between the mentor and the mentee is reciprocal and both parties have something to give to each other” (p. xv). The authors consider PGM having its base on the constructivist view of

learning as they describe the process as not transferring knowledge between individuals but creating a shared understanding through conversations. Understanding that knowledge is always interpreted through prior knowledge, conceptions, experiences, and beliefs, the same thing can be interpreted in different ways, and social interaction is embedded in forming personal conceptions.

Within PGM the starting points are equality between the participants and respect for autonomy. This parity "cannot mean that everyone would be equal in terms of their knowledge and experiences: interaction is enriching precisely due to diversity" (Heikkinen, Jokinen, & Tynjälä, 2012b, p. 19). Instead, parity should be considered through existential, epistemic and juridical levels. Existential parity refers to the equality of all humans and creates symmetrical relations between the participants in a peer-mentoring group. The epistemic level, "about knowing or about being able to do something" (p. 19), must be considered in the wider meaning of professional competence, that a more experienced teacher is assumed to have more knowledge and experience, but that the younger participants have know-how in other areas of life "that can be significant and feasible for success in teaching" (p. 20). At the juridical level the parity of the participants must be considered in relation to their responsibilities, duties and rights. In a peer-mentoring group "young and experienced employees basically share the same legal position" (p. 21). Because the participants of this study work in different institutions, the juridical level is relevant in considering their work description, that they engage in similar working environment with similar responsibilities.

Sundli (2007) has presented critique towards mentoring by asking whether it has become the new mantra for education, and by demonstrating how mentoring may end up being an obstacle to reflection. She reports mentoring frequently being understood as a synonym for the supervision of teaching practicum. Also, Heikkinen, Jokinen and Tynjälä (2012b) discuss how mentoring in several countries "has started from the point of departure of standardization and control, which then makes the mentor the young teacher's supervisor and 'quality assurer'" (p. 18). Even if the concerns may well be valid in some contexts, in the case of this study there was no controlling of participants' learning nor was there quality assuring or supervision involved.

The PGM model is originally based on the idea that there are both a mentor and several mentees in the group, whereas in the project of this research all participants acted as mentors to each other through professional conversations. Still, relying on the literature describing the wide range of styles and applications of mentoring within professional development, and recognizing that mentoring according to Mäki (2012) is increasingly shifting towards collaboration, collegiality, and interaction, the project of this study is considered an application of the peer-group mentoring approach.

2.5 Conversational learning and professional conversations

In this study the collaboration that took place within the series of peer-group mentoring sessions is understood as professional conversations among colleagues, which according to literature enhances sharing and developing of expertise (Britt, Irwin & Richie, 2001; Danielson, 2016; Gruenhagen, 2009; Shaw & Cole, 2011; Tillema & Orland-Barak, 2006). Such human interaction is in literature referred to either as *conversation* or *dialogue*. Some scholars use the terms interchangeably whereas others consider differences between them. For example, Vella (2002) in her Dialogue Education Theory applies the term dialogue and positions it as the means to the end of learning rather than as an end in itself. Baker, Jensen and Kolb (2002) apply the term conversation, which is based on its etymology emphasizing “the communal, sensual, and emotional aspects of conversation” (p. 10) whereas the etymology of dialogue according to them often refers to debate and discussion.

Taking the deliberation of terminology further, Sennett (2012) addresses differences between *dialectic* and *dialogic* conversations. In dialectic conversation “the verbal play of opposites should gradually build up to a synthesis” (p. 36). While understanding that individuals may not use same words in speaking about the same things, “the aim is to come eventually to a common understanding” (p. 36). In defining dialogic conversation Sennett suggests that such conversation does not resolve itself by finding a common ground, as “though no shared agreements may be reached, through the process of exchange people may become more aware of their own views and expand their understanding of one another” (p. 37). Dialectic and dialogic conversations therefore offer two different ways of collaborating, “the one by a play of contraries leading to agreement, the other by bouncing off views and experiences in an open-ended way” (p. 44). Sennett on the other hand does not see the difference between dialectic and dialogic conversation as a matter of either/or. Both include the forward movement from paying attention to what another person implies but does not say, and “misunderstandings can eventually clarify mutual understanding” (p. 39). The aims of this study point towards the ideals of dialogic conversations, as the focus was firstly to enhance listening and respectfulness towards the views presented by others and secondly to develop the participants’ expertise through the project in which they could gain insights from others. Therefore, in this study, the professional conversations between the participants are described as dialogic.

This research adopts *conversational learning* in its framework (Baker, Jensen, & Kolb, 2002). Conversational learning is “a process of interpreting and understanding human experience” (p. 2) and is based on Kolb’s experiential learning theory (1984). Kolb defines learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the

transformation of experience” (p. 38). He conceptualises characteristics of experiential learning by presenting a model comprising of four phases illustrated as a cycle in which “learners move through the cycle of experiencing, reflecting, abstracting, and acting as they construct meaning from their experiences in conversations” (Kolb, Baker, & Jensen, 2002, p. 52). Kolb’s experiential learning theory has been criticised for several of its aspects. According to Jarvis (1987) it is possible to criticise Kolb’s “existentialist assumptions”. (s. 6) The idea of learning being a singular process and that the outcome is always knowledge has been objected by for example Marton and Säljö (1984), who through their research of surface and deep learning suggest that there are more than one type of learning process and more than one type of knowledge. Thus, Kolb has also been criticised of inadequate adaptation of Dewey’s ideas, specifically his concept of immediate, concrete experience has been regarded epistemologically problematic (Miettinen, 2000).

The critique of experiential learning theory suggests that understanding learning taking a form of a singular cyclical process is problematic. Conversational learning approach suggests several simultaneous cycles for understanding learning within professional conversations. It can be described as “a process whereby learners construct meaning and transform experiences into knowledge through conversations” (Kolb, Baker, & Jensen, 2002, p. 51) and “as a process of reaching interpersonal understanding where all participants’ contributions are equally valued” (p. 11). Applying conversational learning in this particular study seems to be pertinent as Kolb’s ideas are successfully explored and further developed within adult learning by for example Jarvis (1987; 1995).

In conversational learning, “as participants engage in conversation by embracing the differences across these dialectics, the boundaries of these dialectics open a conversational space” (Baker et al., 2002, p. 52). Within this conversational space opposing ideas can be explored, resolved, or embraced through conversations. The authors suggest that such conversation is a “meaning-making process whereby understanding is achieved through interplay of opposites and contradictions” (p. 54). Even if the fundamental aim of this study was not to bring forth and investigate opposing ideas or contradictions as such, the process of creation of a conversational space enabled the emergence of various ideas which presented valuable insights to the phenomenon studied. Thus, a conversational learning space can be created as a physical space, a temporal space, or an emotional space (Baker et al., 2002). In this research the conversational space created included all of these forms as the physical space was created by bringing the participants together both face-to-face and on-line. The temporal dimension was created by organizing the sessions regularly few months apart and also by creating enough time for in-depth conversations. The participants also emphasised the importance of emotional space by describing how essential a secure environment is for receptive and accepting listening of others.

Kolb, Baker and Jensen (2002) build the theoretical framework of conversational learning on five process dialectics; 1) apprehension and comprehension, 2) intention and convention, 3) epistemological discourse and ontological discourse, 4) individuality and relationality, and 5) status and solidarity. These dialectics address the different aspects of learning within conversations and provide means of discussing the processes of learning through conversations described by the participants in the data. Therefore, these five dialectics were used as a frame for the analysis of data concerning the results of collaboration.

The first dialectic, *apprehension and comprehension*, meaning the dialectic between concrete knowing and abstract knowing, is a state in which reality is comprehended through these inseparable means of knowing. Apprehension is “an immediate, feeling-oriented, tacit, subjective process” while comprehension is “a linguistic, conceptual, interpretative process”. Learning is based on “the complex interrelationships of these two knowing processes” (Kolb et al., 2002, p. 55). Along with the notions of Kolb (2002), Kolb, Baker and Jensen consider perceptual processes an essential part of conversational learning. “Different conversational experiences that take place in varied contexts enhance or restrict different senses and hence affect what is heard and perceived in the conversation” (Kolb et al., 2002, p. 56).

The second dialectic emphasises *intention and extention*, reflection and action. In his experiential learning theory Kolb states that perception of experience alone is not sufficient explanation for learning and suggests that something must be done with it in order for it to transform into learning. Similarly, “transformation cannot alone represent learning, for there must be something to be transformed, some state or experience that is being acted upon” (Kolb, 1984, p. 42). Conversational learning considers learning to be a simultaneous process of “incorporating ideas and experience to find meaning, and expressing that meaning in thought, speech and action” (Kolb et al., 2002, p. 57).

Kolb et al. (2002) describe conversational learning having two interconnected temporal dimensions, linear and cyclical time, of which discursive process follows linear time and recursive the cyclical time. They have named this dialectic *epistemological discourse and ontological recourse*, doing and being. The epistemological discourse is a discursive process happening in linear time and consisting of individuals ideas, experiences, and concepts generated in conversations in the past (precourse), present (discourse) and future (postcourse). On the other hand, ontological is a recursive process that emphasises going back to previous ideas and experiences to question the new assumptions, creating a cycle in time. “Learners’ abilities to simultaneously engage in these two temporal dimensions will largely determine the depth and quality of learning generated in conversations” (Kolb et al., 2002, p. 58).

The fourth dialectic is *individuality and relationality*, inside out and outside in. It describes “the tensions between individuality, where a person takes in life experiences as an individual process, and relationality, where life is an experience of connection with others” (Kolb et al., 2002, p. 60). Finally, *status and solidarity*, ranking and linking, as the fifth dialectic, addresses the way individuals engage in conversation with each other, status referring to “one’s positioning or ranking in the group, while solidarity refers to the extent to which one is linked interpersonally with others” (Kolb et al. 2002, p. 62). The underlying notion of this proposes that some measure of both are necessary to sustain conversation.

In literature professional conversation is considered a powerful transformative process by many scholars. Danielson (2016) suggests that professional conversations are more than just an opportunity to offer support to a teacher engaging in a challenging work. It creates a setting for an “important opportunity to push at the margins, to promote an examination of underlying principles of learning and teaching” (Danielson, 2016, p. 26). Professional conversations have been discussed as effective ways of constructing knowledge also among teachers (Tillema & Orland-Barak, 2006). Shaw and Cole (2011) report a professional development initiative through professional conversations, which was found worthwhile for community building, professional development, and pedagogical practice. Britt et al. (2001) propose professional conversations to be most useful for teachers with sufficient knowledge of the content, as they “were able to focus on pedagogy and to draw connections between aspects of the mathematics they taught, without recourse to a specialist’s advice” (p. 29). In their study the professional conversations “were a place where teachers felt safe to talk about what did not go well, something that rarely was analysed in their schools” (p. 50).

Danielson (2016) suggests that the value of professional conversations extends beyond the particular setting of one session, and that conversations have value both in the moment and over time. By “participating in thoughtful conversations about practice, teachers acquire valuable habits of mind that enable them to pursue such thinking on their own, without the scaffolding provided by the particular conversation” (p. 25). Also, Gruenhagen (2009) presents results that support this temporal value, that learning in collaborative professional conversations can be applied to other contexts.

Conversational learning approach resonates with many features of this study. As a pedagogical field with limited amount of research and literature, the emphasis on the distinction between and accessibility of explicit, content-based and information-based knowledge, and tacit knowledge developed through individual observation, trial and error, and practice, seems pertinent. Baker et al. (2002) propose that explicit knowledge is not accessible without its tacit dimensions. The interplay of these two dimensions of

knowledge “manifest themselves in conversational learning as individuals come together in a joint meaning-making process” (p. 4). Out of the various forms of conversation, this research employed a more private approach, in which “the participants have opportunities to explore sensitive, intimate, confusing, and important topics about oneself, others and the world” (p. 5), which is considered as a bridge uniting differences and promoting mutual understanding.

2.6 Learner-centered teaching

As described in sections 1.1 and 2.2, in this study the participants are considered to have a high level of expertise in their domain. This does not mean that they would not be learners as well. The notions of lifelong (Tuschling & Engemann, 2006) and lifewide (Heikkinen, Jokinen, & Tynjälä, 2012b) learning suggest that learning is an ongoing process even at high levels of expertise. In this study, continuing learning is considered through learner-centered teaching, an overarching theme which firstly arose from the data of professional conversations about vocal pedagogy but can also be seen referring both to the teaching and learning of the participating teachers during the project and to the way they articulate their teaching practices. The notion of learner-centered teaching may be considered relevant to this study as its foundations connect to the learning of adults.

*Learner-centered teaching*⁵ (Cornelius-White & Harbaugh, 2010; Tangney, 2014) does not have one commonly agreed definition. Still, according to European Students' Union, an umbrella organisation of national students' unions promoting students' interest in Europe, the term is being used by higher education policy-makers (European Students' Union, 2010, 2015). According to Severiens, Meeuwisse, and Born (2015) there is considerable disagreement about what this approach exactly is, and a range of potential definitions exist. Even if there are many approaches to learner-centered teaching, one principle is generally agreed on: that the student is at the heart of the learning process.

2.6.1 Theoretical foundations of learner-centered teaching

The theoretical foundation of learner-centered teaching varies according to approach and literature. In general, it is tied to existing theories of learning, mostly to the ideals of

⁵ In literature learner-centered teaching is also referred to as *learner-centered instruction* (LCI) (Cornelius-White & Harbaugh, 2010) and *student-cent(e)red learning* (European Commission, 2009; Tangney, 2014). The varying terms are here used according to the reference.

humanism and constructivism (Cornelius-White & Harbaugh, 2010; McCombs, 2008; Tangney, 2014; Weimer, 2013). Constructivism is linked to learner-centered teaching because of its notion of deep learning (Tangney, 2014). It suggests encouragement of the learning process through optimal challenge and adaptation to differences and emphasises learners' active constructing of their own knowledge rather than passively receiving information transmitted to them by teachers or from textbooks (Weimer, 2013). The theoretical understanding of learner-centered teaching connects the construction of knowledge to the socio-cultural notions of learning presented by Vygotsky (Cornelius-White & Harbaugh, 2010; Weimer, 2013). In addition, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the concept of scaffolding are considered in the theoretical foundation of learner-centered teaching (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976; Vygotsky, 1978).

In United States the development of learner-centered teaching has been closely connected to *Learner Centered Psychological Principles* (LCP) created by the American Psychological Association Work Group of the Board of Educational Affairs in 1993 and further developed in 1997. LCP is a collection of evidence-based principles that highlight the active and relational psychological and constructivist aspects of learning, and which stand in contrast to more traditional ideas of teaching that are focused more on the authoritative passing of knowledge to a passive, receptive student (Cornelius-White & Harbaugh, 2010). LCP classifies learner-centered practices according to four domains: 1) cognitive and metacognitive factors, 2) motivational and affective factors, 3) developmental and social factors, and 4) individual differences factors (APA Work Group of the Board of Educational Affairs, 1997). McCombs (2008) discusses how the first domain concentrates on the intellectual capacities of learners and how they facilitate the learning process, and the second on how motivation and emotions play an important role in learning. The third domain focuses on the various diverse aspects of learner development and the importance of interpersonal interactions, and the fourth on how individual differences affect learning and "how teachers, students, and administrators adapt to learning diversity, and how standards and assessment can best support individual differences in learners" (McCombs, 2008, p. 5).

Many humanistic theories and approaches⁶ have been connected to the theoretical foundations of learner-centered teaching. *Transformative learning theory* by Mezirow (1991) is frequently mentioned in literature because of its strong focus on the transforming learning experiences of individuals (Weimer, 2013). It is most often connected with adult learning as it contains "the belief that adult learners are capable of critically reflecting

⁶ Depending on the literature such theories are *Attribution Theory* (Heider, 1958; Wiener, 1986), *Self-Efficacy* (Bandura, 1997), *Hierarchy of Needs* (Maslow, 1970), *Self-Determination Theory* (Deci & Ryan, 1985), and *Critical pedagogy* (Freire, 1968).

on the information they receive, both inside and outside of the classroom” (Braun, 2014, p. 28). In higher education transformative learning presents itself as teaching which “poses problems and encourages students to find solutions” (p. 28). According to Braun (2014), in creating transformative learning environments students need to be seen as individuals, their personal and learning needs must be recognised, and they must be supported in “taking risks, exploring, testing their own limits and boundaries, and experimenting with new ideas and new ways of knowing, being, and doing” (p. 168). Moore (2005) asks an important question whether higher education actually is ready for transformative learning. Transformative learning has been studied in the context of one-to-one studio teaching in higher music education by Carey and Grant (2016). They observed for example implementation and cultivation of responsive relational teaching enhancing transformative learning.

All the theories mentioned above as foundations of learner-centered approaches together provide a multidimensional delineation of learning, but also reveal the vagueness of the approach when considered theoretically. In this study the notion of learner-centeredness is therefore considered as an overarching theme in education, under which different pedagogical practices can be discussed.

2.6.2 Teaching according to learner-centered ideals

In the same way as the definition, the principles of teaching in learner-centered literature vary according to the origin and are considered to depend on the students, the teacher, the relevant department, the higher education institution and academic discipline. As suggested by European Student’s Union’s report, the definition of learner-centered teaching also varies according the social norms and the organisation of the society (European Students’ Union, 2010, p. 14). It is generally agreed that learner-centered teaching is “an approach to teaching and learning that prioritizes facilitative relationships, the uniqueness of every learner, and the best evidence on learning processes to promote comprehensive student success through engaged achievement” (Cornelius-White & Harbaugh, 2010, p. xxvii).

The term facilitative in describing the relationship between a student and a teacher suggests that many educators are, or should be, deliberately moving away from teacher-centered instruction towards facilitative relationships that foster the formation, process, and completion of self-actualizing and democratic goals, pedagogical flexibility, and the value of helping students discover how to learn more effectively (Cornelius-White & Harbaugh, 2010). Learner-centered teaching thus takes into consideration “the various factors and histories associated with the learner” (McCombs, 2008, p. 2). Curricula need

to be flexible “with basic skills integrated into authentic and real world problem solving” (McCombs, 2008, p. 3) and teachers are proposed to use differentiated instruction and enhance lifelong and continuous learning (McCombs & Miller, 2007; Tomlinson, 2014).

Weimer (2013) proposes five key changes in education that produce learner-centered teaching; 1) *the role of the teacher*, 2) *the balance of power*, 3) *the function of content*, 4) *the responsibility for learning*, and 5) *the purpose and process of evaluation*. These five changes provide a suitable frame for discussing the data collected in this project as it is very practical in nature.

The first key change, the role of the teacher, implies that “students are invited to share their own views and take initiative in developing and completing their own individual or cooperative learning endeavours” (Cornelius-White & Harbaugh, 2010, 35). The students should be working on problems on their own or with other students, asking questions, summarizing content and offering critical analysis, and the role of the teacher should be to support this learning process (Lebler, 2007; Weimer, 2013). McCombs proposes (2008) that in learner-centered environments students and teachers solve real world and complex problems in joint inquiry. This naturally leads to the notion that not only do teachers know the subject matter they teach but understand that they also are learners, and as learners they are actively involved in their own learning processes (McCombs & Miller, 2007). Even if the changed role of the teacher is more that of a facilitator of learning than a master pouring the knowledge on the student, this role must be considered widely, and learner-centered teaching is not an *all-or-nothing* proposition (Weimer, 2013).

The second key change, the balance of power, suggests that within learner-centered approaches the power is shared with the students instead of it being transferred to them (Carey & Grant, 2016; McCombs & Miller, 2007). Cornelius-White and Harbaugh (2010) acknowledge that society positions teachers as authorities with legitimate power in the classroom, and indeed this asymmetrical relationship challenges to the notions of power. In considering different forms of power within the context of teaching, Cornelius-White and Harbaugh (2010) identify four forms of power: *expert power*, which relates to teachers’ content expertise in a certain field and ability use that knowledge or skills in teaching to provide feedback to students, *reward power* that manifests as the ability to influence others through reinforcement, *coercive power* which refers to setting behavioural limits through punishment, and *attractive power* which is built on belief by learners that the teacher shares their interests and is not there merely for teacher’s own self-interests. Cornelius-White and Harbaugh (2010) claim that attractive power is the most consistent with the ideals of learner-centered teaching.

Often the teachers' authority is so taken for granted that most teachers are no longer aware of the extent to which they direct student learning (Weimer, 2013). Therefore, the balance of power is closely connected to the role of the teacher, because the shift to more facilitative roles naturally leads to a shift in power from the teacher to the student. This is believed to create self-motivated learning, because the student has control over how, what and when they learn and also the choice and control over what they want to achieve (McCombs & Miller, 2007). It must be acknowledged that "the process of becoming an individual learner is gradual" (Weimer, 2013, p. 94), and the amount of decision making must be balanced against students' intelligent maturity and ability to operate in conditions where they have more freedom but also more responsibility.

According to Weimer (2013) the third key change in learner-centered approaches is the function of content, which contains a dual purpose: to acquire knowledge and to develop learning skills. Covering the content has become a teacher responsibility, even if "teaching, on its own, never causes learning" (p. 115), and merely covering the content does not promote learning or develop important learning skills. McCombs (2008) suggests that knowledge and skills needed for our future world and present realities must equip learners with "the capacity for complex and systematic thinking, for focused inquiry and reflection on who they are and what the world needs" (p. 3). A learner-centered curriculum is "the curriculum of life, with basic skills integrated into authentic and real world problem solving" (p. 3).

The fourth key change that produces learner-centered environments emphasises students' responsibility for learning (Severiens, Meeuwisse, & Born, 2015; Weimer, 2013). According to European Students' Union (2010) students are allowed to shape their own learning paths but also are responsible to actively participate in making their educational process a meaningful one. This key change is also closely connected to the power relations in teaching and to the role of the teacher. Through the paradigm shift to learner-centered approaches students gain control, power and at the same time responsibility. Before this shift can actualise, "teachers have to recognize those instructional practices that make students dependent learners" (Weimer, 2013, p. 144).

Enhancing development for responsible learners in teaching may also appear challenging. Weimer (2013) suggests that in promoting such development there should be logical consequences to both action and inaction of the students, consistency between what the teacher says and does, predictability and holding all students to the same standards. Having high standards and expectations, a belief that students can reach them, a strong commitment to helping them to reach their aims, and genuine caring are important features in developing responsible learners (McCombs & Miller, 2007; Weimer, 2013). Cornelius-White and Harbaugh (2010) thus connect caring

to warmth and acceptance of learners. Expressions of caring need to be genuine and should fit comfortably with the teacher's personality (Weimer, 2013). Thus, they have to be perceived and experienced by, and relevant for the student to be really effective (McCombs, 2008).

The purpose and processes of evaluation as the fifth key change in creating a learner-centered environment challenges the present structure and hierarchy of education which has led to the idea that "teachers have the professional responsibility to certify the level at which students have mastered the material" (Weimer, 2013, p. 168). At the same time, it is acknowledged that "traditional grades do not assess all learning" (Weimer, 2013, p. 180). Literature of learner-centered teaching proposes a shift towards a dual purpose for evaluation, to provide feedback to the student to generate learning. Unlike standardised test scores or a teacher passing judgement evaluation is in learner-centered approaches understood through harnessing the power of grades to motivate students, making evaluation experiences less stressful, using evaluation to only assess learning and using more formative feedback (Weimer, 2013). An essential part of such evaluation process is that students are involved in activities that develop their self- and peer-assessment skills. These skills need to be taught explicitly and are best developed through practice in which "students are given the opportunity to compare their ideas with their peers and their teachers, whilst contributing to developing their curricula in a meaningful manner" (European Students' Union, 2010, p. 9). Also, the criteria and how they are applied should be shared with the students.

Traditionally learner-centered practices have been most evident in early childhood settings (Pierce & Kalkman, 2003), but the desirability of student-centred learning endorses also contemporary discussion on teaching in higher education (Blackie, Case, & Jawitz, 2010; Kember, 1997). Blackie et al. (2010) draw a conclusion based on writings by Barnett (2008) and Rogers (1959) that the purpose of higher education is "to enable students to 'become themselves': to come to a point where they are able to evaluate their own performance and to appreciate their own giftedness" (p. 641). Thus, they propose that student-centred teaching is a threshold concept, by which the academics can really pay attention to the students and their learning as "it involves a shift from measuring one's success as a teacher by how much of the syllabus is successfully covered to measuring one's success by how much the students actually learn and with what depth of understanding" (p. 638).

The paradigm shift to learner-centered approaches has been supported in Europe for example by The Bologna Process (1999), in which higher education institutions and academic staff were encouraged to place students at the centre of learning, to help them manage their expectations and to be able to consciously and constructively design

their learning paths throughout their higher education experience (European Students' Union, 2010). Student-centred learning was also raised as a prominent topic in higher education research through the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Ministerial Communiqué in 2009:

We reassert the importance of the teaching mission of higher education institutions and the necessity for ongoing curricular reform geared toward the development of learning outcomes. Student-centred learning requires empowering individual learners, new approaches to teaching and learning, effective support and guidance structures and a curriculum focused more clearly on the learner in all three cycles⁷. (European Commission, 2009)

The notions suggested by the Bologna Process have been criticised for example for being purposeful and preferring *applied* research and measurability for the outcomes (Keeling, 2006), but in relation to this study they provide an example of the force by which student-centred learning has been advanced in European higher education.

There is a wide base of literature of learner-centered principles being adapted to higher education (Blackie, Case, & Jawitz, 2010; Brown Wright, 2011; Myers & Myers, 2015; Pierce & Kalkman, 2003; Severiens, Meeuwisse, & Born, 2015; Tangney, 2014; Webber, 2012). Pierce and Kalkman (2003) demonstrate how the four domains of LCP can be adapted in higher education through directed reflection, in which students are helped to recognise and confront their prior knowledge, to reflect on their new learning experiences, and to gain understanding of different ways of learning through shared reflections. Tangney's (2014) research among art and design staff of higher education proposes that in learner-centered environments learning is more than a mere cognitive function. Significant to the lecturers' teaching was seeing the student holistically and "building self-confidence and self-belief and empowerment" (p. 273).

Brown Wright (2011) claims that in a learner-centered processes the student gains experience functioning both as liaison and as leader. Webber (2012) reports positive effects of learner-centered assessment in higher education through assessment activities designed primarily to foster student learning. Myers and Myers (2015) discuss how there has been a shift in teaching strategies towards more learner-centered approaches, even if many instructors still rely on traditional forms of assessment. According to the authors this should be seen in relation to class size increase. According to their research

⁷ According to the European Union the 1st cycle leads to a qualification which in many countries is labelled "Bachelor" (180-240 ECTS credits), the 2nd cycle to a qualification labelled "Master" (60 – 120 ECTS credits), and the 3rd cycle to doctoral programmes.

comparing student-centred and lecture-based higher education courses Severiens, Meeuwisse and Born (2015) propose that students' perceptions have a greater impact on academic success in student-centred courses, and that student-centred courses are more subject or vulnerable to students' perceptions.

Higher music education is facing the same challenges as other disciplines discussed in this section. Westerlund (2006) describes the pedagogical culture of music education as being based on the apprenticeship tradition, in which teachers "deliver their musical expertise using pedagogically relevant methods that will help them to have effective mastery and control over the process of learning" (p. 119). Lebler states that

if the modern conservatorium is to prosper in a rapidly changing cultural and economic landscape, it will need to provide a learning experience that is musically inclusive and likely to produce multi-skilled and adaptable graduates who are self-monitoring and self-directing in their learning. (Lebler, 2007, p. 206)

Lebler also suggests that music teachers need to demonstrate commitment to learner-centered approaches instead of acting through the roles of performance experts or mentors.

It is notable that there appears to be very little critical literature of learner-centered teaching. In her paper on fallacies of student-centred learning in music education Björk (2017) proposes that superficial representations of student-centred learning can "get even an experienced and well-intentioned music teacher into educational and ethical trouble" (p. 131). These fallacies include generalisation, thinking that student-centred learning is all good or all bad, and the notion of 'availability heuristic', a notion originally presented by Tversky and Kahneman (1973). By this notion Björk means that what the teacher sees of the student during the lesson is invariably all that is needed to make wise student-centred decisions. As antidotes to the fallacy of generalisation Björk suggests combining rich experience of the musician with research-based knowledge, making dialogue an integrated part of teaching and learning, staying sufficiently open so that knowing is not assumed to be immediate, and finally "keeping up continual conversation with colleagues" (p. 133). As antidotes to availability heuristic Björk suggests for example awareness that learning may be influenced by other people than the teacher and the student. She emphasises longer processes by stating that "what the teacher can come to think of immediately is usually not all there is to the teaching and learning situation" (p. 133). Björk (2017) argues that student-centred learning and traditional teaching should not be considered as dichotomies and emphasises joint inquiry with the student, the teacher and other relevant persons.

Research of learner-centered approaches in higher education often concerns classroom teaching. I have not encountered any research of learner-centered teaching in the context of instrumental one-to-one teaching. That may well be, because this instructional form is already considered learner-centered. On the other hand, “instrumental tuition has been conceptualized predominantly in terms of the master-apprentice model” (Creech & Gaunt, 2012, p. 698), a model which does not resemble features of learner-centered teaching.

3 Popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy and music education research

As discussed in chapter 1, the context of this study, popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy in the Nordic higher music education, is a very specific field. On one hand it relates to all the notions of music teaching as a profession, and on the other hand, it has several specific features which are discussed in this chapter. In general, music teaching can be described as a profession in that, “music teachers deal with the teaching and learning of music as problem solving processes” (Bröske Danielsen & Johansen, 2012, p. 32). According to Bröske Danielsen and Johansen (2012) the theoretical knowledge that this profession requires “should include experience-based and theory-based, as well as research-based knowledge, along with the skills required to apply such knowledge wisely to solve the problems at hand” (p. 33). They also propose that the knowledge base of music teaching relates to the knowledge bases of musicology and education, and the use of its diverse elements can be described as “a practical synthesis” (p. 37) of these elements. Thus, they suggest that the difference between a profession and a regular vocation is designated by the markers of professionalism, such as scientific or scholarly knowledge. Indeed, the participants of this study are required to deal with teaching and learning processes and possess both theoretical and practical knowledge and experience in popular music and jazz as musical styles. The participants are also required to have extensive knowledge about the human voice as an instrument.

The small amount of literature concerning popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy in comparison to the extensive literature of Western classical music vocal pedagogy in general suggests that the field still remains under studied. The literature concerning general music education or school music teacher education does not well relate to this context. Several features of popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy, such as one-to-one tuition, are in existing literature mostly discussed in the context of Western classical music, a fact that relates to the notion suggested by Meyer and Edwards (2014), that teaching of classical music still prevails in higher music education. While this may be the situation globally, Nordic countries are known for adapting other musical styles, such as popular music, world music, and folk music to higher education (Heimonen, 2004). This makes the Nordic countries an interesting context for this study.

According to Callaghan et al. (2012) the teaching of contemporary vocal styles in higher education is divided into commercial music⁸, jazz and musical theatre training. This is not the case in the Nordic countries, in which these musical styles are often taught within the same institutions and by the same teacher. This creates challenges for teachers as they are required to recognise and master the wide range of specific elements inherent in the many styles of popular music and jazz.

This section outlines first the existing popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy literature in instrumental music education research followed by literature of popular music and jazz pedagogy in general music education research. Because instrumental teaching mostly takes place in one-to-one situations, this literature is also discussed. Finally, the literature on voice science and modern technology is included, as it has had a strong influence on pedagogical practices in this field during the last decades. The aim of the following sections is to outline the educational environment in which the participating teachers work and from which the issues addressed in this study emerge.

3.1 Popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy in instrumental music education research

Several authors contributing to the literature of popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy suggest, that it should not be discussed through Western classical singing tradition, nor should its outcomes be considered through the aesthetic values of classical singing. Bartlett (2014) suggests that the statement from American Academy of Teachers of Singing (2008) can be considered as a benchmark, because it recognises the inefficiencies of a “one size fits all classical training approach” when generalised to contemporary music styles (p. 32), while O’Bryan and Harrison (2014) suggest that the past pedagogical tradition “does not take into account the proliferation in the twentieth century of a range of musical cultures, styles and techniques, which has forced a rethink of European canonic approaches to singing pedagogy” (p. 2). Kayes, Fisher, and Popeil (2014) state that “the role of the modern vocal pedagogue is to explore, learn, and ultimately be able to impart the intricacies of each vocal genre to the next generation while honoring traditions and values” (para. 1). It is notable that several music institutions in the Nordic countries have for decades included teaching of other vocal techniques than the Western classical vocal tradition in education (see 1.2).

⁸ The etymology of commercial music here comes from contemporary commercial music (CCM) and refers to popular music.

Callaghan, Emmons, and Popeil (2012) suggest that whilst “the subject matter of singing is voice, music, and language” (p. 559), the pedagogy of singing requires the teacher to “meld technique content knowledge with musical performance craft knowledge in a systematic approach that facilitates the singer’s tuning of the instrument while playing it” (p. 566). They go on to suggest that teachers today are required to understand “the physical factors and safely and efficiently produce the appropriate sound and teaching approach suited to a range of students” (p. 559). As early as 1990 Miles and Hollien (see 3.3) argued that there are prominent differences in voice production between classical singing traditions and belting⁹ (see 3.3). The prevailing opinions of educators suggest that appropriateness of the sound should direct the pedagogy to adapt to the musical style and its aesthetic values.

Considering research of popular music vocal pedagogy, the first challenge occurs in trying to define the field. In their attempt to illustrate the different features of popular music singing Callaghan et al. (2012) state, that “contemporary vocal styles exhibit wide variability in tonal preferences and are microphone-based” (p. 576). The importance of the progression from voice as acoustic instrument to the technologically processed contemporary singing voice is emphasised by Hughes (2014), who suggests that “pedagogical strategies must therefore include the singing voice in the context of technological treatment” (p. 293). Technologies must therefore be viewed as extensions of the contemporary singing voice. Callaghan et al. (2012) further describe a contemporary singer as “a cocreator, adding, inventing, and changing the original tempo, key, rhythm, and even genre” (p. 576) making a comparison to classical singers who, according to them, have to be musical interpreters honouring the composer. However, such definitions can be problematic as one might suggest that not all popular music singing is microphone-based, and not all classical vocal music is fully composed. Kayes, Fisher and Popeil (2014) identify the differences between classical and popular music as concerning “written versus oral tradition; historical/cultural context; use of voice; word articulation, dynamics, vibrato, phrasing; stylistic idioms; vocal registers; pitch range; resonance characteristics; and learning cultures” (para. 1).

In comparison to popular music, jazz has a long history of inclusion in Nordic higher music education programs. Jazz singing has also been studied by several scholars in terms of a pedagogy. Many writers emphasise the importance of specific elements of teaching practices designed for jazz singers. For example, Hargreaves (2014a) identifies significant differences between learning modes of jazz singers and their instrumentalist counterparts, such as motor feedback, verbal capacity, embodiment, music learning experiences, and role, which refers to “the social and musical functions assumed

⁹ Belting is a common, yet not clearly defined technique of singing.

by musicians during performance” (p. 277). Vocal teachers have been found to take different learning routes than instrumental teachers (Burwell, 2006) and singers have been observed to differ in learning modes from instrumentalists (Hargreaves, 2016). Literature suggests that these differences have not been acknowledged in teaching practices within jazz.

The vast majority of literature has approached vocal jazz pedagogy through discussing improvisation, one of the main elements of jazz. Madura Ward-Steinman (2008; 2014) has discussed vocal improvisation through analysing Australian and American improviser-educators’ influences and pedagogical views. Her findings suggest that there are national differences in how improviser-educators approach music, and immersion in the musical style and the motivation in engaging with improvising are emphasised as determinants of such differences. Hargreaves (2014b) presents three commonly used pathways to teaching vocal jazz improvisation: immersing students in the sounds of jazz, a conscious learning of the musical building blocks of jazz and encouraging singers to improvise on an instrument. Bell (2013), in addition to reporting several differences in the learning of jazz of singers and jazz instrumentalists, also emphasises playing piano as a necessary part of the process of learning jazz vocalisation. However, this requirement seems controversial for higher education as it suggests that jazz improvisation should not be approached through voice only. Adding to literature calling for teaching practices designed for singers Hargreaves (2016) presents the example of *the 12-key approach*¹⁰, which according to her study is less useful for singers because of physiological limitations of the vocal instrument.

Wadsworth Walker (2005) reports ensemble directors’ and performers’ views on teaching vocal improvisation through various strategies; “(a) listening to jazz singers, (b) listening to jazz instrumentalists, (c) imitative ability (call-and-response, etc.), (d) playing the piano, (e) music theory knowledge (chord symbols, scales, etc.), (f) applied voice study, (g) singing in a traditional choir, (h) transcribing solos, (i) playing an instrument (besides the piano), (j) learning jazz standards, (k) music reading skills, (l) vocalizing harmonic structures (bass lines, guide tones, etc.), (m) physicalizing rhythmic feel (snapping fingers, shifting weight, etc.) and (n) applied instrumental study” (pp. 9-10). Wadsworth Walker’s study reveals consistency in the teaching techniques employed but also suggests that teaching and learning processes may not be quite understood. In addition, several scholars in the United States have addressed teaching a vocal jazz ensemble in their doctoral dissertations, a fact that connects with the tradition

¹⁰ The 12-key approach “involves learning a song, scale, arpeggio or motif in one key, then transposing and practicing it in the other 11 keys” (Hargreaves, 2016, p. 370).

of vocal jazz ensembles as a common teaching practice in the United States (Wadsworth Walker, 2005).

Instead of trying to merge all musical styles into one ideal pedagogy, researchers have turned their interest to teaching approaches designed for distinct musical styles. O'Brian and Harrison (2014) suggest that each style or content requires a unique pedagogy. Chandler (2014) suggests that while popular music singing shares commonalities with other singing styles, "the specifics are distinctive and non-generic, requiring a level of specialized knowledge, training and competence by the people teaching it" (p. 33). In relation to vocal education for singers of popular music Bartlett (2014) proposes that research "with singers rather than about them" (p. 34) might better bring to focus "the real world demands of CCM music styles, gig environments, and vocal health issues faced by this significant and talented group of performers" (p. 34). The literature on musical theatre singing has increased particularly during the recent decades with several scholars identifying a need for a specific pedagogical approach for musical theatre singers (Björkner, 2008; Edwin, 2010; LoVetri, Saunders-Barton, & Means Weekly, 2014; Melton, 2007). Through her research of teaching gospel singing Robinson-Martin (2014) proposes that teachers should be aware of all aesthetic components of gospel singing and address students' musical development from those angles.

The artistic aspects of popular music singing have been addressed by Bartlett (2011; 2014). Her research has investigated the work of professional popular music singers and suggests that they "create a market for their music through the development of specific stage personae, where their vocal individuality and style innovation determines their career success and longevity" (Bartlett, 2014, p. 27). Hughes (2017) has discussed artistry and its pedagogical implications in relation to curricular components in popular music singing suggesting that the aim of these curricular components should be "to facilitate artistry, artistic vision and practice through a range of exploratory and creative processes" (p. 187). Interdisciplinary studies concerning the outcomes of popular music vocal pedagogy include, for example, research on stardom in popular music (Hamlen Jr, 1991). Vocal teaching in higher education also relates to musicological research on different musical styles, such as analyses of performance practices of African American gospel music (Legg & Philpott, 2015) and thinking in jazz (Berliner, 1994).

Research of popular music and jazz singing pedagogy in the Nordic countries, the context of this study, is limited but growing. Zangger Borch (2008) includes some notions of pedagogy and voice science in his artistic dissertation and Puurtinen (2010) analyses the position of vocal effects in her singing in her artistic doctoral degree. Bergesen Schei (2007) investigates identity formation of professional singers of different musical styles, while Valtasaari (2017) studies an intervention through voice teaching on the voice quality

and expressions of students in a teacher education programme. Hakanpää, Waaramaa, and Laukkanen (2018) have studied emotion recognition in CCM and classical singing styles proposing that there are statistically significant differences between singers in these styles, as valence and activation were better perceived than emotions, and the recognition percentage was higher among CCM singers. Tarvainen (2012) has researched empathetic listening by which she means the bodily-based understanding of a singer's vocal interpretation. The research presented here, even if very interesting and enhancing new understanding of singing, does not shed light to the pedagogy of popular music and jazz singing. There evidently is a lack of research in this field. Nordic voice science, another field of science affecting pedagogy, is discussed in section 3.3.

In mapping the literature of popular music and jazz singing pedagogy it becomes evident that while empirical studies are few, there is an array of guidebooks which address different musical styles and techniques. Several guidebooks on popular music and jazz singing (Berkman, 2009; Clayton, 2001; van Doorn, 2016; Niemack, 2004; Peckham, 2006; 2010; Rawlins, 2001; Spradling, 2007; Stoloff, 1999; 2012; Weir, 2005; Zegree, 2002) present a range of techniques and styles to be applied by the individual teacher. The U.S. based National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) has published a series of guidebooks under the name *So You Want to Sing: A Guide for Professionals*. Books in this series address a range of popular music singing styles; rock'n'roll (Edwards, 2014), musical theatre (Hall, 2014), country (Garner, 2016), gospel (Robinson-Martin, 2016) and folk music (Mindel, 2017). The series also contains one book on jazz singing (Shapiro, 2016). Most recently, in the guidebook *So You Want to Sing CCM: A Guide for Performers* (Hoch, 2018) the editor draws together the opinions of a group of well-known teachers in the field. Their responses to a set of questions illustrate the differences of the approach that each writer brings to pedagogy. Hoch identifies similar challenges to those presented in the rationale of this study; for example, the challenge of varying terminology and pedagogical approach in the training of popular music singers.

As discussed in the rationale of this study, vocal pedagogy has during the last decades been affected by several vocal methods or models. The most widespread vocal methods or models in the Nordic countries are *Complete Vocal Technique*, CVT (Sadolin, 2008) and *Estill Voice Training*, EVT (McDonald Klimek, Obert, & Steinhauer, 2005). Other methods such as *Speech Level Singing*, SLS (Riggs & Carratello, 1992), *Singing Success* (Manning, 2017), *Somatic Voicework* (LoVetri, 2017), *Voiceworks* (Popeil, 2018), and *Vocal Power Method* (Howard, 2018) are widely spread globally but they are not common in the Nordic countries due to lack of certified teachers. *Balance in Phonation Voice Training*, BiP (Eerola, 2012) is the first Finnish method that organises certification courses for teachers while in Sweden Zangger Borch has founded the *Voice Centre* which educates certified vocal coaches in his teaching method (Zangger Borch, 2005).

Singers also engage with methods that focus on voice through body work such as *Alexander Method* (Head, 2017), *Feldenkrais Method* (Grant, 2014; Nelson & Blades, 2005) and the *Rosen Method* (Mayland, 2005). In addition to these, some authors prefer to look at the process of singing from a more holistic standpoint (Harrison, 2006; Sell, 2005). These approaches are discussed and marketed in similar ways as vocal methods or models. Additionally, a range of related methods exist for the production of theatre voice promoting the synthesis of acting and singing. Such approaches have been presented for example by Linklater (2018), Kayes (2000) and Melton (2007). Common to most vocal methods and models is that they do not take a stance in musical issues such as phrasing or aesthetics but separate vocal technique from its musical context.

Many of the vocal methods and models as discussed above are commercially based and often are marketed actively by their creators through courses and certified teacher programs. In order to endorse their concepts of singing, some authors have conducted their own agenda-driven research of vocal technique and in some cases have created their own individualised vocabulary for different vocal phenomena. Methods or models often also regulate the ways in which certified teachers present information to students as a way to protect their brand and for consistency of teaching practice. Some music education authors have raised ethical concerns related to the restrictive use of methods, arguing that “an ethical crisis is evident in [...] music education methodologies when in the process of securing ends against the uncertainties of change, creative or imaginative options are foreclosed or limited” (Allsup & Westerlund, 2012, p. 127). Similarly, Regelski (2009) criticises method-based teaching which focuses attention on the details and delivery of instruction, whether or not that instruction results in a musically pragmatic difference. Benedict (2009) states that “indiscriminate use of [...] any method deflects our attention from interrogating issues such as what our purpose would be if a reconstruction of society based upon critically reflective learning framed our engagements” (p. 222).

There is very little research on the effects of vocal methods or models on singers. In connection to CVT, Brixen, Sadolin, and Kjelin (2012) have presented a paper on the acoustic detection of its vocal modes and two studies explore these vocal modes (Sundberg, Bitelli, Holmberg, & Laaksonen, 2017; Thuesen, McGlashan, & Sadolin, 2017). In Finland the vocal technique suggested by CVT is currently being studied in a multidisciplinary doctoral research project at the University of Oulu. However, the results of that study are not available at the time of writing this current dissertation. McClellan (2011) has presented a comparative analysis of SLS and traditional vocal training in his doctoral dissertation. However, due to strict confidentiality issues related to SLS teaching, his analysis does not provide actual comparison between the two approaches. Also, traditional vocal training is challenging to define and therefore

a comparison between these approaches is difficult. Noticeable in McCellan's study is the part in which he discusses teachers who are against or for SLS by name. It can be assumed that such stance creates and deepens the segregation of vocal teachers into the silos of vocal methods or models. On the other hand, such research design can be seen as an attempt to suggest that popular music singing cannot be taught through the aesthetic and technical values of classical singing.

Fantini, Fussi, Crosetti, and Succo (2017) have conducted a research on singers educated according to Estill Voice Training (EVT) and singers with no such education. They suggest that acoustic and perceptual analysis "showed significant differences between the two groups of singers regarding both sound perturbation control and spectral energy distribution control ability" (p. 150). These authors do recognise the lack of prospective approach as a limitation to their study. Still, similarly to McClellan who according to his study concludes that "if an artist aspires to have a career as a popular singer, then Speech Level Singing might be the best route to take" (pp. 77-78), Fantini et al. (2017) propose that "EVT might represent an effective educational system for developing voice quality control abilities in contemporary commercial singing" (p. 151). These conclusions appear to promote a certain method through advertising couched in research.

3.2 Popular music and jazz pedagogy in general music education research

In Nordic higher education popular music and jazz vocal teaching is also part of general music education. Therefore, the literature on general music education is also relevant to this study. Similarly to the previously presented literature, popular music and jazz have been mostly discussed separately in this corpus (Smith, Moir, Brennan, Rambarran, & Kirkman, 2017; Cooke & Horn, 2002; Frith, Straw, & Street, 2001). Considering popular music education in general, Green (2002) proposes that the ways popular musicians learn offers formal music education an alternative and successful method for teaching. In turn, Smith et al. (2017) argue that the presence of popular music has within the last decades grown in schools, universities and conservatories up to the point where it "deserves recognition as its own field" (p. 5).

According to Till (2017) the key question is, are the teaching traditions of western classical music uncritically applied, or are new pedagogical approaches created for the needs of popular music. Similarly, Lebler (2007) discusses how the teaching approaches of popular music should be carefully considered. In teaching that focuses on training

particular skills or acquisition of knowledge, approaches based on transmission of content may be appropriate. However, Lebler also argues that “it is necessary for students to do much that has previously been teachers’ business” in popular music education (p. 207). Alternative teaching approaches suitable for popular music include methods such as “flipped classroom, student-directed learning, collaborative learning and participatory assessment” (Till, 2017, p. 24). According to Lebler and Weston (2015) and Lebler (2008) connecting education to the realities of working life has also to be considered, especially in under-graduate programs in which popular music is taught along the practices of music industry.

Similarly to the literature on jazz vocal pedagogy based on instrumental music education, general music education literature on jazz pedagogy is more extensive than literature on popular music pedagogy (Ake, 2002; Barratt & Moore, 2005; Johnston, 2013; Prouty, 2008). Vast amount of this literature approaches jazz pedagogy from the viewpoint of improvisation. A research focusing on four prominent jazz educators in higher education reveals common pedagogical themes such as an array of unique teaching exercises, facility with non-traditional vocabulary, the establishment of a safe and egalitarian teaching space, lack of evaluation, leader as guide, comfort with spontaneity, and pedagogue as performer/improviser (Hickey, 2015). Louth (2012) suggests that a dialectical approach to improvisation pedagogy “is best suited to address the problem of balancing discipline and freedom when improvisation is taught in formal academic contexts” (p. 10). Johansen (2013a) has identified that jazz improvisation students emphasise the development of a personal sound or voice and quest for autonomy and ownership with respect to the choice and utilisation of learning material. Thus, Johansen (2013b) proposes that learning improvisation through copying from recordings, a common teaching practice in jazz, may be interpreted as means to personalise the acquired knowledge in order to operationalise it in improvisatory performing practices. In addition, Bjerstedt (2015) has identified different landscapes belonging to the notion “didactic loci of jazz improvisation” (p. 509).

In the Nordic countries jazz has been a part of higher music education for decades (see 1.2). The literature also mentions Scandinavia as an exception in considering how general music education researchers have discussed popular music (Till, 2017). Indeed, the early inclusion of popular music into Nordic music curricula and study programs “entailed an early academisation of the topic” (Dyndahl, Karlsen, Graabraek Nielsen, & Skårberg, 2017, p. 439). Väkevä (2006) suggests that music institutions in the Nordic countries have been forced to develop their methods and reflect seriously on the nature of the pedagogy of popular styles, and “this calls for a systematic study of the learning bases of these styles, indicating new directions for music education research” (p. 127). Popular music researchers have since melded as an international discursive

community “empowering it to create a space for popular music in academia” (Holt, 2017, p. 5). The academic interest concerning popular music as well as its related processes of socialisation and learning have been discussed for example from the viewpoints of democracy (Christophersen & Gullberg, 2017; Karlsen, 2012), censorship (Kallio, 2015), aesthetic values (Christophersen, 2009) authenticity (Dyndahl & Nielsen, 2014; Kallio, Westerlund, & Partti, 2014), and formal and informal learning (Partti, 2014; Karlsen & Väkevä, 2012). At the time of writing this thesis, music education scholars are discussing for example the existence and content of different degree programs of popular music such as studio production (Askerøi & Viervoll, 2017).

Within Nordic higher music education improvisation is often considered to be a generic skill that cuts through many musical styles. As an example, the Academy of Music and Drama of University of Gothenburg has named one of their degrees *Improvisation*, which offers “a wide field of improvisational music that often transcend genres” (Academy of Music and Drama, 2018). As another example, Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (2018), in addition to offering courses on the basics of improvisation across different musical styles, has adapted pedagogy of improvisation to its curriculum. Such generic approach to improvisation has also been discussed by MacDonald, Wilson and Miell (2012), who suggest that improvisation provides the opportunity to challenge musical and cultural hegemonies and develop new ways of collaborating and thinking creatively.

Considering the literature of popular music and jazz pedagogy as whole, Mantie (2013) suggests there are international differences in discourses, which are reflective of both differing music education practices and differing conceptions of what music education should be. It is notable, that within the educational literature of popular music, research and discussion focuses mainly on school music teacher education, and there seems to be a lack of research on the education of professional popular musicians.

3.3 Voice science

One of the most influential changes in vocal pedagogy has been the increasing emphasis on new research of vocal science. Beginning in the late 1980s research has been also conducted on singing styles other than western classical tradition. This has brought new understanding of vocal technique concerning for example popular music styles which has changed the conceptions of, and ways in which, human voice is trained. According to McCoy (2014) these advances “are particularly apparent in the application of acoustic voice analysis in teacher education and as biofeedback in singer training” (p. 11). For

example, new knowledge has been achieved from the fields of “vocal physiology and acoustics, linguistics, neurobiology, and teaching and learning” (Callaghan, Emmons, & Popeil, 2012, p. 559). Today voice trainers must find ways to assimilate new knowledge from vocal anatomy, speech pathology and phonetics into their professional competence and “make them practical and useful for performance students” (Sansom, 2016, p. 157).

In addition, researchers have described how different sounds within different singing styles and effects are produced and proposed that they do not necessarily compromise vocal health. The differences between classical and other styles of singing were first discussed in the context of musical theatre by researchers such as Estill (1988), Miles and Hollien (1990), Sundberg, Cramming, and LoVetri (1993), and Titze (2005). In belting, a singing style used in many musical styles but first researched within musical theatre, prominent differences between classical and musical theatre singing have been observed through research. For example, Sundberg et al. (1993) have conducted a research comparing pharynx, source, formant, and pressure characteristics in operatic and musical theatre singing. Later, Bestebreurtje, and Schutte (2000) studied resonance strategies specifically to describe the belting style and Björkner (2008) has investigated the difference in subglottal pressure, voice source and formant frequency characteristics. While Popeil (2007) and Sundberg, Thalen, and Popeil (2012) discuss the multiplicity of belting, many authors suggest that belting as a term has no generally agreed definition (Spivey, 2008a; 2008b; Edwin, 2010).

The researchers also turned towards the different singing styles of popular music. A comparison of a female singer’s voice source in classical, pop, jazz, and blues singing was conducted by Sundberg and Thalen (2001), and the spectrum characteristics of country singers was researched by Cleveland, Sundberg, and Stone (2001). Zangger Borch and Sundberg (2011) investigated phonatory and resonatory characteristics of singing within rock, pop, and soul, while Howard (2010) used an electrolaryngograph in order to research the different aspects of vibrating vocal folds during singing different styles. The somewhat controversial term *pharyngeal voice* used in SLS method has been discussed and challenged by Buescher and Sims (2011). Guzman, Lanas, Olaviarria, and Azocar (2015) have studied laryngeal and pharyngeal configuration in non-classical singing styles and suggested that rock singing is the style with the highest degree of both laryngeal and pharyngeal activity.

One element separating popular music singing from Western classical singing tradition has been the use of vocal effects¹¹ which are various elements added to voice

¹¹ Some literature also uses the terms *extreme vocal effects* or *extended vocal techniques*.

production. Terms such as *distortion*, *growl*, *grunt*, and *scream* are often applied, but they do not have agreed definitions as there are different understandings of how they are produced. Sakakibara, Fuks, Imagawa, and Tayama (2004) have researched the production of a vocal effect they call growl¹². Zangger Borch, Sundberg, Lindestad, and Thalen (2004) have studied vocal fold vibration and voice source aperiodicity in distorted tones. Several researchers have showed interest in extended vocal techniques during the last decades. Eckers et al. (2009) have studied the voice production of death metal singers, and Edgerton (2014) has discussed extended vocal techniques such as throat singing. Caffier, Nasr, Roper Rendon, Wienhausen, Forbes, Seidner, and Nawka (2018) have researched the use of vocal effects and partial glottal vibration and suggest that using them was not harmful to research participants' voices.

New technology and software have changed the ways in which voice teachers can respond to their students in particular teaching situations. Teachers can now use for example voice-specific acoustic analysis software, sound acquisition hardware, spectrum analysers, software measuring vibrato, pitch accuracy and timbre, and phonetic transcription software to enhance their teaching (McCoy, 2014). Welch, Howard, Himonides, and Brereton (2005) as well as Howard, Brereton, Welch, Himonides, DeCosta, Williams, and Howard (2005) have studied the usefulness of real-time visual feedback in teaching singing and suggested that it can provide more meaningful feedback for the student and the teacher in singing lessons. As McCoy (2014) states it, voice pedagogy may now be “based on reality” (p. 18).

3.4 The teaching environment

Instrumental teaching in Nordic higher education is mostly conducted as one-to-one tuition. Within one-to-one tuition traits of master-apprentice model, also referred to as expert-novice apprentice model in the literature, are often found (Gaunt, 2005; Kennell, 2002; Westerlund, 2006). In order to more comprehensively describe the environment in which the participants of the project of this study worked, the following sections discuss research of one-to-one tuition and the master-apprentice model.

¹² The terminology around vocal effects varies between references and definitions are not agreed on.

3.4.1 One-to-one tuition

The main focus in this study corpus is the adaptation of one-to-one teaching method to popular music and jazz pedagogy, acknowledging the long tradition of Western classical instrumental learning, which has been, and still is, established as a continuing core activity of vocal and instrumental tuition (Carey, Lebler, & Gall, 2012; Creech & Gaunt, 2012). The affordances and constraints of one-to-one tuition have been studied by several music education scholars (Gaunt, 2009; 2011; Heikinheimo, 2009; Johansson, 2013; O'Bryan, 2014; Zhukov, 2012). Gaunt, Creech, Long, and Hallam (2012) suggest that students often look towards a one-to-one teacher as a mentor and that the “aspects of the intimacy and trust established with a teacher [provide] the potential for a mentoring relationship” (p. 40). According to Creech and Gaunt (2012) teachers and students are deeply committed to the one-to-one practices which allow “scope for the transmission of detailed content in terms of technical expertise, musical knowledge, and approach to the interpretation of repertoire” (p. 695). Thus, Gaunt (2005) states that the intensity and privacy of the engagement of the teacher and the student within one-to-one tuition resembles “the intimacy of personal or therapeutic relationships more than conventional teaching/learning relationships” (p. 268).

Serra-Dawa (2014) has researched the teacher-student relationship in one-to-one vocal tuition from the viewpoint of adult attachment from both the teachers' and the students' side. She observes that teacher domination is an important factor of such attachment, as personal characteristics and professional conditionings are involved, which she suggests imposing an attitude of being “in charge” (p. 209). Interestingly, in a few teacher-student dyads an inversion of roles was observed, and “the characterisation clearly presented students with more dominant characteristics or teachers with insecure style of attachment” (p. 209).

Literature also suggests challenges within the interpersonal relationship between the teacher and the student. As one critical feature Creech and Gaunt (2012) identify the balance of participation, as research has found low proportions of “student talk” or students asking questions and high proportions of “teacher talk” devoted to technical commands (p. 696). In a study by Burwell (2005) teachers' questioning strategies typically did not stimulate students' creativity, exploration, and skills as mature and independent learners. Also, Zhukov (2012) has observed “the predominance of teacher demonstration, general directives and praise as most frequent teaching strategies employed in lessons” (p. 32). The findings of Zhukov's study emphasise the importance of teacher modelling as the predominant teaching strategy in advanced instrumental music lessons. Gaunt (2011) proposes that even if in her study an assumption of shared

understanding existed, “in fact the reality of the boundaries of the relationship, [...] were largely constructed by the teacher” (p. 175). Creech and Gaunt (2012) state that the dynamics of power in the relationship between the student and teacher has an extensive impact which often remains tacit.

Johansson (2013), based on her research on one teacher and three classical vocal students suggests that problems and learning obstacles experienced in one-to-one tuition may be redefined and used as learning options by students as well as teachers. The intersubjectivity of the relationship between the teacher and the student has also been studied by Collens and Creech (2013), who propose one-to-one tuition relationship to be “an emotionally imbued and intersubjectively co-created encounter between two human beings” (p. 161) and continue that in the existence of certain conditions in the relationship “there is the possibility for the emergence of collaboration, trust, and mutually enhancing experience” (p. 161).

Burwell et al. (2017) discuss how in addition to one-to-one environment creating a dedicated and undisturbed space for the interaction between the teacher and the student the isolated teaching environment also may “serve to disguise and perpetuate assumptions, attitudes and practices” (p. 2) often embedded within the traditions of apprenticeship and conservatory culture. Such isolation, which often is not a conscious choice of the teacher, has not contributed to the development of coherent pedagogies, as “the activity of the teacher–student dyad [...] is inaccessible to others, and teachers are often obliged to develop their work in relative isolation, relying on reference points that are limited to their personal histories and accumulating experience” (p. 2).

Vast majority of literature presented in this section concerns either instrumental tuition or tuition of Western classical tradition. There seems to be paucity of research concerning one-to-one tuition of singers in popular music and jazz. Among the very few research reports on popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy Carey and Grant (2015), in an empirical study of teachers’ and students’ perceptions of one-to-one tuition, suggest that one-to-one tuition is often considered essential to students’ learning and development, and also that the relationship between the teacher and the student in one-to-one tuition extends to the aspirations of the students as professional musicians. Based on a case study of a transformative teaching in jazz vocal pedagogy, Carey & Grant (2016) found no indication of teacher modelling as being an important aspect of teaching, but instead emphasised encouragement of students “to be actively involved in their learning, from setting the agenda in lessons to discovering their own solutions to challenges they face, thereby developing in them self-sufficiency” (p. 60).

Within one-to-one tuition of popular music and jazz singing two questions arise in relation to teaching practices. Firstly, the teacher and the student do not share the same instrument, especially if they have different voice qualities or are of opposite gender. Secondly, in popular music and jazz there often is not one ideal way to sing but many personal means of expression are allowed, a fact that creates a need for creative pedagogical practices excluding teacher modelling.

3.4.2 The master-apprentice model

Apprenticeship is based on acquiring practical know-how skills “through modelling, demonstration, imitation and application” (Westerlund, 2006, p. 120). Westerlund suggests that in apprenticeship the teacher is the master who identifies the goals and how they should be achieved. The model presupposes the recognition of the teacher-given goals and the means of achieving them by the student, as the teacher “is the initiator and verifier of the activity” (Westerlund, 2006, p. 120). Callaghan, Emmons, and Popeil (2012) suggest that the master-apprentice tradition has continued to prevail in vocal pedagogy “despite a breakdown in the assumptions underpinning it, and despite modern educational pressures” (p. 559).

Burwell et al. (2017) connect the apprentice model and one-to-one tuition. They propose that modelling and participation are linked to isolation of the teaching environment “where the student is presented with a single exemplar” (p. 3). Even if contemporary higher music education provides students with group-based activities, the models presented in one-to-one tuition by the teacher may be considered closer and more immediate. This creates challenges for students “to consciously choose the influences they adopt” (p. 3). On the other hand, in one-to-one environment the teacher can select demonstrations “that reflect the individual student’s concerns across varying challenges and stages of development” (p. 3). Burwell et al. suggest that the collaboration between the teacher and the student in one-to-one tuition is a closed setting and may emphasise the student’s accountability to the teacher, while reducing the teacher’s accountability to the institution. This may cause passivity among students as there is “potential for the teacher to dominate lesson interactions, if not through personal intentions then through cultural assumptions” (p. 8).

Many scholars see potential for development in the ways instrumental teaching is structured. Gaunt and Westerlund (2013) state that collaborative learning is becoming one of the most powerful ways to deal with challenges of development in higher music education. Several researchers have investigated the affordances of collaborative

processes within instrumental teaching. For example, Nielsen, Johansen and Jorgensen (2018) bring forth the benefits of peer learning in instrumental practicing, and Latekefu and Verenikina (2013) discuss how vocal students' self-directed learning has been enhanced through expanded collaborative practices, but also make a point that their results do not suggest abandoning one-to-one tuition in higher education. Christophersen (2013) brings forth several challenges in the dynamics of power within collaborative learning. She suggests that "despite perceived benefits of collaborative learning, un-reflexive practices may promote an appearance of consensus, dialogue, and inclusion, and of an absence of distributed power, that are highly questionable" (p. 85).

4 Methodology

The following chapter presents the different methodological choices made in this study, beginning with the philosophical and ontological foundations underpinning the choice of qualitative approach. The chapter also addresses facilitation as means of researching the professional conversations that took place in the project. The reasons for choosing case study as a design and how the case has been defined and selected are addressed. Also, the multiple sources and different phases of data collection and my own involvement in it are discussed in detail. Finally, in order to enhance transparency in the study, the methods applied in analysis and a description of the analysis process are presented.

4.1 Qualitative approach

It is essential to define the different philosophical foundations underlying a research and choose an approach that matches the worldview, personality, and skills possessed by the researcher (Merriam, 2009). In this study I adopt a qualitative approach in investigating the development of expertise of the participating popular music and jazz vocal teachers, because this means exploring a social human problem that cannot be studied on the basis of quantitative data (Silverman, 2000). Qualitative research has been found applicable in applied research, which aims at improving the quality of practice of a particular discipline (Merriam, 2009). The nature of the research questions in this study also imply that the answers cannot be found through quantitative enumerations but require exploration of a context that consists of unclear variables. The epistemological stance of this study is based on the notion that the knowledge this study is interested in lies in the thinking of the professionals working in the field and can be viewed by bringing these professionals together to discuss real working life experiences.

Ontologically this study investigates multiple realities and experiences and presents this multiplicity through the voices of the participants. Therefore, methods that value diversity are applied in order to build a complex and holistic picture of the process. I report detailed views expressed by the participants in order to present “the multiple dimensions of a problem or issue and [display] it in all of its complexity” (Creswell, 1998, p. 15).

Silverman (2006) argues that the main strength of qualitative research is “its ability to study phenomena which are simply unavailable elsewhere” (p. 43). Scholars generally agree that qualitative approach is appropriate when conducting inquiry “in a natural

setting where the researcher is an instrument of data collection who gathers words and pictures, analyses them inductively, focuses on the meaning of participants, and describes a process that is expressive and persuasive in language” (Creswell, 1998, p. 14). As a situational approach qualitative research requires that the researchers connect meanings closely to the context and assumes that the researcher shares certain features with the participants (Schreier, 2012). Thus, qualitative approach allows the researcher to be an active learner in the process (Creswell, 1998). As a colleague of the participants, my aim was not to position myself above the participants or pass judgement on them but study the phenomenon through exploring “the story from the participants’ view” (Creswell, 1998, p. 18).

Some literature criticises qualitative research by stating that in order for it to be valid, it needs to be based on “operational definitions of variables, experimental data, official statistics, or the random sampling of populations” (Silverman, 2006, p. 43). The generalizability of qualitative inquiry has also been challenged with the same reasoning. I agree with Schreier (2012), who opposes such views by suggesting that objectivity does not make sense in qualitative research between humans and that “reflexivity becomes important instead” (p. 23). Reflexivity of the participants should be considered as an important asset and they should be seen as experts of the research question and treated as “partners during the research process” (Schreier, 2012, p. 23). My reflexivity as a researcher is discussed in section 6.6.

4.2 Researching professional conversations

Professional conversations were used as a methodological choice in generating data in this study. I assumed that by researching professional conversations between teachers with a high level of expertise important insights would emerge. The aim was firstly to make the project worth the participants’ time (Sennett, 2012), and secondly to distribute power for the participants to decide about the content of the professional conversations.

Facilitation was used as a methodological tool which framed my action as the researcher in the project. Facilitation is commonly used in business and organisational settings. Apart for the word being used as a verb in the sense of making an action or a process easy or easier (Oxford Dictionary, 2018), Bens (2012) suggests it can also be considered as a leadership role in which the decision-making power resides in the participants. This feature frees the facilitator to focus on creating a climate of collaboration and provides the group with the structure it needs to be effective. Cadwell (1997) suggests that facilitators should provide structure, focus on results, and manage

time and the agenda. Facilitators must thus encourage participation, show empathy, remain objective, avoid manipulating or embarrassing anyone, and stay committed to the process. The facilitator also uses questioning and probing to encourage deeper exploration (Bens, 2012). The literature emphasises neutrality of the facilitator, but this may sometimes be hard to maintain, as often facilitators have their own insights of the matter in question (Bens, 2012). This was especially true in this research, as I am deeply involved in popular music and jazz vocal teaching myself. Bens suggests different techniques in maintaining neutrality in facilitating. She sees asking questions as a way to lead the process without overstepping the boundaries. Through well formulated questions the facilitator may prompt the group members to consider alternative solutions or angles. Offering suggestions is also considered a neutral way of facilitating: “if the content is presented as an offering instead of an order, the boundary of neutrality is not crossed” (Bens, 2012, p. 13). Sometimes stepping away from the facilitator position in order to bring in important facts is acceptable, but this should be clearly communicated to the group.

Facilitation has also been successfully applied in educational research (Pharo et al., 2012). Danielson (2016) suggests that with skilled facilitation “conversations can help a teacher reflect deeply on their practice and see patterns of both student behavior and the results of teacher actions” (s. 20). These features of facilitation connect it to continuing professional development of teachers. In order to be able to use appropriate and varied facilitating tools and keep the project interesting for the participants, I studied facilitation and attended a course presenting various facilitative tools. My aim was also to clarify, how I could combine the organisational tasks such as keeping structure and time, the involvement of all participants in the process, and using my content knowledge and understanding of the field as positive aspects without influencing the content and outcomes of the discussion. All facilitative tools used during the project were considered carefully and are reported in data collection (see 4.5.2).

4.3 Case study

I chose case study as the research design in investigating the development of expertise of the participants through professional conversations. Case study allowed investigation of the bounded case of five teachers, in an up-close, in-depth, and detailed manner (Bassey, 2000; Creswell, 1998; Flyvbjerg, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; 2000; Yin, 2003). Flyvbjerg (2011) connects case studies to development of expertise by stating that common to all experts is the ability to “operate on the basis of intimate knowledge of several thousand concrete cases in their areas of expertise” (p. 303). Thus, case studies

produce “the type of context-dependent knowledge that research on learning shows to be necessary to allow people to develop from rule-based beginners to virtuoso experts” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 221).

The demarcation of the boundaries of the researched case is decisive in considering whether a case study is an appropriate method (Flyvbjerg, 2011). The case of this study was identified as the particular group of popular music and jazz vocal teachers participating in a particular project. This case is not merely the object of the study, but a bounded system, around which there are intrinsic boundaries of time (11 months), space (a conversational space), and activity (professional conversations) (Harrison, Birks, Franklin & Mills, 2017; Merriam, 2009). Such boundaries comport to the essential features of this case study in which the bounding of case selection, time frame, implementation of the project, methods of data collection and analysis are systematic and rigorous.

Several scholars (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2009; Silverman, 2000; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2003) present differing philosophical foundations of the case study approach. Harrison et al. (2017) and Yazan (2015) suggest that a distinction of a philosophical stance can be made between Yin, Stake and Merriam, the foundational case study methodologists whose suggestions “largely impact educational researchers’ decisions concerning case study design” (Yazan, 2015, p. 134). Epistemologically Yin can be placed in the positivist or realist-post-positivist stance because of his positivist view on emphasizing objectivity, validity and generalizability in building a case study design (Yazan, 2015). Stake’s approach, on the other hand, can be placed on the stance of constructivism and existentialism, as he conceives qualitative case study researchers “as interpreters, and gatherers of interpretations which require them to report their rendition or construction of the constructed reality or knowledge that they gather through their investigation” (Yazan, 2015, p. 137).

Yazan (2015) sees the philosophical perspectives of Merriam being close to Stake’s views and emphasises that reality is being constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds. Merriam (2009) understands reality not as an objective entity but rather as “multiple interpretations of reality” (p. 22). The ontological stance of the present study is based on understanding realities as experiences that are multiple in existence and embedded in social contexts. In this study I apply the approach to case study proposed by Merriam, that a case study is “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (p. 40). Thus, I consider my position as a researcher in this study similarly to Merriam who suggests that “researchers do not ‘find’ knowledge, they construct it” (p. 9).

Merriam (2009) proposes that the specificity of focus of case study approach as *particularistic*, *descriptive*, and *heuristic* makes it “an especially good design for practical problems – for questions, situations, or puzzling occurrences arising from everyday practice” (p. 43). By particularistic Merriam suggests that case studies focus on a particular situation or phenomenon, in this case the project as a bounded system. Therefore, the case itself is important “for what it reveals about the phenomenon and for what it might represent” (p. 43). By case study being descriptive Merriam refers to the precondition of complete, literal description of an entity. Heuristic according to Merriam refers to the illuminative features of the case study: that it discovers, extends and confirms aspects of the phenomenon for the reader.

The aim of this study was to understand the phenomenon using the case as an illustration (Creswell, 1998), and “in the process, to see things we otherwise might not have seen” (Donmoyer, 2000, p. 63). In choosing the case study research design I relied on the notion that “in-depth knowledge of an individual example is more helpful than fleeting knowledge about a larger number of examples” (Gerring, 2007, p. 1). This case offered a possibility to study the interaction and thinking of the participants for “both their uniqueness and commonality” (Stake, 1995, p. 1). Gerring (2007) suggests that “the product of a good case study is insight” (p. 7). Through in-depth investigation this study aimed at gaining insights to popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy from the teachers’ perspectives and thus “take us to places where most of us would not have the opportunity to go” (Donmoyer, 2000, p. 61). On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that “a complete description of the phenomenon is impossible” (Donmoyer, 2000, p. 63) and the outcome of a case study is the expanded understanding through which the phenomenon can be viewed.

A case study requires data collection over time through detailed, in-depth process involving multiple sources of information rich in context (Creswell, 1998). The data of this in-depth case study is indeed rich and was collected using multiple sources providing comprehensive depth and breadth to the study (for more see 4.5). In case study approach the context is significant to understanding the case and the data. Every case is delineated by contextual variables such as political, economic, social, cultural, historical, and/or organisational factors (Harrison et al., 2017). In this study contextual variables can be identified for example in the geographical demarcation of the case, the Nordic countries, and the position of popular music and jazz in higher education as a historical variable. Both musical styles are today prominent fields of higher music education in the Nordic countries, but the historical perspective reveals how they still are comparatively new in relation to Western classical music teaching tradition and in many countries the classical tradition still prevails. This is especially true with popular music, as jazz was introduced

to higher education earlier. Thus, the institutions or departments offering popular music and jazz studies often are small in size (see 1.3).

Some aspects emphasised as key features of case study method by methodological literature were compromised in this study. Merriam (2009) states that being “anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon” (pp. 50-51). Because of the small amount of popular music and jazz vocal teachers working in higher education, and especially because of the small amount of them working within each institution, the requirement of “situating the case within its setting” (Creswell, 1998, p. 61) could not be met, nor could the professional conversations be organised in participants’ institutions “in real-life context” (Yin, 2003, p. 1). Also, the fact that the project of this study was organised by me separates it from real-life situations. Still, considering that the focus of this study was on the descriptions of development of expertise and teaching practices and not the factual teaching of the participants, I did not consider this feature to be bounded by the physical location of the professional conversations. Therefore, the knowledge gathered in the project may be considered as another form of context-dependent knowledge as the participants would still provide real-life context experiences into these conversations.

According to Gerring (2007) the methodological status of the case study is still suspected and often identified with loosely framed and nongeneralisable theories, biased case selection, informal and undisciplined research designs, weak empirical leverage, subjective conclusions, nonreplicability and causal determinism. Also Stake (2000) notes that case studies are believed to be “useful in the study of human affairs because they are down-to-earth and attention-holding but that they are not suitable basis for generalization” (p. 19). These views have been objected by for example by Flyvbjerg (2006; 2011) and Donmoyer (2000) who both have made convincing propositions of how case studies have much to offer epistemologically. For example, when considering generalizability of case studies, Donmoyer draws on the schema theory and states that “the purpose of research is simply to expand the range of interpretations available to the research consumer” (p. 63). Flyvbjerg (2006) proposes that general, theoretical and context-independent knowledge is not more valuable than concrete, practical and context-dependent knowledge provided by case studies. In addition, he suggests that the generalizability of a case depends on how the case has been chosen, that “formal generalization, whether on the basis of large samples or single cases, is considerably overrated as the main source of scientific progress” (p. 226) and that “it is falsification, not verification, that characterises the case study” (p. 235). This case study has forced me to set aside my preconceived notions and theories and required me to reflexively “close in’ on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice” (p. 235). The limits created by the sensitivity and integrity of the

investigator must also be considered in case study design (Merriam, 2009). The fact that the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis has its advantages but also creates a challenge, as the investigator has to rely on his or her instincts and abilities throughout the study. Aspects of sensitivity and integrity in this study are addressed in section 6.7.

4.4 Defining and selecting the case

Methodological literature offers different ways of further defining the case study (Creswell, 1998; Gerring, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). As my aim was not to compare the individual teachers but consider them as a unit taking part in the case studied, as certain people developing their individual expertise through a collaborative process, this research design should be considered a single-case study (Stake, 1995). From the three variations of case study presented by Stake – *intrinsic*, *instrumental* and *collective* – the features of this project and the way it was conducted mostly resemble instrumental case study, as it aims to accomplish more than understanding the particular case. Yin (2003) also proposes a further way of defining a case study as *exploratory*, *descriptive* or *explanatory*. The definition of a case should be considered through the questions asked in the study. An exploratory study aims at developing pertinent hypotheses and propositions for further inquiry instead of enumerating the answers. This study asks how the participating popular music and jazz vocal teachers of Nordic higher education articulate their development of expertise and pedagogical thinking within the project, questions that clearly point towards exploratory ways of looking at the phenomenon. Therefore, this study can be defined as an instrumental single-case study with an exploratory design.

I built the case of this study using what some scholars call *purposeful sampling* (Creswell, 1998; Gerring, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Gerring (2007) proposes that the goals of representativeness and causal leverage must be met through purposive and non-random selection procedures. The information-oriented selection of the participants was based on the expectations about their information content, which maximised the utility of information of this study (Flyvbjerg, 2011). I do not consider the term ‘sampling’ appropriate in addressing my colleagues as its etymology leans towards quantitative enumerations, and therefore I refer to the procedure with the term *purposeful selection*.

In literature of social sciences, the optimal number of participants in a collaborative study can vary from four to eight (Breen, 2006; Liamputtong, 2011) depending on the research design. I originally recruited six participants from Denmark, Finland, Norway

and Sweden which I considered optimal for allowing enough time for each participant to express their views in the professional conversations, creating possibilities of long-term networking with international colleagues, and creating a trustworthy environment for the conversations. The gender distribution, five female and one male teacher, well represented the existing condition within Nordic higher music education, where the vast majority of the teachers are female. In August 2015 the only male participant withdrew from the project. Since there wasn't a possibility to recruit another male participant, and also because there would be severe difficulties in protecting the anonymity of male participants in general, I continued with five female participants. The reasons for emphasising anonymity are discussed in section 6.7.

As discussed in section 1.3, this research is concerned with a rather small target population: popular music and jazz vocal teachers working in full-time positions in higher music education in the Nordic countries. The exact number of the target population has not been compiled in statistics, but my estimation of the number of such teachers is under 50. My previous knowledge of the field was used in several ways in case selection within the target population, for example in considering that the educational culture may have similar traits in the Nordic countries, especially if compared to the rest of Europe and the wider world. Thus, the Nordic context provided a large enough target population to conceal the identity of the participants.

After defining the basic target population, it was necessary to define sub-criteria with which the purposeful selection could be accomplished. I created these sub-criteria with the aim to select a case in which the diversity of teachers of the target population would be present. Firstly, the selection pursued to engage both teachers with long careers in higher education and teachers who have recently joined a higher education staff. This criterion assumed that the more adept the teacher, the more her pedagogical thinking is based on and affected by her long working experience. In parallel, the younger the teacher, the more her pedagogical thinking is based on her recent formal education. The second sub-criterion directed me to recruit teachers with different backgrounds among popular music and jazz styles, as I assumed it to have an effect on their pedagogical thinking. As the third sub-criterion I considered varying educational backgrounds, because it might also have a similar effect. Fourthly, participants from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden do not necessarily share a common mother tongue and being able to have professional conversations in English was considered a requisite. Most of the literature and research on popular music and jazz singing as well as the most common language of repertoire is English, which therefore can be considered the professional language of the field. The final, and obviously a very important criterion for the selection was, that the possible participants showed interest in taking part in the project.

In order to protect the participants' anonymity, the demographics are here presented without connecting country of origin, age, educational and musical background and working experience. In summary, the participants were between ages 36 to 52 and had from 1 to 25 years of working experience each in higher education at the time of the project. Their educational background was Master's degree or equivalent of music education, performance or musicology in different combinations. They described their musical background to be jazz, pop, folk, gospel, traditional dance music and western classical tradition also in different combinations. In addition to the formal degrees mentioned above, all participants had the pedagogical competence and certificate required by their countries' ministries of education. In reporting, the participants are given pseudonyms. It is notable, that even if a participant would have only one year of working experience in higher music education, it is likely that she would not be a novice in her profession as teachers receiving full-time teaching positions in higher education in the Nordic countries often have established a career in vocal pedagogy beforehand e.g. as part-time teachers.

4.5 Data Collection

The data of this study was collected from a project that was organised among five popular music and jazz vocal teachers working in full-time positions the Nordic higher music education, in which they developed their expertise by sharing their professional knowledge and skills, and by addressing challenges of their daily work they themselves had raised for discussion. The project lasted 11 months and was conducted during 2015-2016. The different data collection techniques used in this study were determined by the theoretical orientation of the research, by the research questions, and by the bounded case of this study (Merriam, 2009). Thus, the data was collected using multiple sources, as a case study "involves the widest array of data collection as the researcher attempts to build an in-depth picture of the case" (Creswell, 1998, p. 123).

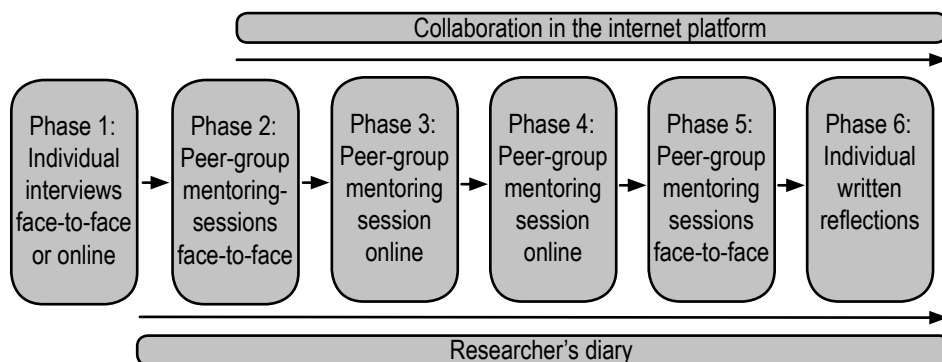


Figure 1: The data collection process

Figure 1 illustrates the timeline of the project including the six phases of data collection and the varying data collection methods used in them. In addition, data was collected using a closed internet platform and a researcher's diary.

4.5.1 Individual semi-structured interviews (phase 1)

The first phase of data collection was individual semi-structured interviews. Interviews were chosen as a data collection strategy because they are considered appropriate when conducting intensive case studies of a few selected individuals (Merriam, 2009). I was interested in how the participants articulated their pedagogical thinking and considered interviews necessary as “we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them” (Merriam, 2009, p. 88). Instead, through interviews I was able to learn about the participants’ experiences, feelings and attitudes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Therefore, I acquired the participants’ preconceptions of sharing expertise, their thoughts on what part of their expertise they would like to share, and their thoughts of working life challenges they wish to raise for the professional conversations through individual interviews. Interviews thus allowed me to distance my own preconceptions of professional challenges in this project (see 6.6).

The importance of preparing for the interviews is emphasised by many scholars, because “there are few standard rules or common methodological conventions” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 15). Merton, Fiske and Kendall (1990) suggest that the persons interviewed must be known to have been involved in a particular situation and that “a distinctive prerequisite of the focused interview is a prior analysis of the situation in which the subjects have been involved” (p. 4). Such interview then “focuse[s] in the subjective experiences of persons exposed to the pre-analysed situation in an effort to ascertain their definitions of the situation” (p. 3). I linked these preparations closely to

the bounding of the case and the case selection described in the previous section. Careful preparation also benefitted the analysis as “equipped in advance with an analysis of the situation, the interviewer can readily distinguish the objective facts of the case from the subjective definitions of the situation” (p. 4). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest thematising as the first step, which includes “formulation of research questions and a theoretical clarification of the theme investigated” (p. 105). Planning an interview study then involves planning both its procedures and techniques.

I first determined the type of structure and the number of themes according to desired data acquisition (Merriam, 2009). Out of the structural options of interviews I chose semistructured interview in which the questions are presented similarly but not identically to all interviewees and the answers are not restricted to any form (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998; Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2011; Merriam, 2009). Semistructured interviews proceed according to chosen themes and questions can be presented flexibly with no predetermined wording or order, which allows the interviewer to respond “to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam, 2009, p. 90). Thus, they give the interviewer more freedom to lead the discussion and enable the voice of the interviewee to be heard (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2011). Since the interview method was only used in the first phase of the project, the seven stages of an interview inquiry presented by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009)¹³ were modified and compressed into one phase. The themes for the interviews were determined by the research questions as “the way in which questions are worded is crucial consideration in extracting the type of information desired” (Merriam, 2009, p. 95).

The participants of this study lived in different Nordic countries, so the practical issues of organizing the interviews had to be considered carefully. I decided to conduct the interviews online except with one participant who preferred to meet face-to-face. I considered this disparity not to have a strong influence in the outcomes. Because interviews are conversations in which “knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 2), I needed to establish an environment in which the verbal and non-verbal communication between myself and the interviewee would be enabled online and proposed using a video chat application. I aimed to create common and clear language avoiding technical jargon in order for everyone to understand the themes similarly. I prepared to use probes, “questions or comments that follow up something already asked” (Merriam, 2009, p. 100) if needed. Because the participants requested the themes of the interviews in advance, I decided to formulate them into broad but clear questions. I sent these questions to the

¹³ The seven stages of an interview inquiry according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) are: 1) thematising an interview project, 2) designing, 3) interviewing, 4) transcribing, 5) analyzing, 6) verifying, and 7) reporting.

participants two weeks prior to the interview. I video and audio recorded all interviews with two devices in order to secure the data collection.

After the interviews, the data collection and analysis intertwined. In order to continue with the collaborative part of the project, the topics the participants wished to raise for the professional conversations needed to be identified. As a result of this first phase of analysis I compiled eight questions which acted as frame for the professional conversations:

- 1) How can we prevent our own vocal challenges or interests from influencing our teaching?
- 2) What do we teach when there is no right or wrong?
- 3) How can we guide the students to find their own voice?
- 4) How do we deal with the individual differences in students' instrumental skills with limited resources?
- 5) How much and what kind of knowledge is needed?
- 6) How can we prepare female students to challenge the gender roles in the music business?
- 7) What are the right criteria in evaluating popular music and jazz singing?
- 8) How can we navigate between different vocal methods?

The citations from the interviews from which the eight questions were compiled from are presented in the results section of this report in sections 5.2.1–5.2.8.

4.5.2 Collaborative professional conversations (phases 2-5)

Vast majority of the data was collected through professional conversations among the participants. The concepts of peer-group mentoring, and professional conversations were considered as theoretical underpinnings of this research (see chapter 2) but also applied as methodological choices. The participants met in peer-group mentoring sessions. These encounters were considered as conversational spaces in which the participants engaged in professional conversations that enabled exploring, resolving and embracing different, sometimes opposing ideas. I positioned myself as a facilitator, which suggests that I was a part of the professional conversations but only with the task of providing structure, time and probes.

The reason for having both face-to-face and online sessions during the project was based on both practicality and funding. Eventually, there were two face-to-face peer-group mentoring sessions that lasted for two days each and two online sessions, which

were organised with Adobe Connect¹⁴ software. All sessions were video recorded with two devices. An internet scheduling tool was used to settle the dates for the various sessions. Next, the phases of organizing and executing the data collection are presented with the aim to provide an accurate illustration of the decisions made by myself as the researcher and the decisions made by the participants.

Phase 2

In order to enhance participants' involvement in the process I used a facilitating tool *rank ordering*¹⁵ to find out in which order they would like to address the eight questions acting as the structure for the professional conversations. The participants were also asked at what phase of the project would they want to share their expertise with others. The first set of professional face-to-face conversations took place in Helsinki, Finland on Dec. 3-4, 2015. The session started with introductions, discussion of the ground rules, the position of the facilitator and data management during and after the project. The different ways to conceal the participants' anonymity in reporting as well as the ways in which the project would be discussed with outside parties were addressed together. As a part of the orientation of the group, I asked the participants to choose two postcards from a pile, one picture representing the positive expectations towards the project and one describing their concerns, and to write these thoughts on the cards. I promised to save the cards until the end of the project, and they were used in the collaborative reflection as means of reflecting back to the beginning of the project.

The participants had given the most votes to the question *How much and what kind of knowledge is needed?* which started the professional conversations. I chose writing relevant words or issues through individual brainstorming as an appropriate facilitative tool. The participants produced many ideas, which were written on sticker notes, placed on the wall, discussed and categorised together (see 5.2.1 for results). As the final facilitative tool of the day I asked the participants to tell a success story from their teaching career in order to enhance sharing of experiences among participants. These stories were reflected on through questions *What did you hear in this story?* and *What skills were used?*.

The second day started with a session in which the first participant shared the expertise she had chosen with others. These sessions are not reported in results because

¹⁴ Adobe Connect is a software in which people can join a meeting room through internet connection and in which all participants are able to see each other during the meeting.

¹⁵ Rank ordering is a facilitation tool that helps identify the priorities. The process involves taking votes to narrow the number of options (Cadwell, 1997).

describing them might compromise the anonymity of the participants. I assumed the participants use these teaching methods in their work actively and could be recognised from them. Nevertheless, the discussions following these sessions have been included in the data and are reported in results. The day continued with addressing the question *How can we guide the students to find their own voice?*, which was approached through three facilitative questions: What is a singer's own voice?; What skills or knowledge are related to it?; and What pedagogical tools do you use in guiding your students to find their own voice? The participants answered these questions first individually, then shared their thoughts with another person and combined both answers into one. Finally, these two sets of answers were presented to all participants and they were combined together collaboratively. The results are presented in section 5.2.2.

The question concerning evaluation, *What are the right criteria in evaluating popular music and jazz singing?*, was addressed through a video of a student performance brought by one of the participants. After the video I asked what aspects the participants had paid attention to and how they would assess the performance. These thoughts were categorised using the same categories as in the previous question (see 5.2.3 for results). The final conversations of this session concerned creating an internet platform for collaboration outside the sessions and writing individual reflection after each session. I also encouraged the participants to give direct feedback on processes of facilitation.

Phase 3

The first on-line session was held on February 24, 2016. The participants logged in from their homes or work places. There were some technical difficulties as my host computer crashed and one participant ended up being absent from parts of the conversations due to problems with internet connection. Also, some participants were not accustomed to the use of Adobe Connect and needed guidance during the session. I did not consider sharing expertise to be successful online, so sessions of sharing expertise were moved to the second face-to-face session. Instead, *What do we teach when there is no right or wrong?* as the next most voted question was addressed. I asked everyone to say one to three things they felt were relevant to the topic, and after that commenting was free (see 5.2.4 for results). The conversation about the question *How do we navigate between different vocal methods?* continued in the same manner as the previous (see 5.2.5 for results). Finally, I used Adobe Connect poll feature to find out if the participants were interested in having another on-line meeting before the last face-to-face sessions in Finland, and all agreed. This first on-line session lasted altogether 90 minutes.

Phase 4

The second on-line session was held on March 7, 2016. The question *How do we deal with the individual differences in students' instrumental skills with limited resources?* engaged the participants in a lively conversation that lasted the whole online session (see 5.2.6 for results). During the conversation I used the poll feature in acquiring the amount of one-to-one tuition in participants' institutions and the chat feature allowing the participants to comment in writing and see other comments in real time during the conversations. All the chat entries were also included in research data. The second online session lasted 120 minutes.

Phase 5

The second set of face-to-face professional conversations was held in Finland on June 8-9, 2016. In planning I reserved enough time for the rest of the participants to share their expertise. Since this session took place ten months after the interviews, many participants had forgotten about what they had originally suggested as their expertise to be shared. I reminded them of the original topic, but also allowed them to change it if new interesting topics had emerged during the project. The first day included two participants sharing their expertise. Similarly to the first sessions of sharing expertise, this particular phase is not reported due to anonymity reasons, but the discussions that followed the sessions are included in the data. As the last event of the first day the question *How can we prevent our own vocal challenges or interests from influencing our teaching?* was addressed (see 5.2.7 for results).

The last day of face-to-face sessions started with sharing expertise by one participant after which the last of the eight questions, *How can we prepare female students to challenge the gender roles in the music business?*, was addressed. Because the conversation did not flow even with the help of facilitative probes, I chose to tell a story from my own experiences as an awakener for the conversation. This choice may not be considered a facilitative one, but it seemed to solve the problem because afterwards the conversation flowed naturally to different aspects of gender in music education and music business (see 5.2.8 for results). After the last participant shared her expertise, I directed the focus to collaborative reflection. I chose a facilitative tool presented by one of the participants earlier in the project: individually describing the project with five adjectives. I asked the participants to elaborate on some of them in order to understand the context of each word better. The postcards that were written in the beginning of the project were presented and reflected on. My final question in the face-to-face sessions was "What's next?". The participants discussed options of continuing the project, the financial issues related to it, and options of using existing networks to stay in touch. The

participants were also interested in knowing how the process would continue for myself (see 5.1 for results).

4.5.3 Individual written reflections (phase 6)

Personal documents, such as writings, are according to Merriam (2009) “a reliable source of data concerning a person’s attitudes, beliefs, and view” (p. 143). Such data is very personal in nature, so in considering using personal writings as means of data collection it must be taken into account that “the writer is the only one to select what he or she considers important to record” (p. 143). Indeed, one of the multiple means of data collection in this case study has been to collect individual written reflections from the participants at different phases of the project.

In the beginning of the project I had asked the participants to individually reflect on in writing after each session and also had reminded them of this request after each session. Still, at the end of the project I discovered that not everyone had done so. One participant also informed me that the data from her computer had gone missing. Because the use of English as a language had created several challenges during the project, I believed it to be significant to gather reflective data also in writing which provided the participants more time and accuracy to express their thoughts. Therefore, I changed the last phase, originally planned as individual interviews, to individual written reflections. I reformulated the premeditated interview themes to questions and sent them to the participants with the request to return their answers in four weeks before the details of the project would be forgotten. All participants returned their reflections.

4.5.4 Researcher’s diary and the internet platform

In order to acquire data from the researcher’s point of view I considered a researcher’s diary an appropriate means of data collection. This researcher-generated document was created to learn more about the situation being investigated (Merriam, 2009). I constructed this “regular, personal and contemporaneous record” (Alaszewski, 2006, p. 1) as a document, in which I wrote entries reflecting organisational tasks, choices of facilitation, timeline and the schedules within the project, and personal feelings related to the project. It provided access to occurrences unavailable elsewhere and was also used to “overcome one major cause of bias: recall or memory problems” (Alaszewski, 2006, p. 26). Thus, it provided data of the ways I perceived the project, a notion relevant in considering transparency and validity of the research. Entries to the diary begin from the preparations of the first face-to-face session in Finland, November 24, 2015, and continue until the participants had returned their written reflections on June 30, 2016.

It must be acknowledged, that the diary is a product of my perceptions and at certain points lacks temporally and content wise coherent entries.

In the beginning of the project, I suggested a closed internet platform in order to enable collaboration between the organised sessions. A closed Facebook group¹⁶ was agreed on and created after the first day of the face-to-face conversations. The interaction in the Facebook group has been included in the data of this research. The group has been in active mode, although not much used, until the submission of this dissertation, and it will be permanently closed along with the destruction of all data.

4.6 Analysis

The analysis of the data was recursive and dynamic. It included three phases: analysis of the interviews, analysis of the professional conversations and reflections, and analysis based on the chosen overarching theme. In addition to discussing these phases the following section also provides a timeline of the process as the data collection and analysis at times intertwined.

4.6.1 Analytic strategies

The interest of this study was both in how the participants articulate their development of expertise within the project and how they articulate their pedagogical thinking and action. Therefore, the overall strategy was to choose analysis methods that would most conveniently suit the needs of the varied data collected in different phases of the project. I combined two approaches, *thematic analysis approach*, TA, (Clarke, Braun, & Hayfield, 2015) as it is compatible with constructionist paradigms (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and *qualitative content analysis*, QCA, (Schreier, 2012) because it is “a method for describing the meaning of the qualitative material in a systematic way” (Schreier, 2012, p. 1). Thus, QCA suits studies in which “there are no previous studies dealing with the phenomenon or when it is fragmented” (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 107). The ways in which these methods were applied are presented among the analysis process.

The case in this study consists of 5 participants (n=5). Gerring (2007) suggests that “there is an elective affinity between the case study format and qualitative, small-N work” (p. 33), and that “only in the case studies does qualitative analysis comprise a significant portion of the research” (p. 34). Every case study should according to Yin (2003) strive

¹⁶ In Facebook groups can be made in a way that they are not visible to other users.

to have a general analytic strategy by defining priorities of what to analyse and why. Analysing case study evidence is on the other hand difficult because “the strategies and techniques have not been well defined” (Yin, 2003, p. 109). My position as the researcher allowed close involvement with the process and therefore a flexible analytic strategy. The analysis was guided by the needs of the project: for example, the first round of analysis was conducted after the interviews in order to gather topics for professional conversations, and the last phase of data collection was reformulated after a close inspection of the existing data. The aim of the analysis was not to mechanically code and reduce data, but instead to organise and find multiplicity within certain categories or themes and to see emergence of meanings (Stake, 1995). In interpreting the data, I aimed to present the quotations accurately within the context and tried not to simplify the content. If at points differences or similarities in the participants’ verbalisations were considered, it was not with the intention to generalise but instead to understand the complexity of popular music and jazz vocal teaching within the higher education context.

Throughout the project the participants used a foreign language and this aspect had to be acknowledged in the analysis. The participants are considered as professionals with high level of expertise in their domain and reporting their thoughts in the spoken and partly defective language of the transcriptions, such as mixture of different languages or the use of non-existent words, would not do them justice. Because of this challenged and limited access to different linguistic expressions on behalf of the participants, I excluded analysis methods that involve making advanced interpretations of the chosen words, such as discourse analysis. The incomplete quotations were paraphrased through a careful process of maintaining the original tone and meaning of what the participant had said. These paraphrased sentences were approved and corrected by each participant in question (see 6.7).

Creswell (1998) proposes that in the analysis of a case study the researcher should make “detailed description of the case and its setting” (p. 153). Especially if the case presents a chronology of events, Creswell suggests “analysing the multiple sources of data to determine evidence for each step or phase in the evolution of the case” (p. 153). In this study report, I report the different phases of data collection in chronological order, but I did not consider the chronology of the events as a fundamental feature in analysis. Stake (1995) suggests that in analysing a case study, new meanings of cases are reached through both direct interpretation and categorical aggregation, clustering data into categories to ease the search for meaning. I used both means in this study.

Computer programs are suggested to be useful in case studies especially when the data is extensive (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2009), as long as the software does not “take place of a careful analysis of the material” (Creswell, 1998, p. 156). In this study,

I conducted the first phase of analysis of the individual interviews manually as the data was limited, but the data collected from the professional conversations and the written reflections was in turn extensive. As it was important to be able to connect quotations from different chronological conversations, Atlas.ti software was employed in this phase of analysis.

4.6.2 Analysing the interviews

I conducted the first phase of analysis on the data collected through the interviews by using thematic analysis. The process started by transcribing each interview, and the themes of the interview guide were also applied as themes of analysis (see appendix 1). The demographic information was tabulated as presenting it by each participant would compromise their anonymity. The participants' answers to different questions were then categorised. At this stage of the process the analysis focused on data concerning themes formed as questions 'What are the biggest challenges of popular music and jazz pedagogy in higher music education you wish to raise up for discussion and development?' and 'What aspects of your expertise you would like to share?'. The question concerning how the participants understood sharing knowledge with colleagues and students was not attended to at this point and was addressed with the subsequent data later.

Some of the participants' answers to the question of the challenges were either teacher or institution specific and could not be formulated into more general topics for the professional conversations and were excluded also from the analysis. I compiled the ideas mentioned by more than one participant. I then formulated both the compiled topics and the ones mentioned by only one participant into eight questions (see 4.5.1). Thus, the participants suggestions to sharing their expertise were listed in order to make sure that I would reserve enough time in the following sessions of the project. The results of this first phase of analysis, both the eight questions concerning the challenges of the participants daily work and ideas of expertise to be shared, informed the next data collection procedures.

4.6.3 Analysing the professional conversations, reflections and researcher's diary

The project produced a large recorded data which would have meant extensive time spent in transcribing the recordings. Therefore, the transcription of the data was conducted by an external party and was executed based on the audio recordings. As the person doing the transcription was not acquainted with the participants' speaking voice and dialect in English, some parts were not transcribed, and several mistakes occurred in the transcripts. In order to correct the mistakes and add the missing parts, I carefully read

the transcriptions and viewed the video recordings again. The benefit of this procedure was gaining deeper understanding of the data. At this point the written reflections were added to the data. The data generated by the internet platform was originally intended to be added as well, but as there were no relevant entries apart from the researcher's organisational ones, this data was excluded. Altogether 6007 quotations remained in Atlas.ti after removing quotations with no relevant content.

The second phase of analysis conducted on the data described above was approached through qualitative content analysis (QCA) (Schreier, 2012). Elo and K ng s (2008) suggest that QCA may be used in an inductive or deductive way. In inductive approach of QCA, the coding is data-driven and "includes open coding, creating categories and abstraction" (p. 109). In deductive approach the data is tested against "categories, concepts, models or hypotheses" (p. 111). In this study I apply the view of Merriam (2009) according to whom qualitative study typically moves from inductive data analysis through using both inductive and deductive analysis to the final stages of analysis which are primarily deductive. Even if all categories and codes were informed by the research questions and were "congruent with the orientation of the study" (Merriam, 2009, p. 184), the process in general was data-driven.

The second phase of analysis was constructed along with Schreier's (2012) notions of eight steps of qualitative content analysis:

- 1) Deciding on your research questions
- 2) Selecting your material
- 3) Building a coding frame
- 4) Dividing your material into units of coding
- 5) Trying out your coding frame
- 6) Evaluating and modifying your coding frame
- 7) Main analysis
- 8) Interpreting and presenting your findings. (p. 6)

During the process I reformulated the research questions several times, but their focus did not change. The questions aimed to investigate the ways in which the participants articulated their development of expertise within the project and how their pedagogical thinking manifested in the professional conversations. I conducted the second step of QCA, selecting the material, through purposeful selection of the case (see 4.4).

The third step of QCA, creating the coding frame, was informed by the two investigated levels mentioned above. I coded each participant and myself as the facilitator as categories should there be need to combine answers of individual persons, but because

of anonymity issues I did not create individual participant profiles. I also used the eight inductively constructed compiled questions as categories (see 4.5.1). Thus, I created the categories *collaboration*, *sharing expertise*, *ethics*, and *confidentiality*. The interviews, the researcher's diary, and interaction on the internet platform were not included in the analysis at this point. The fourth step of QCA is dividing and segmenting the material into units of coding (Schreier, 2012). Because the data was generated from conversations between the participants, each comment created a natural unit for analysis. I tried out, evaluated, and modified these categories out and added *teaching methods* and *schooling in higher education* as categories. Finally, I created two practical categories, *change name* and *facilitative tools*, to help concealing participants' identity and find my own involvement in the process. I did not use development of expertise as a category at this stage, as the notion grew out of the data later.

In QCA *all* data must be examined and coded (Schreier, 2012). Indeed, the following step, main analysis of the extensive data, was time consuming and took several months. I marked quotations with more than one code should they concern more than one category. I noticed that the data of the interviews concerning sharing expertise with students and colleagues was repeated by the participants in various professional conversations, and therefore I chose not to add this data from interviews to the analysis.

As the next phase, I considered data coded in each category starting from the eight questions. In some categories the amount of quotations was quite large, and I needed to create second level of sub-categories. I revisited the data of the question How do we deal with the individual differences in students' instrumental skills with limited resources? and created sub-categories: *voice as an instrument*, *age of singers*, *teaching rehearsing skills / emphasizing students' responsibilities*, *planning and reflecting*, *focusing* and *other solutions*. In the data of the question How can we navigate between different vocal methods? I identified the following sub-categories: *gaining knowledge*, *to be certified or not*, *methods as languages*, *teaching according to methods*, *contradictions* and *navigating*.

My focus then turned to data coded with categories *collaboration*, *sharing expertise*, *ethics*, *confidentiality*, *teaching methods*, and *schooling in higher education*. Several problems occurred that were not visible in the earlier testing of the coding frame. These categories firstly contained data that would compromise the anonymity of the participants, because their identities could be recognised from the descriptions of their teaching practices. Secondly, the quotations in teaching methods and schooling in higher education were mostly duplicated in the data of the eight questions. Therefore, I chose to exclude some quotations of teaching practices and analyse some of them in other categories. The data under collaboration was quite large and varied and seemed

to overlap the data of sharing expertise, ethics and confidentiality. I inductively created another set of sub-categories: *affordances and constraints of the collaborative project, expectations and concerns, safe and confidential environment, time, the role of the researcher as the facilitator, professional conversations face-to-face and online, language, collaborative reflection on the project, effects on professional thinking and/or action, the future, criticism towards the project and organisation of the project*. The coding frame is presented in table 3.

MAIN CATEGORIES	1st LEVEL OF SUB-CATEGORIES	2nd LEVEL OF SUB-CATEGORIES	
People	Anna		
	Birgitta		
	Cecilia		
	Daniela		
	Emma		
	Facilitator		
8 questions	How can we prevent our own vocal challenges or interests from influencing our teaching?		
	What do we teach when there is no right or wrong?		
	How can we guide the students to find their own voice?		
	How do we deal with the individual differences in students' instrumental skills with limited resources?	Voice as an instrument	
		Age of singers	
		Teaching rehearsing skills and emphasizing students' responsibilities	
		Planning and reflecting	
		Focusing	
	Other solutions		
	How much and what kind of knowledge is needed?		
How can we prepare female students to challenge the gender roles in the music business?			
What are the right criteria in evaluating popular music and jazz singing?			
How can we navigate between different vocal methods?	Gaining knowledge		
	To be certified or not		
	Methods as languages		
	Teaching methods		
	Contradictions		
Navigating			
Themes related to the project	Collaboration	Affordances and constraints of the collaborative project	
		Expectations and concerns	
		Safe and confidential environment	
		Time	
		The role of the researcher as a facilitator	
		Professional conversations face-to-face and online	
		Language	
		Collaborative reflection on the project	
		The effects on professional thinking and/ or action	
		The future	
		Criticism towards the project	
		Organisation of the project	
		Sharing expertise	
		Ethics	
		Confidentiality	
	Teaching methods		
Schooling in higher education			
Practicalities	Facilitation tools		
	Change word / name		

Table 3: The coding frame

The coding frame presents how I first developed the original main categories: people, eight questions, themes related to the project, and practicalities. Then I developed the first level of sub-categories, and after attending to the data again, I created the second level of sub-categories within some of the first level sub-categories.

The eighth phase of QCA, interpreting the findings, started from the quotations coded under the categories of the eight questions. The gathered data seemed to supplement the knowledge base of popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy from several different angles and provided interesting insights into the field. While carefully attending to the data, an overarching motif started to emerge to me. The ideals of learner-centered teaching were manifested in several ways in how the participants described their pedagogical thinking and action. Therefore, as the third phase of analysis, I revisited the eight questions in order to investigate the data in relation to the fundamentals of learner-centered teaching. At this point, I considered the use of my researcher's diary in analysis carefully. It provided data that was unavailable elsewhere, especially concerning the organisation of the project, reasoning behind the schedule and facilitation. Therefore, parts of the diary were added to the analysis, but it must be acknowledged that analysis of the diary was thematic instead of following the steps of QCA.

As explained in section 4.6.1, I had paraphrased the quotations from the conversations and sent them to the participants for revision. Four participants requested none or only minor changes, but one participant suggested extensive changes in her quotations, including things she originally had not mentioned in conversations or written reflections. After a careful consideration of research ethics, I decided to accept all requests that could be considered unsuccessful paraphrasing on my behalf. Also, I proceeded with deleting all requested quotations but decided to address this procedure in discussion. As adding quotations that were not originally said in the conversations could be considered manipulation of the data, I had to build a specific strategy. Should the new material clarify original quotations that were unclear because of language issues, they were added to the data but marked as 'revised'. Requested changes that did not meet this prerequisite were not added to the data. This procedure was approved by the participant in question.

Merriam's (2009) suggestion of data exclusiveness, that "a relevant unit of data can be placed in only one category" (p. 186), was somewhat compromised in the analysis process. The professional conversations included quotations by the participants that provided insights to more than one category. I considered it valuable to include these insights to all relevant categories even if I understood this feature of analysis as being not obligatory. According to Merriam, conceptual congruence is the most difficult criterion of categorizing and coding to apply, as categories should be of the same conceptual level. In this research the idea of creating sub-categories suggested by Schreier (2012)

was applied, which allowed to build the coding frame in a way that consisted of main categories of same conceptual level and different levels of sub-categories.

In general, the analysis process turned out to be responsive to research questions because it provided means of answering all of them. The analysis was also exhaustive, because there were “enough categories to encompass all relevant data” (Merriam, 2009, p. 186).

5 Results

Because the data of this study was collected through a collaborative project based on active participation of the participants, in presenting these results I have chosen a strategy that respects this participation. In order for the reader of this dissertation to “vicariously experience a phenomenon” (Merriam, 2009, p. 259), I first give the microphone to the participants and present their conversations and comments in a loyal manner. The following section 5.1 presents the results concerning the first research question, how the participants articulated their participation in the project and their development of expertise within it. Next, the data relating to the second research question, how the pedagogy of popular music and jazz singing is articulated by the participants is presented (5.2). Then the previous results are considered from the standpoint of learner-centered teaching (5.3) and finally the data is discussed in relation to socio-constructivist notions (5.4).

5.1 Results of participants’ articulation of their participation and development of expertise

In general, all participants held a positive attitude towards taking part in the project, discussing working life related issues and sharing their expertise. The written reflection from Anna illustrates the general atmosphere of the professional conversations.

ANNA: I always find it stimulating to consider how education can be better and hear other people’s thoughts about it. However, there is not often time and possibilities to do it, because there are so few of us in each school which has popular music and jazz vocal studies. This has been a rich thing to get to do.

The participants’ attitudes towards sharing their knowledge, skills and teaching methods can also be gathered from one encounter between Cecilia and Daniela during the session in which Daniela shared her expertise.

CECILIA: This is perfect, I’m going to steal this idea.

DANIELA: It’s sharing, you don’t have to steal it.

CECILIA: It’s perfect, ah, thank you.

Expectations and concerns

The participants joined the project with either mixed feelings or no expectations. They reflected on these expectations both in their individual written reflections and in the first facilitative task they were given when the project started, which was to choose two postcards from a pile, one picture expressing their positive and the other their negative expectations towards the project. In these reflective texts the participants expressed enthusiasm towards professional conversations:

ANNA: I didn't really have any specific expectations. I thought it sounded very interesting and was looking forward to meeting vocal teachers and just talk about issues that we meet in our field.

BIRGITTA: I expected to meet talented experienced teachers with huge knowledge and a lot of different views on the teaching, and to learn from them and to share my own stuff. Also, to get connections in Scandinavia and to get a feeling of how other higher education works in other countries.

CECILIA: I didn't have any expectations.

DANIELA: To be honest, I didn't have any special expectations towards this project due to my very hectic life. However, I was hoping that we get along well and have good conversations about vocal education, and also, I was looking forward to hearing what kind of curricula and pedagogical approaches different schools have.

EMMA: I felt at once that this was something I needed and would learn a lot from. A rare chance!

DANIELA: I hoped that we enjoy the different points of views and end up having a great organised group.

EMMA: After having taught popular music and jazz singing over seven years pretty much isolated I was very positive towards sharing knowledge, learning, seeing the bigger picture and loosening the chains. My motives were first and foremost to learn more about how vocal pedagogues in popular music and jazz are thinking about their own teaching, since my own formal vocal training was mostly within the classical genre.

The project also raised concerns:

BIRGITTA: I hope I'm not alone. I hope we have a lot in common, and that we can identify things in ourselves and in each other, and also in what we are sharing.

DANIELA: My fear or concern is will I have patience to really go into these discussions and focus on the topics because of my busy life with so many distractions.

EMMA: My concern was, that it would be sad if we were all in our own islands, just wanting to share our own views but not listening to the others.

ANNA (revised): I was afraid of getting stuck not being able to meet or understand others, which would make it harder to see what things are really like. If you stand above everybody else, you don't see things on the ground.

EMMA: I was very much looking forward to participating in this project, and at the same time I was a bit afraid. Afraid because my education is not a popular music and jazz education and that I wouldn't be considered as a "real vocal pedagogue".

CECILIA: I was afraid that my English skills wouldn't be adequate enough.

In the end of the project the participants were asked to reflect on their expectations. All participants mentioned that their expectations were met and even exceeded. Birgitta reflected how the positive expectation she had was actually not met, but she considered it a positive thing.

BIRGITTA: In my positive postcard "Susanna is leading this, but she has food in the box for all of us, and we are talking together down the line". I think it's nice that my positive card was not true. I wrote that "you have food and we are followers", but we actually had to do it ourselves. That's nice, but I couldn't see it clearly in the beginning. So, you have been leading us, but everybody has had to get involved.

Safe and confidential environment

The participants expressed that having a secure, confidential and trustworthy environment was very important for successful collaboration. Confidentiality was discussed and agreed on in the beginning of the project. The participants agreed that the topics of conversation were not confidential, as they already had been presented in conferences and posters by me as the researcher. However, all conversations from which a person or an institution could be identified, were agreed to be confidential. The participants also agreed that they were allowed to discuss the project and share its affordances in their home institutions while respecting the anonymity of others.

Collaborative work and atmosphere were described in individual and collective reflections in the following way:

CECILIA: I was very impressed with the group. People were warm and easy to get along with. People were open minded and wanted to co-work together. There was no age or skill "racism".

BIRGITTA: Our group was relaxed and easy going, but still worked without loosing focus and wasting time. It was obvious that the more we got to know each other, the more open discussions and honesty we had. We got deeper into the conversations and got more out of them.

ANNA (revised): I have valued the approach and openness, which I think relates also to the facilitator's openness in the project. The responsiveness and listening keeps one growing.

DANIELA: I think everyone was really friendly and we had a nice atmosphere and great discussions.

ANNA: I think that all participants have an open approach to the field of singing and also seem to have openness towards different thoughts about technique and so on.

CECILIA: The atmosphere among us is very warm and friendly. It has been easy for me, because being myself has been enough.

Birgitta also mentioned the importance of free collaboration outside of the organised sessions:

BIRGITTA: Things that happened in between the sessions, hanging out together, is a big part. We had some good conversations on both nights.

Time

The participants in general expressed their positive thoughts towards having time to discuss work-related issues with colleagues. Many mentioned the lack of time as a reason for not having done it more before. Birgitta suggested that one thing that facilitated the project was that it ran over a longer period (the collaborative part of the project lasted seven months). On the other hand, Daniela wrote that “maybe we could’ve gone a bit deeper in the discussions sometimes”. She suspected that it would have happened after a couple of more meetings.

Language

The question of language proved to be a hindrance for some participants. Cecilia and Emma described how they were not used to speaking English and felt that the choice of language used in the project lessened their contribution. They both felt a lack of words and terminology during the conversations. Still, when the project proceeded Cecilia gained confidence and mentioned being happy to have survived with her English.

Professional conversations face-to-face and online

Participants agreed on that meeting face-to-face is easier and more productive than meeting online. They described their participation in online meetings as being generally hard and uncomfortable. Anna and Daniela had difficulties in focusing during the conversations and were easily distracted. Emma mentioned that online she could not contribute as much as she wanted to, and that her speech contained too much stuttering. She also mentioned not being able to stop to think when interacting online. Cecilia agreed that discussions online did not allow enough time for her to think, as getting into the conversation takes time. Anna emphasised the importance of seeing the participants’ faces and hearing their voices. For her, seeing them on a screen or hearing them via speakers was not authentic.

The experience of having conversations online was not a completely negative one. The participants had also noticed that online conversations worked better, when they already knew each other and had interacted face-to-face before. They also mentioned that preparing for the online conversations helped.

BIRGITTA: I had thoughts about what we were trying to zoom into in the first online meeting. But the second time I had thought about it before and made some notes for myself. I felt that it really helped, but I can't say why. It was just much easier to be a part of the conversation and be focused all the time.

Several participants also reflected that participating online gets better through experience. Birgitta had taken part in online meetings before and mentioned that one can get better and more comfortable through experience. Emma shared that thought. She felt that the first online conversation was harder than the second. Cecilia also valued the experience of being a part of an on-line meeting.

CECILIA: I learned how on-line meetings work and what the difficulties with them are. I learned that people don't necessarily always have to be around the same table but can also participate from abroad. That was a very nice learning experience.

Even Anna, who was very critical towards on-line conversations, still reflected, that "it has been better than nothing".

The role of the facilitator

My greatest concerns in organizing and conducting the project was my dual role as a colleague of the participants and a researcher. These considerations had led to the result that I positioned myself as the organiser and facilitator of the conversations (see 4.2). The participants also acknowledged this challenge and reflected on it on several occasions during the project.

BIRGITTA: It has been good that Susanna asked the questions but didn't join the discussions. It could have been hard not to push things in a certain direction.

DANIELA: The leader of this project was very well organised but still very flexible, and that had a big influence on the atmosphere in this project.

ANNA: And you have really been the facilitator. I've been thinking about that a lot, because you have given so much thought to this aspect, even if you have many things to say.

BIRGITTA: You obviously have a lot of strong opinions about these things. You are also a very talkative person, which is very nice, but it could have dominated. So, I think it's brilliant that you were able to do it this way, otherwise I would have had a hard time.

In my researcher's diary there are a few entries in which I have reflected on whether to participate or not in the conversation.

RESEARCHER'S DIARY: Thought for a while to bring it in the conversation but then decided not to – it's my thought and not a part of this discussion.

RESEARCHER'S DIARY: Since we had 45 minutes left, I decided to take on the gender question. I asked for stories, but it seemed that they didn't have any themselves and were quiet. So, I decided to tell one of mine to start with. I liked the way the conversation started from it, even if it was a bit difficult in the beginning.

Keeping the conversation flowing meant that I had to observe the participants carefully and simultaneously watch the clock and let the conversation take its course.

ANNA: The facilitator had the courage to keep the conversations open, and not control in detail what we talked about. That all facilitated the energy and the desire to continue.

RESEARCHER'S DIARY: After the conversation following Anna's sharing of knowledge, I could see that we naturally went to question 'How do we deal with individual differences between students', so I let the conversation go there. I then let the conversation flow but asked some questions again, because I noticed that I was getting different answers and ideas every time.

Organizing the project

Planning and organizing the project was according to the researcher's diary very time consuming. A particular challenge was finding joint times for the participants. Six online schedule questionnaires mapping available times were made at different phases of the project. Because of these itinerary difficulties the first face-to-face session was held as late as in the beginning of December. The same challenge was evident also with the second face-to-face session which was postponed until June because of participants' busy schedules. In addition, finding two hours for an online meeting needed several

adjustments and one agreed session had to be postponed because of one participant's changed schedule. After setting the dates, organizing the travel arrangements and accommodation, reserving meeting rooms, gathering all equipment for collaboration and beverages took several working days.

Entries in the researcher's diary and the participants' reflections both suggest that a well-organised process creates an appropriate environment for successful collaboration. The participants could concentrate on the professional conversations when sessions, breaks, meals and free time were scheduled realistically.

RESEARCHER'S DIARY: Everyone seemed to be very happy that all food including refreshments were provided. It is nice to say, 'take what you want'. If all doesn't fit in the budget, I will pay for it myself, because it has a lot to do with a respectful and task related atmosphere within the group.

ANNA: The project was very well organised which made things a lot easier, since there's always the lack of time.

Another time-consuming feature of the project was the creation of online meetings. I spent a lot of time testing software, creating user accounts and sorting recording options. Also, since many participants had not participated in online meetings before, I had to make a guide for them including both technical instructions and how to operate the software from their computers during sessions.

Criticism towards the project

The participants presented also some criticism towards the project. The following remarks were made at different phases of the project.

BIRGITTA: A weak point is that we were only women.

CECILIA: It was amazing how just by talking those questions really melted. Except curriculum type of problems. "WHAT should we teach in real life" But of course there isn't any right answer.

Collaborative reflection on the project

The collaborative reflection on the project was conducted by asking the participants to write five adjectives that in their opinion described the project. The adjectives mentioned

were: fun, long, mindful, open-minded, surprising, intense, fruitful, productive, rewarding, easy, accepting, confusing, confident, challenging, clarifying, instructive, communicative, interesting, exhausting, painful, hurtful, developing and inspiring. In addition, respectful debating was mentioned. The participants were then asked to elaborate on some of the adjectives. At times I also joined the collaborative reflection and these comments are included in results.

BIRGITTA: I pick mindful, that was my word. What I meant by that is, that at the same time as we have these discussions, I can look inside myself and I get a clearer idea about what I do and what I don't want to do.

FACILITATOR: So, by talking to other people and hearing different ideas and thoughts, you actually confirm your choices or what you have done?

BIRGITTA: Exactly, well said.

EMMA: It has been confirming also for me, feeling a little bit out in the darkness, trying to find a way, and then seeing that I'm not in a totally wrong direction in my thinking. So that has been very good. And also new ideas and new thoughts and developing myself as a teacher. Not only being where I am, but also wanting to change.

ANNA (revised): Original: I take the two that actually go together, first accepting because everybody is afraid of saying something that nobody else understands. But it has also been very exhausting. Everyone listens and accepts each others story. It's exhausting, because you try to understand what others are talking about and really try to see into their world.

DANIELA: It's been very fruitful, productive and rewarding, this whole project and the whole year actually. It has opened my eyes and also made me think more. And also confusing in a way, that I have been thinking from different angles.

CECILIA: Well, it's been fun. Of course, a lot of work, but still fun to finally have time to discuss things. It's been also interesting. The atmosphere among us is very warm and friendly and easy for me, because being myself has been enough. And also, instructive because there has been a lot of learning going on. What everyone brought on the table was interesting.

EMMA: It was challenging to communicate via computers.

EMMA: I have written a lot of notes, so it has been fruitful also in that sense.

EMMA: I would put one more word and that's unique. I feel like I've been part of something unique that you don't get a chance to do very often.

I took part in this conversation by telling about my own observations while presenting some of the preliminary results in conferences, that this project seems to be very rare. I asked the participants whether they considered value and benefits in having teachers from different Nordic countries as participants. Anna and Birgitta thought that these countries have different cultures and traditions. Several participants did not answer the question, but after I pointed out some of the similarities as well, for example vocal teacher education, Birgitta considered the context globally:

BIRGITTA: And maybe also, since no one has been doing this kind of research, we have to start from somewhere. It could have been too big a 'piece of cake' to have the whole world. There's a whole another way of thinking in Southern Europe. I think it would have been too big a project to keep together.

BIRGITTA: Now you have built yourself a position from where you can compare Southern Europe to this. But you need somewhere to stand first.

The future

The participants envisioned collaboration that would continue in the future:

DANIELA: It would be nice that this group would carry on, so it wouldn't be only this year.

EMMA: I hope we can continue meeting and sharing our experiences and learn from each other.

Many participants expressed that now, after getting to know the other participants and how they work better, there would be many benefits in continuing the project with these teachers. They would for example like to learn more about the approaches and profiles different institutions have.

ANNA: Had we continued, I would have found it useful to know more about why each and everyone of us chooses to work the way they do. I'm also really curious about the differences between our countries and schools, why your school and you yourself work the way you do and if there is a specific profile in your field at your institution. Also, have we as vocal teachers taken our own stance. There are many norms in our field, and I think it is interesting to try to see yourself from the outside and find out why I have chosen the focus I have, what the background and also the consequences are.

DANIELA: It also would've been nice to visit each others' institutions and observe how they work.

BIRGITTA: Maybe combining visiting with singing with students or something.

EMMA: I would also like to come and get some lessons from you. Maybe I apply my institution for some money to come.

BIRGITTA: Since we now know more about how each one of us work, it could be nice if we organised some kind of a master class among us. You or me singing a song and then discussing how we would work with it, to learn different ways. It could be interesting, because it's obvious that we have so different ways to go into the work. We could learn more from each other.

Networking through existing platforms was mentioned as an alternative way to continue collaborating together. Financial issues were seen as the biggest challenge in developing future collaboration, as finding funding for informal gatherings would be difficult. The participants also wondered whether the research project would require them to get together later. Birgitta emphasised that before applying for funding there needs to be an idea of the content. She mentioned that she prefers to continue with this group, because there are many benefits from knowing each other already. The participants agreed to keep the Facebook group active for future collaboration.

The effects on professional thinking and/or action

The participants were asked to reflect on the effects of the project to their pedagogical thinking and /or action in the last phase of the project, individual written reflections. The

few quotations concerning these effects expressed during the professional conversations are also included in these results.

BIRGITTA: In a way the whole thing ended up being very different from what I expected, but not in a bad way. It fulfilled my expectations, but the way we worked together was not how I thought it would be. It was much more relaxed and easy-going, without losing focus and wasting time. I liked the process very much. And somehow, I both learned something and also got a clearer view on my own teaching.

EMMA: I was positively surprised how similar my thoughts were to the other pedagogues' thoughts, that I was not "way off" in my thinking. In being part of the conversations of the different topics I learnt A LOT, and at the same time gained a lot more confidence in my own teaching. I have a better feeling of what direction my teaching in action will be, especially in topics regarding the students' own responsibility to reflect, know their own voice, and to rehearse.

ANNA: It's been nice to hear and see demonstrations about how we all work. However, my main motivation to be there wasn't to get new ideas, that is something that we need to work on all the time. I think everyone finds their own way and we can inspire each other to develop our own thinking and our own ideas.

DANIELA: Even though some topics were self evident and felt maybe unnecessary to discuss at first, it was still very good to talk about the topics with other voice teachers. It's good to question and reflect on our own thoughts, methods, ways of thinking and ways of teaching (physically and mentally) every once in a while. Also, to have possibilities to share some thoughts with others. These conversations made me analyse my own doing more. I have been teaching for a long time and I'm still interested in learning more and developing my own teaching.

BIRGITTA: I'm more aware of different perspectives and solutions in my teaching. I have a clearer angle on my own doing, because I have been a part of a lot of conversations and having to clarify what I do myself in teaching. Since there is so little supervision at my institution it has given me a chance to open up with the ideas I have, and it has given me a strong feeling of knowing that I need to do it more.

CECILIA: This project made me realise that it's not all about the years of experience, it's more about the state of mind and attitude. There's no reason for me to think less of myself as professional. Also, problems are quite same no matter where we are, lack of money, lack of time...

Emma mentioned how this project inspired her to develop a similar project in her own institution crossing also musical styles.

EMMA: I my institution there are a few vocal pedagogues. We have been very busy doing our own "thing", and as we also teach other subjects the time has been our enemy. A direct result of my taking part in the project is that we are now taking time together to develop a common ground for the vocal teaching, the expectations for student development, and will soon be working more in detail on assessment criteria. We are also planning more group teaching, workshops and master classes (we had some before, but there will be more), for the students. As singers and singing pedagogues we come from different traditions, as do the students. But we are looking at this as one of our strengths in our music education program. I am excited and inspired to work for an even better teaching that allows us to think differently, but at the same time to have some joint visions.

Daniela had noticed changes in her approaches to teaching and content.

DANIELA: After this project, I will be more active in contacting other vocal teachers, asking more questions and sharing thoughts about vocal education. This project broadened my way of thinking in many aspects of vocal education. I got to be more aware of how I'm teaching and also how would I like to teach; to be able to guide and help the students to find their own voices and their own careers. I also started to prepare new exercises to my students more often. My role has also changed a bit from "only vocal jazz education" to more "genre free vocal education". Maybe this project also helped me divide these certain roles in my teaching and also gave me more understanding to other ways of teaching.

Emma mentioned that because she recorded the conversation following a video of a student performance, she could use that material to write an article about assessment and evaluation. The group gave her a permission to do that.

5.2 Results of the participants' articulation of their pedagogical thinking and practices

The professional conversations in the project of this study were structured according to the eight questions I had compiled from the interviews in which the participants were asked what challenges of their work they would like to raise up for the professional conversations of this project. In the analysis these eight questions provided the study with appropriate categories. The results are presented in the order the questions were addressed in the process. As the professional conversations sometimes flowed naturally from one question to another, several questions were also addressed in other conversations. In analysis, all quotations concerning a specific question presented in different conversations or reflections are considered as a whole.

5.2.1 How much and what kind of knowledge is needed?

This question was compiled from different ideas emerging in the interviews. Many participants mentioned the challenges in choosing what to teach out of such a large field of musical and vocal skills. This was referred to e.g. when considering the width or depth of knowledge and skills, when talking about the amount of information available and when choosing the repertoire. As described in section 1.2, popular music and jazz education in the Nordic countries usually includes many musical genres. Balancing in between the requirements of the curriculum and students wishes of what they want to study was also found challenging.

Before the discussion, in order to make sure everyone understood the question similarly, I asked the participants whether they thought it concerned the quality and the depth of knowledge, or a list of things students need to know. The participants understood the question as pertaining to the background of teaching and repertoire. One participant mentioned that within institutions there is a certain amount of knowledge one needs to have and that teaching has to adapt to this requirement. An important aspect seemed to be the individual needs of students. Teaching also has to adapt to what the skills are needed for. As the facilitator I tried to create a common ground for the discussion by asking again whether they were thinking of the depth of the knowledge or the quality of the knowledge. As an example, I mentioned surface and in-depth knowledge. This question was not answered as such but the participants felt that the question is related to the individuality of the teacher and the student. Students and their needs and ambitions were mentioned as the most important aspect.

ANNA: Some of the students are going to become really focused on something. But for example, to be able to work with choirs, you have to learn how to sing straight on a note. So, different angles depending on who they are and what they're going to be.

BIRGITTA: I think it also depends on what kind of student you have. If you have a student who is working towards being an artist, sometimes the more you learn the harder it gets to really find your own voice. They can do everything and at the same time they don't know what they are doing. Sometimes people develop that special sound without knowing the concept or what they can not do. It creates limitations.

The collaborative work started with a brainstorming session. I asked the participants to write on sticker notes as many things as possible connected to the question "How much and what kind of knowledge is needed". After putting the notes on the wall, we noticed that some thoughts referred to students' skills and some to teachers' skills, and also that similar themes could be identified. These themes were categorised as 1) music skills, 2) technical skills, 3) psychological skills and 4) pedagogical skills. A few notes were not related to any of these and remained uncategorised.

The first category, 'music skills', consisted of ideas about knowledge and skills in basics of music (ear training, sight reading, analysis), music history, "present music", improvisation, other instruments and choosing repertoire. Many comments emphasised the importance of knowing what is considered correct within different musical styles and also understanding variety within these styles. One participant mentioned in several discussions that the student needs to know this, but they are still allowed to make personal choices and sing how they wish. The participants did not clarify whether they had thought such knowledge and skills to be required from the teacher or from the student, but it can be understood from the context, that these competences referred to the student.

The participants placed ideas connected with the singer's instrument to the category 'technical skills'. The context suggests that the teacher is expected to have these skills in order to teach them. There were several ideas about the knowledge of the human body, the voice as an instrument, its functions and its kinaesthetic feeling. Technical skills were also seen to be in close connection to interpretation. One sticker note, "knowing the most common vocal techniques to communicate with the students" concerned the teaching skills and referred to different vocal methods or models, but later in another conversation it was also mentioned, that knowing about the most common vocal methods is useful for the student as well.

The category 'psychological skills' consisted of several different viewpoints. As a central psychological skill for teachers the participants mentioned knowledge of interaction in the classroom. Teachers need to accept how big of an influence they have on the student and how they effect the energy in the room. Inspiring was seen important as well as learning to "shut up" and draw boarders if needed. One participant mentioned that it is important not to project one's own vocal interests or challenges on the student. The teachers' and the students' mindset were mentioned several times through such terms as 'daring', 'growing in braveness', 'having courage', 'having a connection to one's feelings' and 'being honest with what one's skills really are'. Some ideas placed in this category were very practical and connected to working life demands. For example, 'being in shape as a singer' referred to the physical requirements of a singer and understanding different job options to knowing how to get employed in working life. Some ideas were according to the participants relevant to more than one category. For example, technique and personal expression were also seen as psychological skills.

The ideas placed under the category pedagogical skills mostly concerned the teacher. Since all participants were teaching in schools that offer vocal teacher education, these ideas can also be understood also as being connected to teacher training. As a starting point, developing pedagogical skills was seen as the teacher's responsibility. Valuing students' individuality was also seen as very important. The teacher should have sufficient knowledge about human psychology, understand and acknowledge individual abilities and goals of the students and acknowledge their progression. The individuality of the student was also emphasised in comments such as "being aware of the special person in the room" and "knowing how to make use of the unique sound and make it grow". The sticker note "understanding that it depends on to whom we give the knowledge" pointed out, that an important pedagogical skill is taking the students' individual ways of learning into account.

At times themes of psychology and pedagogy intertwined. The participants mentioned for example acknowledging one's own interests as an educator/teacher and as an artist as a pedagogical skill. Also, the mindset of the teacher and the student was challenged in the thought of "not judging but accepting", which emphasises that learning and teaching should be approached positively, and in the idea of "learning through failure", a notion that underlines the importance of trying despite of the outcome.

Teaching the students to take the responsibility and at the same time learning how not to take responsibility as a teacher was seen important. This requires teaching the students proper learning skills and being a good listener and communicator. On the other hand, "giving precise knowledge based on experience" was mentioned, which designates teacher's personal knowledge. The participants also listed concrete teaching

ideologies and methods as pedagogical skills such as supporting knowledge layer by layer (constructive thinking), understanding that usually slowly, little by little, works better than all in, answering the demand (teaching what the student wants to know) and having a bag of concrete things if pictures fail. I understand this notion to concern teaching through mental images, a common method used in vocal teaching. The content of teaching should also prepare the students for working life as suggested by one note: “making students understand what work possibilities they may have as a singer or as a teacher”. “How to look for and choose repertoire” was first seen as a music skill but was also mentioned as a pedagogical skill.

There were two sticker notes, that the participants did not place under any category. The first, ‘instrument vs. human body’, can be interpreted in several ways. Because of time limits, the participants could not go deeply into all ideas mentioned, and this idea was not discussed further. The second uncategorised sticker note, ‘PA skills and microphone technique’, did not connect directly to music or instrument skills but was still found important.

5.2.2 How can we guide the students to find their own voice?

In the interviews the participants mentioned several challenges that concerned the concept ‘one’s own voice’.

DANIELA: Finding your own voice is very important. Because of too much available information students don’t get to be themselves and find their own voices, understand who they are, what their voice is or what their special way of doing things is.

BIRGITTA: The challenge for the students in our area is, that it depends so much on them. They need to find out what they want to do and how they sound.

EMMA: You are supposed to make your own unique sound. Your person is so important when you sing, who you are, how you interpret the songs and what you want to say, at the same time trying out different things but needing to find your own direction.

Considering how to facilitate this question I realised that the concept needed to be defined. I created four questions, which I hoped would clarify the concept. The first question concerned terminology; What is a singer’s own voice?, the second competences;

What skills or knowledge are related to it?, and the third teaching; What pedagogical tools do you use in guiding your students to find their own voice?. Originally I had formed a fourth question about the end result, What should the goal of guiding be?, but during the discussion I realised that this question would be answered through the first three questions.

I then asked the participants to individually answer these three questions in writing. I formed two groups based on where they were seated. Birgitta and Cecilia formed one group, and Anna, Daniela and Emma the other. The participants shared their sentences and the thoughts behind them with their group and then combined their ideas. These combined ideas were then presented to everyone. To the question "What is a singer's own voice?" two groups answered:

BIRGITTA and CECILIA: It's a combination of the instrument and what the singer wants to say.

ANNA, DANIELA and EMMA: Singer's own voice is a combination of physiology, psychology and the self- and musical awareness, and also the decisions we make with the instrument and music.

These sentences were then discussed, and the two groups combined their ideas as following:

It is a combination of the physiology, psychology, self and musical awareness, and what the singer wants to say with the instrument and the music.

To the question, "What skills or knowledge are related to it?" the two groups answered:

BIRGITTA and CECILIA: It's a combination of teacher's skills to read and understand the student and together use and choose tools and methods with different angles [...]. (the end of the sentence is deleted because of anonymity)

ANNA, DANIELA and EMMA: To be in the moment and present, as your own self.

In discussing these answers, it became evident that the participants had thought of different angles. I asked whether the conversation was about the teacher or the student

being in the moment and present. They agreed that both angles would be important and agreed on these two sentences as final answers:

For the teacher it is the skills to read and understand the student and together choose and use tools and methods with different angles [...].

For the student it is to be in the moment and to be present as yourself.

To the question, "What pedagogical tools do you use in guiding your students to find their own voice?" the two groups answered:

BIRGITTA and CECILIA: It's a combination between presenting different ways of singing to allow the student to sound like they want, to make a lot of recordings and improvisations to get the students to hear what comes through and get the student to find out what they like or what they have special.

ANNA, DANIELA and EMMA: Allowing the students to search themselves and letting them acknowledge who they are now. And also, that they are constantly growing.

In the discussion that followed participants considered the meanings of the chosen words. They mentioned that some words were not clear or wide enough to describe the phenomenon. For example, "hearing what comes out" could be understood as only being connected to the voice or in terms of development. Instead, Birgitta suggested this theme should be approached through questions such as: Is this me? Can I recognise myself? Is this my voice? Is this what I want to say? After the discussion I facilitated forming a synthesis and all participants accepted the following sentence:

It is presenting different ways of singing, allowing them to search for themselves and their musical expression, using recordings and improvisation to get the students to hear what comes through, helping them to find out what they like, letting them acknowledge who they are now and at the same time understanding that they are constantly growing and developing, and helping them understand what is the special thing they've got and why they are doing music.

This topic was not easy to verbalise. Some participants said that the formulation of this sentence was not adequate enough and things were missing. Being too specific would make it impossible to include everything, but it was also hard to describe the

phenomenon in wider terms. Still, the participants appreciated the chance to discuss the topic. At this point the choice of continuing to other matters was made and I asked the participants to think about this in their own time and maybe return to it later.

The idea of students' own voice was mentioned later in other discussions, in which the participants shared their ideas on how to approach it pedagogically. Daniela described how she often faces situations in which her student approaches singing very technically with questions like 'What kind of a sound should I have in a song?' or 'What should I do here or what effect should I have?'. She suggested that students often do not trust their own voices, who they are, and how they sound. Instead of finding the desired sound from outside they should trust that the sound of their own voice can be applied in different styles. Cecilia shared some of her teaching practices in dealing with this challenge:

CECILIA: To those students who don't know what to do or what they want, I give a lot of listening tasks. They have to listen to a lot of music and bring it to our lessons, music that they don't like at all, artists or songs that they hate for some reason, and music that they love. The idea is to try to find out why they hate or love certain music. This way they try to find out their own goals and ideas of what they want themselves. I can help them to find their own voice and own mind, and where they can go during the time we work together.

Others had acknowledged the same challenge. Interestingly, they mentioned using songwriting as a tool, because when one writes one's own music, there is no vocal ideal to copy. Birgitta described it as "a direct way to oneself". Cecilia had also asked the students to approach songs through sheet music only, which could be approached without an aural reference. Many participants agreed that the culture of having references is very common in this field. According to Daniela, this may be caused by the singing competitions on television.

5.2.3 What are the right criteria in evaluating popular music and jazz singing?

The issue of evaluation was approached through watching a video of a student performance brought by one of the participants. In the general conversation before the video the participants shared their institutions' conventions in assessment, which varied remarkably. Depending on the school there were two to four teachers in the panel. In some institutions the teacher of the student could be part of the panel, in others that had

not even been considered. Some institutions used adjudicators¹⁷, some did not think it was necessary. Also, numbers, letters and/or verbal assessment were used depending on the institution. Some teachers mentioned that their institution uses recorded videos in assessment, if a panel member could not be present in the performance.

Before showing the video, the participant informed others that she had asked for the student's permission to show it, and that she had not taught the student on the video herself. She also mentioned, that in her institution they have a custom of first discussing the students' phase of studies and the required level within the panel. In these discussions the assessment board also considers whether the student is studying to become an artist or a teacher, and what musical style the student focuses on. She also mentioned that the performance in question was videotaped in the morning, which may be a difficult and unusual time to perform.

After watching the video, I facilitated the conversation with the question 'What did you pay attention to?'. All aspects the participants mentioned during the first round of comments were written down: pitch, vocal technique, body work, energy, presence, feeling, contact, working with the band, going for it, boldness, working with the audience, lyrics and choice of repertoire. I then asked whether these could be connected to some of the categories we had formed earlier in the question 'How much and what kind of knowledge is needed'. The participants identified music skills, technical skills and psychological skills. They also noticed that the category 'music skills' was missing from the aspects they had paid attention to, so musical interpretation and expression were added to the previous list. The conversation continued by combining aspects that the participants had mentioned. The first music skill that was mentioned as an object of assessment was pitch, which according to the participants is the correlation of support, articulation and interrelation of ear and muscles. The participants also mentioned dynamics, sense of subdivisions, and choices of instrumentation. As technical skills they mentioned breathing, use of body muscular work, grounding and body balance, energy level, coordination, balance of vocal folds and air pressure, use of registers, ornamentation and loudness. Relating to psychological skills the participants mentioned having feelings and controlling them, having thoughts behind the lyrics, and having a strong stage presence. Matters concerning the performance on stage were also mentioned: contact with others on stage, energy to and from the band, active listening, the use of microphone and microphone stand, contact with audience, choosing the right songs and the set up of the performance.

¹⁷ Adjudicators are members of the assessment board coming from outside of school's own collegial body.

When talking about the concept 'energy level' the notion of verbalizing abstract matters in feedback was addressed. Cecilia had experienced that not every student understands for example the concept of high energy or lack of energy. She mentioned that not everyone learns through mental images, either. Cecilia asked whether the participants knew different ways of expressing the concept of energy.

EMMA: Students practice to get the energy to flow the way we want it to.

BIRGITTA: Video recording it maybe in order for them to see themselves.

ANNA: It's important to say it in a way, that nothing needs to be taken away, that the student should use the energy and....

DANIELA: Channel it.

BIRGITTA: Yeah. So, it's not a bad thing, it's normal.

FACILITATOR: Could you say the same in a very concrete way without using abstract terms? What could we say to a student who just doesn't understand the concept of energy?

CECILIA: For me it might be two things. One is posture, so it's balanced according to the way the student wants to use his or her voice, the muscle work. It also has to do with the vocal folds and air pressure. They have to be in a balance. Even if the student wants to shout there still needs to be balance or it will hoarse his voice.

DANIELA: In my opinion we are talking about music that has lyrics. If the music includes a vocalist, everything is really tied to the thought behind the lyrics. If one is really in them, they form the intention of what do one wants to say with the music. If that's lacking or going to a different direction, it's superficial. One shouldn't miss the whole point; why am I singing this song, am I really standing behind it, do I want to sound like this, is there authenticity behind it. That comes with the lyrics.

CECILIA: The type of person who doesn't understand the concept of energy, doesn't understand how to put emotion in lyrics, either. So maybe the kinaesthetic way of explaining, that there must be your body behind the lyrics, works better. But this is very difficult.

FACILITATOR: It's one of the key questions in giving feedback as teachers. Are we understood? Are we talking about things that are clear to us but are not received by the student?

CECILIA: This is the reason why a few of my colleagues have gone to the Vocal Methods way of explaining singing.

EMMA: It's concrete and it fits their needs when they don't feel this way.

DANIELA: I'm still very much behind the thought that you have to have the feeling and emotion.

FACILITATOR: How would you describe feeling an emotion if the student says I did have it?

DANIELA: I would say what were you thinking, what was your attitude, what story did you have, how did you feel, why did you choose this song? I would really go deep into what was your feeling, what had happened before and what was about to happen, what did you want to say there. I would search for the emotions from the thought behind the story. Through that I would have got it through because I've used these different emotions many times. Students find things when they really have to go into their own lives. It's not just performing, it's about how they are and how they feel and what they have experienced.

CECILIA: I have used feeling emotions for example if the song is about sadness. Of course, I don't want to push anyone to think of their childhood and when they were sad, not that far. I might ask if they can think of something sad but not too sad, and where they felt it, a concrete feeling if they think of something bad is happening. I get the process started through these real physical feelings. It works.

BIRGITTA: But sometimes if you ask do you feel it here or do you feel it there, still for some it's totally air.

ANNA: I use polarisation. For example, being in this position [leaning forward] and run and being in this position [leaning back with open chest] and run and being in middle. Ask the students to run and then have them lie down. And feel the difference, the first was high energy, here's the low. So, polarizing actually works really well.

BIRGITTA: It's the same like taking a song and putting it up to a double tempo and then suddenly you find your own tempo.

CECILIA: That's concrete.

BIRGITTA: There's this exercise, I can show it to you. First you are standing still and then you start falling and your feet just start walking. But I don't force them to walk further than they want and I stop when they want to stop. This can give the student a very good idea of when you don't force things it feels like this, instead of pushing it by stomping hard.

These teaching methods, polarisation of high and low energy and feeling the difference between pushing and not pushing were added to the previous list. The participants then returned to the challenge of giving grades. Everyone agreed that giving grades was difficult; Emma even mentioned that she thought it was devastating for the learning process. Cecilia had tried to solve the difficulties by using an evaluation form, which included all aspects that were being assessed. After giving a number to all aspects on the institution's scale, she calculated the final grade from the average. Cecilia expressed that she did not want to give numbers at all but preferred the evaluation form to grades based only on intuition, because the form at least made all aspects of assessment visible. Other participants wondered whether some things were more important in assessment than others. Birgitta explained how for example problems in pitch may be an easily solvable technical problem and therefore she would put too much emphasis on it in evaluation.

The challenge of evaluation was also addressed in another session when discussing students' varying instrumental skill levels. I asked the participants whether the challenges in varying instrumental skill levels relate to challenges in evaluating students. Cecilia mentioned that in her institution there was no joint understanding of evaluation because of differing views on requirements for vocalists. Birgitta explained that two students might get the same grade from her but for different reasons and criteria. For her, the grade can have "a different flavour inside" by which she meant that the grade may emphasise different elements. Daniela mentioned the importance of concentrating on the students' own path and development. She pointed out that this can be difficult if there is change of teacher at some point. The new teacher does not know from where the student has begun. Still, she believed in emphasizing individual competencies. Anna saw this challenge in close relation to curriculum development:

ANNA: I often think about this in relation to how do we design a curriculum for a future that is actually unknown. We don't know what their future

is going to look like and probably it's going to look quite different from present. The things that matter in the future are for example independent learning skills like we discussed, to be able to plan your work in between lessons. Things like how you handle the unknown are not as easy to evaluate. If you work on your technique, if you work on getting to know music and if you work on theory, then you have a wider possibilities of handling those unknown things, but it can be easier to evaluate the more concrete things like how far they have technically gone.

Emma understood evaluation as an on-going action regardless of the situation:

EMMA: Evaluation is always going on, we are always evaluating phrasing or how the rehearsing has been going. We always evaluate together with the students, and the students evaluate themselves.

5.2.4 What do we teach when there is no right or wrong?

In the first interviews two participants mentioned the challenges concerning the content in vocal teaching, what to include from the extensive fields of vocal technique, traditions of musical styles, and other related topics. They contemplated whether there is a right and a wrong way to sing. One teacher told about her experiences from her student years, when "the teachers filled me with these rights and wrongs". Similar experiences were later mentioned also in the professional conversations. The fourth question presented in the process was formed as a compilation of the following comments of the interviews:

BIRGITTA: A big challenge is that it depends so much on the person. It's not like in classical singing where we have rules. If the music is from a certain decade or country, it should sound a certain way. There are a lot of rules to hold on to, and I think the challenge for the students in our genre is, that it depends so much on them. How can we get into who they are, what they want to share with the world and how do they want to sound? There's not even a rule there. And even if there is some aesthetic rule, you can still break that rule and say you know you shouldn't so that, but you I do that anyway.

BIRGITTA: I really try not to say this is wrong, this is right, this sounds good, this sounds bad. I never do that. Because I think that's not my job. It's

a big world for them because there's a lot of personal choices in it. But that's also what makes it interesting.

ANNA: It's challenging because of the freedom in the choice of repertoire, and how to build it up.

This question was discussed in the first online meeting. First the participants all shared one thought about the topic from which the conversation naturally flowed to discussing different rights and wrongs and teaching methods they use to tackle this issue.

ANNA: The student is the most important thing, the center. And what the students' character, voice and personality are. And their thoughts about the message. I usually take it from there, start with the student and work with both the songs, finding their own voice in a song, and their technique, when they need it.

CECILIA: I've found myself thinking a lot of what is right and wrong in music. Can there be right or wrong? Can this be right only for me? In my subjective opinion this is right and that is wrong, but how to make someone else learn without me being too subjective, too much inside my own opinions, but instead trying to be as objective as possible?

BIRGITTA: I offer my students solutions. And I give them the responsibility to find out what is right for them. It means, that I have my experience of things that could work with the song or with the technique and I offer my student that knowledge. But then they have to take responsibility about if it feels right for them.

The participants presented varying views in considering teaching tradition. This was one of the topics in which teachers did not thoroughly agree on.

DANIELA: I think we teach tradition in many ways. And we do that from our own experience. What do the students want to take from that? But I think our responsibility is to teach the tradition and how it has been done. And also, what makes certain things sound certain way. But after that it's up to the student.

BIRGITTA: But although you know the tradition you can still feel free to do something differently and say 'this is my opinion, that's how I want to do it'.

As discussed earlier, some institutions use adjudicators in evaluating student performances. This was found problematic because of many reasons:

EMMA: Sometimes as a teacher you have to say what you think are the right solutions out of your own experience. But here are some rights or wrongs when it comes to their exams and assessment in them. I think it's far too hard sometimes to manoeuvre everything, because there is no right and wrong and the students still have to choose. Sometimes they don't know what kind of opportunities they have, so you have to present them with something from which they can choose. And then they're going to be assessed in this something, because they have to get a grade. Also, the adjudicators may have some criteria, that makes things right or wrong in students' singing.

BIRGITTA: Who can judge if it's right or wrong then?

EMMA: It's a double standard. There shouldn't be right or wrong so the students can choose their way and find their own voice. At the same time someone from the outside comes and assesses what the students do using some kind of criteria. The adjudicators have views about what's right and wrong, so sometimes it's a bit scary to let the students choose too freely. But when they have finished their studies they can choose. They do learn a lot of things this way, but at the same time it has to be the student's will at the centre, building up the student's voice as it is.

I directed the conversation to these criteria by asking what the participants' institutions base their evaluation on. In many institutions the criteria were quite general and applied to all instruments. Such criteria included for example musicality and technical level as well as knowledge in tradition. Daniela mentioned that every school should have a curriculum because it is "the only way to evaluate". But at the same time, she expressed that these criteria may only be for schools, not for real life. Anna mentioned on several occasions, that not all students are self-directed, and that they often ask the teacher to tell them exactly what is required and what they need to do. Anna explained her pedagogical thinking in such situations:

ANNA: I see it as a mission to give them the freedom of evaluating themselves what they are doing. I try to strengthen them in the ability to trust their ideas, to trust their own creativity and to trust that they actually can ask themselves; "where am I, where do I want to go and how do I get there?". It doesn't have to be the teacher saying what they need. So, the

freedom of making those decisions is their responsibility. I see it really as a mission, since our society seems to set us demands to accomplish certain results. I think we can give them so much more than that.

In order to make sure the different views were understood correctly I asked again if the participants thought that concerning tradition there is a right or wrong.

DANIELA: Yes, but they need to know to what to compare that right or wrong. In order to find their own voice, they have to know what there is that they can do. They need to try different things and they need some guidance.

BIRGITTA: Still, when we teach about traditions, they have freedom to say yes or no. It's a personal solution. If I sing jazz in a folk way, I can do that, and you can't say that it's wrong. You can say that I'm breaking the tradition, but I have a right to do that as a singer. So, I would say that it still doesn't give us a right or a wrong. But maybe you could find right or wrong in hearing issues, knowing the scales, singing in pitch or making it swing, taking responsibility on the stage, communicating and all these kinds of things are maybe a little easier to evaluate. We can at least see, if it works. If there are three four professional musicians in the panel and they agree, then maybe they are right. So, I don't think right or wrong is about tradition.

CECILIA: If I have students who know what they want, it's much easier to teach them the tradition and rules of how it used to be done. They know how to use that information. But there are a lot of students that just don't know what to do, and they take everything the teacher says as "words from God". In these cases what to teach when there is no right or wrong is problematic for me. I don't want to give orders or sound like this is the only way to do things. That's why I like the idea that it's not necessary to obey the tradition.

DANIELA: Maybe I sounded too harsh in talking about right or wrong. I'm not saying, that I would tell the student that now you are doing something wrong. It's just a matter of teaching them what there is and the possibilities of what they can do. So, as it has been said, it's easier to evaluate scales, pitch and these certain things. We can just mark a yes down on the paper, this was good. But then there are many things we cannot evaluate because they require long-term studying and

learning, like how to interpret music on their own. And they need a lot of studying and a lot of guidance to know what there is and what styles there are.

The challenges in evaluation were seen in close connection to the previous question in the first group discussion, finding one's own voice.

ANNA: I'm thinking about the discussion we had last time about the students finding their own voice. It might be an answer, a goal maybe, that the students have to take responsibility and really work with themselves, be curious and explore, find out what they want, what kind of message they have and what kind of songs they want to sing.

Participating teachers had created different teaching practices in enhancing students' ability to evaluate themselves. Birgitta emphasised communication with the student, the words the teacher chooses. Often, instead of giving her own opinion, she involved the student with questions like "Is this how you wanted to sound?" or "Does it hurt you?". She said that teaching through questions prevents both the teacher and the student from evaluating everything and enhances discussion. Anna used the same teaching method but also saw challenges in it. She wanted to be a teacher who asks questions and makes the students responsible, but at the same time she sees that some of them are not ready for that. Anna mentioned that she has to give them some ideas to start with. Birgitta agreed that the teachers should give the student skills and knowledge for example about the traditions and vocal techniques, but that in more personal matters she cannot give the students right answers.

BIRGITTA: I still think that I'm more of a coach in these situations, when I help them to find the answers which I think they already have inside themselves if they search.

The aims of the vocal studies should according to the participants reflect the goals of the students, for example whether they want to become artists or teachers. Daniela added institutions' requirements as another relevant aspect the teacher has to take into consideration. Birgitta pointed out, that the present schooling system does not prepare the students to think for themselves and take responsibility. She thinks higher education is too late of a stage to learn to reflect on oneself. Anna agreed that this kind of thinking is quite new to many of her students. She had noticed that some students do not even know how to rehearse. Anna summarised this idea of variety in teacher's positions as follows:

ANNA (revised): I think all of us agree on, that we go in and out of being a library, an expert, a coach and a teacher, who knows what has to be changed in vocal technique. So, we actually have a very wide perspective of different roles that we act on all the time. And sometimes just be the one who asks questions, who walks by their side creating the permissive atmosphere in which they are allowed to succeed, fail and fall.

5.2.5 How can we navigate between different vocal methods?

As discussed in section 3.1, popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy has during the last decades been shaped by international, commercially based vocal methods or models. In the first interviews two participants mentioned challenges that different vocal methods and models have put on their professional identity and daily work. Emma described how she has found it challenging not wanting to become a certified teacher of the method she was the most acquainted with because of outside pressure. She mentioned it would make her become too focused on the ideals of that method. Also, getting the knowledge of methods is expensive. Anna also explained how she in her work tries to think deeper instead of just using methods.

This topic was addressed in the first on-line discussion. In the beginning I asked the participants about their background in vocal methods or models. Most participants had studied several methods or models, such as Complete Vocal Technique (CVT), Estill Voice Training (EVT), Speech Level Singing (SLS), Anne Rosing Method, Singing Success and classical singing technique, which many participants mentioned as a ‘method’ which they had studied only for a short period. None of the participants were certified teachers of any of these methods.

In order to address this phenomenon from a neutral starting point, in formulating the question about vocal methods or models I used the verb ‘navigate’. I believed the verb to have a more neutral meaning and bring forth the diverse effect of methods and models on the field. The results are presented here according to the themes that I identified from the professional conversation.

Gaining knowledge

Firstly, the methods and models were seen as means to gain more knowledge:

ANNA: I want to know as much as I can.

CECILIA: I'm interested in everything including singing and technique and also how people explain things.

Methods or models were also as understood as ways to get more tools for teaching:

BIRGITTA: For me it's to have different angles and to have as many ways as possible to help the student.

DANIELA: I'd also like to dig deeper into different methods to maybe find some new answers or ways to explain things. So, I think it's very nice to have different methods.

In several comments the participants mentioned, that there are too many methods or models for a teacher to master. Many participants stated that they wanted to learn more about many methods.

EMMA: I'm very interested in knowing more about all methods, there are a lot of things that I don't know so much about. I will have to find some way to learn more about them, to be ready.

CECILIA: I think it would be interesting and nice for me if I could educate myself enough, that if someone with a different method background would come to me I wouldn't have to start searching the latest knowledge.

To be certified or not

For all participants not being a certified teacher of one method or model was a informed choice:

DANIELA: I don't believe that only one can be a solution, there are so many kinds of us.

Some participants thought that connecting to one method or model as a certified teacher would limit their vision of the field:

EMMA: I want to learn more but I don't want to be a method teacher, I want to see the bigger picture.

CECILIA: I have been asked to go to a teacher certification program but I don't feel like it, I want to be neutral. I appreciate how methods can help us, but I don't want to be a method teacher.

ANNA: I don't want to pick a method.

Emma had experienced pressure of getting a certification:

EMMA: I sometimes feel that I should be a certified method teacher, because so many are studying to become that. What kind of singing teacher am I when I don't have the certification? On the other hand, I don't want to have it. I sometimes feel pressure that everyone should have a certification, especially when teaching singing in higher education.

Cecilia explained that the situation can also be the other way around, that teachers with certification also feel pressure:

CECILIA: Sometimes there is the same problem also with a certification. It's either whether you are or whether you're not.

Methods as languages

The terminology produced by methods or models among popular music and jazz singing was discussed from different angles. Knowing different terminology and understanding the physiology behind them was one important reason for studying more than one method:

CECILIA: It's very useful to know the language the students are using.

BIRGITTA: It's like having a joint language. When students call certain singing phenomenon something, then I know what they are talking about and use the same names or tell them "in my terms I would call it...". It easy to communicate with different students. As a teacher I think it really helps to know about the techniques but also the language about it.

DANIELA: Every method or model wants to help with voice technique of singers and every method or model has certain terms that can help. I think it's very convenient to use one term from another method or

another term from another. Some words just work better in certain situations, so I feel comfortable using all that I've learned.

Teaching according to methods

All teachers welcomed methods and mentioned that they combine knowledge from different methods in their teaching:

DANIELA: There are many methods and models that can be useful for certain people. I think they are good, but you have to always think who can benefit from a certain method.

CECILIA: It is refreshing and interesting when people with different backgrounds come together and we can discuss things.

BIRGITTA: I think we really need some 'boxes' in the beginning, and now we know that there can be many boxes, we can search within them all.

DANIELA: I'd also like to dig deeper into different methods to maybe find some new answers or ways to explain things.

CECILIA: This abstractness is the reason why a few of my colleagues have gone for vocal methods. It's concrete and it fits their needs because they don't feel this more abstract way.

ANNA: The more tools I have, the more I pass them forward when they are needed. So, I don't want to present the method, I just want to give the needed tools.

Teachers also saw challenges in using methods in teaching:

BIRGITTA: As teachers we have to trust, that even though the student cries, my intuition tells me that this is the right way to go. And the more we do that and the more we can see that we can trust that. Of course, that draws us to do what feels right, instead of having a method.

BIRGITTA: As a teacher you try to be in connection with your intuition all the time as a part of the improvisation style. When you don't have an exact idea, that will make you able to see who the student is in front of you, instead of having this method.

BIRGITTA: Having vocal lessons isn't bad but you can really tell, who has learned what method. You can hear it in the sound and it's so boring. But of course, it's to get more knowledge about your voice.

The participants agreed that the basis of teaching should be in the individuality of the student. According to several participants, the use of tools from one method only limits the options of the teacher:

BIRGITTA: We need to teach them, even if it sounds like hippy, that they are unique. That must be the basis from which we work instead of "I have a method", because that's not unique.

ANNA: A starting point for me is to think of the student as an intellectual and equal. When they come into my room, I don't think that I'll put something on them, that's not my starting point. It is to make an incentive.

BIRGITTA: It's much easier for the teacher to just say: we do it like this, I have this method. I often think that's why singing can end up with very much technique.

Contradictions

The participants also mentioned that the arrival of different methods has caused contradictions:

EMMA: I have some colleagues within classical singing that are very negative towards methods and I have one colleague that is a certified method teacher. There is a lot of resistance among teachers, especially those who are practical teachers.

CECILIA: When the first method came there was a big battle of what is right and what is wrong and what is good and what is not. Promotion of the method was very strong, and it made some teachers very anxious. They wondered whether they had to teach everybody with this same system.

Navigating

In general, the atmosphere in the conversation of vocal methods can be described along with Emma:

EMMA: We only have one voice and different ways of understanding it.

Living with and in between different vocal methods was mentioned to be easy by many participants:

ANNA: I take courses, read books and listen to the examples and then I try to navigate between the different vocal methods.

EMMA: I don't feel like I have so many things to navigate in between because I don't know so much about the other methods.

BIRGITTA: I don't find it hard to navigate, either. I tell my students that what I work most with this one method, but I don't only use that. They know that is not my religion and that things don't have to be that way. I tell them that for me this method has worked, but I've also searched in other directions.

CECILIA: Most of my closest colleagues are now method teachers and we have very good conversations about teaching. I have noticed that they use the same tools as I do, even though they are method teachers and I'm not. A good way to navigate.

BIRGITTA: When I do things with students, I tell them from whom I have learned these things. It feels good to be totally open about that.

DANIELA: When I teach, I have to start from my own point of view, that I have to tell where I get this from. So that it's not the fact or the truth for the student. It's very comfortable navigating between all these methods.

EMMA: I use different terminology navigating in between. What kind of words I use depend on what's helping the student. But it's also a little bit confusing to navigate.

5.2.6 How do we deal with the individual differences in students' instrumental skills with limited resources?

This question was formed as a combination of several notions the participants mentioned in the interviews. The first part of the question refers to differences in students' instrumental skills when they enter higher education. Some participants mentioned that in their institutions up to half of the students entering the program have low instrumental skill levels, while the rest have studied years in pre-higher education and are more advanced. Cecilia for example described how the hardest part of her work is trying to teach students with lower skills levels how to become professionals. The second part of the question focuses on the amount of vocal lessons and amount of time available. It was generally agreed upon that it is a question of money because the less money there is the less lessons can be offered. Cecilia also found it hard to provide the students with individual processes, because some need more support than others.

The conversation revealed immense variety in the amounts of one-on-one tuition in different institutions. They are not reported here in detail because of securing the participants' anonymity, but it is notable, that individual teaching resources varied from having four 45 minutes lessons per semester to having six times more lessons. In some institutions there was also group teaching available for singers in addition to one-on-one tuition.

The participants shared their thoughts and ways to manage this situation. Daniela pondered over the fact that she needs to accept that some students do not get very far within their formal studies. She mentioned that it is important and also challenging to provide them with enough information to continue learning outside of lessons and school. Birgitta mentioned the large amount of content in teaching as another challenge. It was also mentioned that sometimes difficult choices needed to be made. Daniela for example explained that she did not have enough time to work with how to express the lyrics, because the students had to learn so many other things. She was concerned that the present tuition hours per semester are not enough to enhance deeper understanding of the instrument. Anna had also experienced, that it takes time to build faith for the students to trust what they already have as a starting point. Emma described how she uses the time differently with different students. Some students benefit from having shorter lessons more regularly and some are able to have longer lessons less frequently. However, she emphasised that the frequency of the lessons was always the decision of the student.

Voice as an instrument

According to the participants the learning process of the voice as an instrument differs from the learning process of other instruments. As the difference was hard for Anna to explain verbally during the conversation, the quotation here is taken from the corrections Anna sent when checking her quotations:

ANNA (revised): When I learned to play the piano, I developed my muscle memory through what I see in my hands, notes or chords. I've heard about physiological difference between being a singer and an instrumentalist: For instrumentalists, synapses (electrical and muscular relations) must be formed, from the brain to the lips or hands and fingers, and then to mechanical instruments. This is different from the singer whose instrument is directly linked to the brain, this is the main reason why the process through which the singer learns his instrument is fundamentally different than how most instrumentalists learn to play theirs. There is an extra step on the road compared to singers who are directly linked from the brain to the mouth from birth, through speaking. Jazz pedagogy for singers must be better adapted to the unique human instrument. This is even more critical when it comes to teaching in vocal improvisation. Singer may not always be helped by going "the instrumental" way.

Since most parts of the instrument cannot be seen, understanding its functions takes more time. Some participants mentioned that this emphasises the need for adequate time on teaching and more lessons:

DANIELA: Voice as an instrument is so abstract. There should be more time to find things so that they are able to explain it to their future students.

The learning process of singing was also judged to be different because of reasons related to students' age. Daniela had noticed that singers often lack the knowledge in basic music skills compared to other instrumentalists, for example in music theory. Cecilia mentioned this was due to the fact that singers generally start learning their instrument later than other instrumentalists, often as late as around the age of 16. If the student enters the music school later in life, it is hard to meet the required learning outcomes in higher education. While the other instrumentalists have been working for years on their instrumental technique, vocalists are only finding their voice in singing. However, Cecilia had noticed a change in this situation:

CECILIA: This might change, because nowadays students can start the vocal lessons and studying music earlier. Research has shown that it's not dangerous or a bad thing for children to take singing lessons.

The participants did not see insurmountable problems in teaching singing to children. Birgitta noted that children sing from when they are born anyway. Anna continued how in her country it was believed, that children going through the voice change shouldn't take lessons, but she also thought that the situation has changed. Yet, there are things to consider in teaching children: for instance, some participants suggested that teaching should not interfere with the natural way of children's singing and not make them think too much. Daniela also raised imitation as an important aspect of learning. She mentioned that it is very important to have good vocal examples for imitation.

Teaching rehearsing skills and emphasizing students' responsibilities

Because of the limited amount of one-to-one tuition, teaching rehearsing skills and practice routines was considered very important. Good practice routines can make up for scarce tuition time, but this was also found challenging, because some students lack practice routines:

ANNA: Some of my students are really experienced singers and we can work more on the individual stuff. But I also have singers that are less experienced, and they often lack practice routines. We can find things that are really important to practice every day, but to actually get the routines working is harder with the ones that are not so experienced.

In Daniela's experience singers often have explanations for arriving at the lesson unprepared, such as that they have not had time to rehearse or they have not understood how. In her opinion this is mostly just avoiding the responsibility:

DANIELA: It's quite challenging to turn the thinking the other way around, that they wouldn't think practicing is a responsibility but an inspiring thing to do.

In some comments the challenge of passing the responsibility on to the student in a teacher-student relationship was addressed. For example, Birgitta proposed that students should understand that one learns mostly working outside of lessons. Still, some students just try to make the teacher happy instead of taking charge of their learning:

ANNA: Rather than thinking about teaching I think about learning, because, as somebody already said, it is about the interaction. I'm not supposed to just give the knowledge they should have. It's a two-way communication, we explore things together.

Anna had also noticed that in the beginning the students look for her confirmation all the time. She considered this understandable because the teacher needs to be more in lead when the student does not know enough yet. But she also emphasised that later the teacher has to let go more and more. Birgitta told an example about her similar thoughts in teaching:

BIRGITTA: Instead of me telling them that they are standing in the right position, they take the responsibility of thinking how it feels for example to be in the right position. This is another way of thinking, the whole starting point actually. They have to be much more involved, and to be able to reproduce the feeling instead of the teacher telling this is right and this is wrong.

ANNA: That's a part of trusting yourself when you start actually listening to yourself and how things feel.

The participants had also witnessed how learning popular music and jazz singing can be frustrating. Anna said that many students want “frustration-free lessons” and instead of having to think themselves they want a list of things they need to do. She mentioned that it is sometimes tempting to go into the role of being the leader as doing the opposite, letting the students be in charge, can lead to uncertainty and frustration on the students' behalf. Anna emphasised that in such situations the teacher still has to stay calm.

As a tool for enhancing individual practicing Birgitta mentions making recordings during the lesson: it is easier for the students to rehearse and exercise when they can focus with the recording. Daniela said she has suggested recording to students, but she thinks that it is the students' responsibility to make the recording. Enhancing motivation and inspiration was seen as one solution for supporting individual practicing. Birgitta mentioned that it is important that the students know why they need to learn certain things, because seeing the idea behind the work inspires and motivates them.

BIRGITTA: In order to make the student work both in the classroom and home, they have to know why they need to learn these things, working needs to inspire them so it feels like there's an idea behind the work and they can see where they are going. It's the same with making a vocal

exercise. If you don't know why you are doing it, then you can't see if you get a result.

ANNA: Hopefully the student runs out after the class to find a practice room. You hope that you light up their own desire to keep on working. The little time we have is not enough for them, and I try to encourage them to find people to play with, so they actually have something forcing them to work.

BIRGITTA: All my students are on the bachelor program and there are no beginners, but of course they can still have very different instrumental skills. In the beginning I work a lot with trying to help them find out, what they like about singing, what they like about their voice and to give them some fundamentals from which to start. Because often they don't see that. They have passed the entrance exam, because they have some skills and they have some nice music in them, but still it can be very hard for them to really feel who they are. I record their singing, so they can find out themselves what they like about their voice and realise that something sounds actually really good. Then I build on that, instead of them wanting to change who they are. That makes them stronger. Often, when they start in the higher education, they get frustrated because they see how much there is to learn, and it seems to them that they know so little. Still, we both know that they have something and it's important to find it and make it bigger, to start from there.

DANIELA: Also, vocalists should write songs, music and lyrics, in order to get motivated.

BIRGITTA: Also, I work on intentions, because if you have an intention of being in the music, that can protect you from asking everybody whether they like it. Some of them find that they do music because they want to make the world bigger or want spread love, but not meaning the religious thing. They must try to understand why they do it, what do they want to share or that they want to connect with people. This higher thought can actually protect you from people's opinions about what you are doing.

EMMA: I don't know, you just have to try something. You always have to think about these things and try to talk and make the singing lesson

inspirational enough for them to want to work. And sometimes even that doesn't work. There's no answer I feel.

BIRGITTA: I can just inspire them and give some advice, but the big work is their work.

Planning and reflecting

Planning vocal studies both in terms of time and direction was seen as a good way to teach rehearsing skills. Many participants reported that they use practice diaries, reflection tasks and essays to help the students to manage their use of time. Emma mentioned that she also gives the students examples of what a rehearsal diary could look like. In general, the participants had experienced that diaries help many students:

CECILIA: I use practice diary, 5 year/semester/month/week plans, and answering questions 'how, why, what, when and who'. I usually present the practice routine stuff to a group of students. These are the main points I use with everyone, but of course I don't force them to do a five-year plan in their education or their singing. But that is what I offer. I have found out that some students have already done plans before, but when I ask if someone has taught them how to organise their practicing or the routines of the week, they say no. The students have told me that this helps them to focus on the things that matter, and on the things that are important to them.

ANNA: I try to establish grounds for assurity. That means reassuring them to trust their ability when they don't feel like doing it or get stuck. And also, that the uncertainty is a part of the learning process. I actually have tried to give them tools for structuring their learning. If you have 60 minutes, structure that hour so that you have five or ten minutes for warming up and so on. In the first lesson we go through what they can do in warming up and, depending on how tired they are by then, add more time for that. Then they have the vocal technique part, if there's something special they work on right now. They should dedicate next 15 minutes to that, and then you go through some specific material for 15 minutes. Then there also is the creative part, in which you create new things and develop them having an improvisational approach to the music the last session of the hour. It can also be about spending time with theory. When they understand that everything demands time, but the little you do every day makes a great progression, it's easier not to

get overwhelmed. Hopefully after giving my students these tools they can actually decide how much time they need for each part, so I don't have to decide for them. But in the beginning, it's easier when they have something really concrete as a tool, so they can start scheduling their use of time.

EMMA: We have the essay at the end of the year and then they use a diary or a log as a start. I think that the diaries and the reflection are for those who aren't used to rehearsing. It can be helpful to make a plan. We don't necessarily say that they should follow their plan, for some it doesn't work and for some it works. I tell my students that the diary is more for themselves than for me. It's not for me to see what they've done or if they should work harder. They should find their own driving force and what inspires them and what makes them want to sing more. I work with them a bit by making them read and write about their own goals. Also write about how they want to work with their instruments and that way give them the opportunity to reflect on themselves as musicians. Then I can read these and help them to develop these things. And this I do outside of the lessons.

The diaries were seen as an important tool to teach the students to take responsibility for their own learning. By keeping a diary, it is easy to see the how much time is spent on rehearsing. The participants had experiences of both singers who work too little and singers who work too much. The diary was also helpful in finding a way to rehearse that fits the students' needs:

BIRGITTA: I don't have to for example tell them that they should work harder, they can see that they are not rehearsing every day. Sometimes they have to make arrangements or other tasks, but they are in the school as singers, so they have to make it a priority. If they do everything with a 100% effort, there's not enough time left for singing. Sometimes they just have to tell themselves that they need to practice vocals every day, 10 minutes, an hour. Having time to do that every day gets them in connection with the voice. Often such routines make them want to work more with the voice, because they focus instead of floating around or doing other stuff.

ANNA (revised): In our institution they have to write a lot. It seems that the art is not worth anything if we don't write about it. Sometimes I think they should just do it practically, because this is one of the few things

you can actually just do. And then, once in a while, you have to think about it. I haven't experienced diaries as something that makes a huge difference.

Two participants mentioned that they sometimes also ask their students to change the order in which they begin rehearsing. Birgitta for example asks the students in one period to begin with vocals and then continue with other things such as theory and piano playing and then change the order in the next period. Anna also extends changing the order to rehearsing vocals:

BIRGITTA: I try together with the students to find out, what they need to rehearse and then make a schedule which is realistic. In the beginning I'm really strict. Every time I meet the student, I want to know what they have worked with it, what they have rehearsed, what they have found out and how I can help them to move on. Normally that works well. If it doesn't work, we have to find out why. Were you not able to or why couldn't you pull yourself together? I'm there to help but still, every time, it's their responsibility to do the work.

Focusing

Focusing was seen important by the participants. For the vocal teacher focusing might mean for example paying attention to the skills that the students already have instead of skills they do not have:

BIRGITTA: In dealing with not enough time, it's important that we don't focus too much on the things that the students are not able to do. We have a tendency to teach what is important by in which order we do things with the student. If you always use half of the lesson in technique, it gives them the idea that the important thing here is the vocal technique. Even if we know that they need to work on certain things, we shouldn't do it every time. It's important to think about the balance and also the order of things.

For a student focusing can mean for example spending enough time with one thing. Daniela had experienced that students often come to lessons with an aim to learn many new things, because there is so much knowledge and skills available:

DANIELA: It's about getting them to focus on that one thing for a longer time.

Emma also shared the concern of balancing between time and the things the student needs to work on. Both Emma and Anna mentioned how teachers want to give their students as much as they possibly can, but that there should be a balance in how much knowledge one lesson may contain. Some participants mentioned that they use small-group tuition as a tool to motivate and inspire students:

CECILIA: I don't have one method that I use but what I've tried to bring to my work is to have as much group work for singers as possible. In these groups we talk a lot about singing, feelings, technical stuff, how and why to practice and that kind of things. So, they don't need me as much. I'm not the master of knowledge throwing them ideas that I think are right. They talk to each other and connect, make friends and colleagues who they can trust after graduation. That is my solution for how to deal with the different levels. Those groups also help, because it's easier for me to have those kinds of discussions when there's more people around. The teacher says this is important but is it? Let's talk about it.

ANNA: I think about that as well because I have some students that are more beginners. Sometimes I make groups with my students, because they inspire each other so much. Especially it makes those who haven't come as far taking bigger steps, when they see someone daring to do things. All the collaboration, feedback, critical thinking and reflection are so good when you work in groups.

Because of different educational structures, some teachers face the situation where they have to teach students that are beginners in singing even in higher education. These students may for example have another first instrument, or the school might accept students with various levels of knowledge and skills:

FACILITATOR: Did some of you have students that are more in the beginner level? Some of you work in schools with only fairly advanced students and some in schools that accept students with a lower instrumental and musical knowledge and skill level. Issues that you have to deal with seem to be very different with these groups. Can you share any ideas of working with beginners?

EMMA: Many of my students have never played an instrument and they don't know music theory. But they all have been singing. We all have music

in ourselves, but I have to lead them all the time and do the rehearsing during our lessons, because they never rehearse on their own.

DANIELA: It's very difficult because the level of students varies. The first student may be a beginner and the next student can be a bit further already, so it's difficult to adapt to these situations. But yes, there are some students who don't even have the courage to sing during the lesson. It's challenging to get them to open up and also to give the guidance that they need at that point. So, it's about the balance of how much information you can give to help them to move forward. I think the first year usually is spent on building the connection with the student. It's very slow, slow motion. But then you have the curriculum and you really need to accomplish certain things, for example if they study to become music teachers. They only have a certain amount of time and have to start from the zero level and become a music teacher...

CECILIA: Some students that are accepted with a low skill level and don't do the required work, very soon find out that they can't make it. They go and study something else.

DANIELA: There have been a few students of the beginner level that have really worked hard. In the beginning they have realised that it's a great chance for them, so has been very rewarding to see that you can really start from a zero point and develop very fast.

EMMA: I think that's very important with the beginners, to make them trust you and relax and also trust themselves, just in a bit more guided way.

BIRGITTA: It is not important if it's beginners or students on a higher level. It is, as a teacher, trying to be in connection with your intuition all the time. That's a part of the improvisational styles, that you don't have an exact idea. That will make you be much more in contact with your intuition. So, the more you let go and the more you just shut up and think, the better. My best lessons have been the ones where I totally back off and do just 50 percent of what I normally do, instead of me taking the total leadership and them wanting me to give them something. That's so important and it doesn't matter if it's a beginner or an advanced student. It's a way of thinking and being a teacher.

ANNA: It doesn't matter if you want to be a professional or not, music for me is a way to express myself. Even if the students won't be at the highest level, they can still use music as means of expression.

DANIELA: I think students that are in the beginning are much easier to work with, because they don't have any requirements. More advanced students come to the lessons more focused on "I have a problem", which is great. But at the same time, they are thinking too much that "I need this, I need that". It's difficult trying to really get into the music with them, because they think too technically. With both kinds of students, it should be more about expressing themselves in music, starting to think about what they want to sing, what the song is about or what the lyrics are about. Also, what is your story, how do you really feel through these lyrics, has this happened to you or what's your situation in this song. Those are the most important things for me when I start working with the students, because they really have to have an idea of what they want to express in the music. That will automatically give them something in their voice and we can work from there on. Some people are very shy about expressing their feelings or their thoughts. They don't connect with this idea that they would have to say something about yourself, they try to take a role like in a play. That is a problem because then they are think outside themselves. I always try to start from the song and their expression and through that work on techniques or improvisation if they are stuck in the melody. So, it's about listening to the student and asking them questions. It's about observing but still trying to dig into their emotions. There are individual differences, because everyone is different. I don't know if there is any method behind this, just going into the song.

BIRGITTA: In the beginner level is really important that they have a strong feeling of what they like in their own doing. Most of them need to work less with their brain and more with their body. I really try to help by taking away the pressure of being good, because then they are just there.

Other solutions

The issues of money, time and responsibility were linked together closely as shown in the following discussion:

CECILIA: I have realised time after time that resources are the thing that I most would like to have. I think of how to find more resources and at the same time I know that I'm not the one who has the power to find them.

BIRGITTA: Just to be able to give them more lessons?

CECILIA: Whatever it is they need. But more money because the money with what we run our system is so small. But, as my boss says, concentrate on things that you can affect and try to forget what you can't.

BIRGITTA: But it's not all the students who need more lessons, I'm not sure about that. They need to be better at working by themselves. Having more lessons can also be again taking the responsibility away from them, that they just go to school every week. It's also about what we do and how they work. That is sometimes more important than how many lessons they get.

Some teachers wanted to focus on the bigger picture and saw challenges in not having a joint understanding of learning outcomes within the institution:

DANIELA: It's good to know what other teachers are teaching so that you find the balance in what you have to teach. If you're the only one teaching singers and you don't have any connection to the other teachers, it is difficult to find out what they have to learn. So, one of the big challenges is to communicate with other teachers and to find out what they are teaching, so that everything is planned for the student, so that they will get enough information to provide as much information for them as possible.

CECILIA: I find myself thinking the bigger picture, not only the instrumental skills but the whole package of education. One problem is that in our working community we don't discuss these things much. Within the vocal teachers it's quite clear how we want to do things, but the big picture is a problem. There is not only one direction everybody wants to go to. All teachers want to help our students to be as good as possible, but the idea of how to get there varies.

There were also other solutions on how to deal with individual differences:

EMMA: How I deal with the individual differences is by using the choices or repertoire, what they are singing, taking that as my starting point.

ANNA (revised): We call it civil disobedience. Sometimes we also have to think as individuals and not just obey what someone says. So, if I have another point of view and don't say it, then who's going to say it? I at times don't obey the curricula. Instead, we set goals with every student and sometimes the direction changes. You just have to stay open. It doesn't make a difference if they're beginners or advanced. Maybe the beginners need more language and more examples of things they can do, try them out and after that they can I play it their own.

Birgitta also mentioned how popular music and jazz are in some institutions treated differently in comparison to classical singing in the amount of individual tuition:

BIRGITTA: It's stupid that classical singers have longer lessons because it's "a known thing" that singing classical music is very hard. I think popular music and jazz singers should have the same amount, because they have the big challenge in finding what they want to say. It's such a personal thing, developing your own sound and your own way of doing music.

Anna explained that she tries to teach her students a 'philosophy' which she hopes to continue through the rest of their lives. She believed that if the students apply a learning a process in which they first start searching for something, then find it, and then practice it daily, it will not be only the time in school that matters but that they will also continue developing after the school is finished. In addition, Cecilia mentioned that she is very interested in using the internet more in teaching, for example using student videos or teaching online. She had used a web-based platform and thought it was very useful in sending videos or exam recordings. She was interested in using the platform more effectively and with the aim for helping the students to do their homework without the teacher.

5.2.7 How can we prevent our own vocal interests or challenges from influencing our teaching?

The topic of teacher's own vocal interests and challenges affecting teaching was mentioned by two participants in the first interviews:

BIRGITTA: Another challenge is to take care of not putting all your own issues on the student. It could for instance be, that you as a person have always had a hard time with breathing. Then, if you don't be careful, you have a very big focus on breathing with every student, even though it already works for that person. Then there are some things you will oversee and some things you don't see. It's about to find that balance, to take care of not losing yourself in it.

ANNA: It's important that students feel that they have the ownership of the knowledge. It's easy to say we give the students space and freedom to develop their music but of course our ideas as teachers will shine through anyway. So, I think the biggest challenge is to work on yourselves as teachers to back off a little of those ideas that we actually have.

I compiled these ideas into a question “How can we prevent our own vocal interests or challenges from influencing our teaching?”. The forming of this question was difficult and finding suitable vocabulary to describe the original meanings was hard. I explained my choice of words to the participants by elaborating that “what we ourselves are interested in should not lead us as teachers, that it might not be what the student needs or is interested in”. Before the discussion started, I mentioned a comment this question had raised in a conference: “Why not let teachers’ own interests affect teaching, because it is what they know the best?”. In the conversation it became clear that not all participants agreed with the idea, either. Even the participants, who had brought this question up in the interviews, presented controversial comments.

Anna saw this topic in connection to teachers’ identity:

ANNA: You get confirmation from the student by presenting everything you can. You put yourself at risk as a teacher when you don't present yourself directly as the master. The student may already know that you are, but when you choose not to show it all the time, it may feel like an identity crisis for some teachers.

This topic also rendered misunderstandings in the conversation. For example, it was misunderstood that Anna by her comment meant having or not having knowledge of the content which lead Birgitta to ponder over whether teachers should teach things they do not know about. Anna elaborated her first comment regarding teacher identity:

ANNA (revised): What I was talking about was that you have the knowledge but as a teacher you keep yourself from showing it. If you don't, it can feel like a bigger risk. It's a decision whether you put all your knowledge forward when needed.

Anna also suggested that teaching almost anything is possible by presenting questions like 'how does it feel' and making the students discover the answer themselves instead of the teacher showing it.

As a facilitative choice I brought the original question about teacher's own vocal challenges or interests back to discussion. I tried to bring perspective to the conversation by telling an example from my working life:

FACILITATOR: I have seen the same phenomenon in teacher training. Students teach their students the things they themselves are working on, even if the student is not ready for it. Then we have to tell them that this is their own project but that they need to think what their student needs. The question here is, should the student decide what the challenges and interests are and should we work towards those instead of our own.

After this example, more views and opinions emerged. Daniela mentioned that she did not believe in the teacher forcing his/her own topics on students but also mentioned that the teachers can use the ideas they are learning themselves in the lesson:

DANIELA: I'm thinking of the bigger picture, because we are all individuals that have their own strengths. It's good that we are using our personalities as teachers. In the ideal world students would come to you because you are a fantastic teacher and they can get things they want from you.

BIRGITTA: That's how you get private students. You do the thing you do and students want that from you. It's so nice when you are picked because of the sound you have or the things you do. That makes everything easier.

Birgitta mentioned how in many music institutions students cannot choose their teachers. I saw this as an opportunity to bring into the discussion the differences in private sector teaching and being employed in higher education institutions, where students are usually pre-assigned to certain teacher:

ANNA (revised): It's really important that you think about why you make decisions you make. One might for example talk down of specific genres like classical music. I don't think you should do that. It's actually really important to think about what is your driving force, is it the student or is it yourself.

Daniela commented that the curriculum sets the goals and ways of working. Birgitta believed that because of themselves, teachers sometimes miss other things. She used the verb “to project” in describing this phenomenon, proposing that it is important for the teacher not to project herself too much on the student.

I then asked the participants whether they are expected to teach a variety of musical genres when they teach in an institution and whether they had experienced situations in which what the student was interested in a musical style that was not of their main interest and knowledge:

CECILIA: Yes, and it was fun. I don't know anything about this certain genre and the technical use of voice in it, but I'm not afraid of trying. I told her already in the beginning, that I don't know much about this and I that I knew many very good teachers she could call to get more knowledge. We talked about the sound, the use of voice and using effects. The student brought audio examples and we tried together. By active listening, hearing where the student was at, what she was doing, what she wanted to do and using the knowledge that I have on physiology and anatomy, we ended up having a really nice session. I learned new things at the same time.

BIRGITTA: I think it's nice to be honest. I would never pretend that I knew something when I don't. But I never promise that I know everything. For me it feels good just to say that I can help even if I can't do that myself. I don't have to sing like Beyoncé but still I can help the person, because I know how she does it.

5.2.8 How can we prepare the female students to challenge the gender roles in music business?

The last topic addressed during the project was the one concerning gender roles in music business. In her interview Anna brought it up. Because of several challenges with the language, this quotation is from the revised data:

ANNA (revised): Women for example in the field of jazz, not only in institutions, can be pushed into new ditches by having to adapt more masculine qualities because we value typical masculine features such as being ahead and daring to take risks. I think it is a challenge even though it's really great that women have become braver. Wearing high heels or not is our decision to make - it shouldn't be about that. We have to be able to have different ways of expressing ourselves. I see this as a larger challenge in the society, not only within music and feminist thinking.

I noticed that starting conversation about this topic was hard. In order to raise thoughts and opinions I told one gender related experience from my early days as a musician. My example provoked a lively conversation on the topic, first about the female dominance in vocal students. In all of the institutions represented by the participants, there were mostly female and very few male majors in vocals, and one institution even had only female singers. At the same time, there were very few women playing other instruments in their institutions. According to Birgitta there are things we as teachers can not affect, but we can strengthen women by emphasizing rehearsing and becoming good:

BIRGITTA: We need to help our female students to be good at what they are doing and not play the silly girl.

Birgitta also suggested that in her country male vocalists rehearse more and are more competitive than their female counterparts. Anna had noticed that because of their different role compared to other instruments, vocalists sometimes do not get respect if they do not play another instrument well, and because of that they may feel like outsiders. Birgitta proposed it isn't necessarily because of the role but because they lack knowledge:

BIRGITTA: Sometimes they don't know enough. It gives the singers power when, even if they maybe not very good at playing piano, they know the chords and they know what they want. Especially when they have written the songs themselves. If they are able to lead the band, something happens to the respect, they are seen in another light. We can help them to understand that they can get more power by knowing more.

Anna also raised the question of knowledge in this context. She wondered what is considered knowledge:

ANNA: Is it expressing feelings or is it that they can theoretically tell what they are doing? It can be so many things. In the music institutions we sometimes tend to value certain knowledge.

However, in her experience raising the gender issue by organizing events and conferences for women only does not work:

ANNA: The female students don't want to be seen as "women" in the field, they just want to be musicians.

Some participants suggested that, since most of the vocal students and almost all teachers are female, male students sometimes feel left out. Emma explained how in her institution some male students had started their own group to discuss singing among males, because there were no male vocal teachers.

The conversations also addressed the choices of instruments by girls and boys. The participants mentioned that the change needs to happen earlier in children's lives. Cecilia gave an example of how institutions directly affect the choices of instruments:

CECILIA: When I started playing my first classical instrument, the teachers were offering young students' choices of instruments, that would bring more students to certain teachers. They said that in the auditions they were considering which instrument is the best for that child, but it was just talk. And because it has been like this for many years, it has been piano, flute and violin offered for girls. And this still affects.

Cecilia also acknowledged the influence of friends in choosing instruments:

CECILIA: At a certain age, girls want to be exactly like their friends, so they take the same instruments as their friends.

Birgitta thought that girls' power camps, music camps for girls only, are a good idea because they aim to change the way the young girls see themselves, that for example playing drums is possible for them. She also mentioned the importance of role models:

BIRGITTA: Because we haven't seen many women behind the drums, we don't think that it is a possibility for making a living, being a girl and a drummer.

Birgitta further explained that the sound ideals of different instruments are often male dominated, and this lessens women's possibilities in playing different instruments. She feels it is a loss for music:

BIRGITTA: When women play drums, they may feel like they should sound like guys playing the drums. It's a shame for music, because we could have much more colour. We know when we hear a girl playing drums, because it's so different and it's so nice.

Anna gave an example of male dominated social environment. A young girl had noticed that in her jazz band female players dress a lot like men. The girl had wondered whether she was supposed to be more like a guy and asked if she is allowed to be a girl in jazz scene. According to Anna teenagers are concerned about such things, and she feels that dealing with these issues is tricky.

Daniela brought the preferences of media to the conversation:

DANIELA: There has been a lot of discussion about not having women as instrumentalists. I don't see it as a problem, but the media makes it one. In newspaper interviews they try make it a big thing, so maybe we shouldn't respond to it so much. It is a problem, but if we start making a huge thing out of it, we continue making it a big problem. I've never faced situations in which I've felt like "I'm a woman" or "I'm a singer", just a good atmosphere. Situations in which there has been an interviewer asking how I feel about working with men, or older men in audience asking what my real job after going home from a singing gig is, are strange. It's a social and media problem but I feel that the whole musician community is still on better grounds.

The participants also wondered whether women are more drawn to certain musical genres. Emma had noticed that even if women often play the piano, all improvising pianists she knows are men and that she had often wondered why. Anna considered that not many women are drawn to the complexity of jazz improvisation. Birgitta added that often women want to be more in control, and it is not possible to be in control when improvising. However, Anna noticed that the field was changing, meaning that one can improvise in many ways. Hence, she believed improvisation is not "all about harmonics" anymore, and these other options attract different kind of people.

The participants were not supportive to the 50-50 model¹⁸, as they proposed that music should be in the center and that there are so many ways of playing and saying things. They emphasised that discussion about music should be all about the music, “freedom”, “equality” and “individuality”. Instead of focusing on “who is telling” it should be about “what is being told”. On the other hand, Birgitta mentioned that sometimes really big changes need to be made to wake the people up.

I led the conversation to another angle of the gender issue mentioned in the original quotation of the interviews by asking if the requirements are different for women and men. I asked them whether female performers have to look or dress better than male performers as hinted in the original comment. According to Cecilia commercial marketing wants to use beautiful people, men and women. However, she herself was interested in how a performance is visualised rather than in how people look. Yet the field is not the same for everyone:

CECILIA: Yes, I think that women must do more work to get respected.

Anna had noticed that relating to aging is different for men and women. She mentioned women have to keep on looking young whereas men are allowed to get old, even if they still have to look good. Birgitta thought this depends on the genre:

BIRGITTA: You have much more freedom if you move away from pop. And just to be not beautiful but special. You can be that in so many ways.

Daniela had noticed that some vocalists enjoy being looked at, carry themselves more naturally or want to wear more make up or flashy clothes. She felt that we should not try to fit everything into non-gender roles but instead think of individuality. Cecilia was concerned about social media and what is written or said out loud there. She had encountered hidden sexism and even harassment for example in social media. She was also concerned that the feelings of individuals that have been harassed were understated by saying that “it’s not that dangerous, it’s just talking, it’s just words”.

I directed the conversation then back to the remaining part of the original question, which concerned how we can prepare students to meet such problems or maybe even to challenge them. Emma suggested that it should be a topic for conversation not only with women but with all students. Anna’s institution had been involved a great deal with

¹⁸ 50-50 model here refers to the initiative of more gender-balanced society in which the aim is to raise the number of women in leadership positions to 50%.

gender work up to the point where people had been tired out, but she still felt it was needed:

ANNA: We push women and say that you have to take your space. I don't always like this, because it's not only about that. Guys are maybe generally better at taking more space, but we need to mention other values as well. Are we teaching each other to give space, to give freedom – freedom to also be quiet or shy, both as a man and a woman.

Emma added that it is also important for all to be able to be selfish. Many men also have problems with self-confidence. However, Anna stated that in our society women need to deal with more with such issues. Birgitta said that teachers need to talk about these matters and set an example:

BIRGITTA: We need to teach them to stay strong, not to push people away but to be able to be themselves, because that's what it's all about. We have a big role in these students' lives. We need to be aware, that if we set an example and try to stand up against these things, the student sees that. So, it's not always about talking but also about what we do ourselves.

Emma agreed but was concerned that it might be impossible to prepare students for such learning experiences. She said that the awareness of the topic is important and that we should talk about it more, opening up the possibility of change and enabling people to make different choices. Birgitta believed that teachers can definitely inspire students in this respect. The conversation then continued to more general issues of gender such as gender-free restrooms in schools and the new ways of defining or not defining gender. The participants proposed that small things can make a strong statement, even if there is resistance.

Birgitta mentioned one more gendered issue which is closely related to music education, the entrance exams:

BIRGITTA: More men will get accepted to higher music education if we have four men deciding, that's just how it is. We should also have women and people with different ethnic background there. According to these men they chose the best, but it's from their perspective only.

Anna proposed that a mixed board is one way an institution can show that these questions are acknowledged. Birgitta pointed out that in business world it would nowadays be

impossible to have a job interview where there would be four men about the same age deciding. Instead, there must be people of different ages and at least one or two women. She believed that being aware of these things may lead to change. Blind auditions used by most orchestras were also mentioned as an example of how to address the gender issue. Daniela pointed out that this way it is the skills that matter, as they should.

Emma asked the participants whether they thought that in the admissions female instrumentalists should be favoured over males should they be equally good. She mentioned that in some countries there is legislation saying that there has to be women in all boards of institutions. Birgitta pointed out the problem, that there are not that many to choose from since not many girls are playing the drums or the bass. She did not believe that people in her country would want to apply that rule, even if according to her knowledge one institution has decided to accept a female applicant over male should they be equally good. Anna agreed, because she argued that the women who are accepted want to know if they are accepted because of what they bring in, not because there was a place for a woman. On the other hand, Birgitta mentioned that such policies could create front figures in the long run, which is something that is needed. Cecilia wanted to know whether applicants had to mark down their gender in the application form in different countries. It appeared that the procedures vary: some institutions require marking down the gender in the application while some don't, but that the social security number automatically informs the registered gender of the applicant. In general, the participants suggested that this is a hard topic but very important to discuss.

5.3 Popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy as a learner-centered practice

The data acquired through the project provides a rich and diverse collection of insights into the educational field. The topics of conversations, suggested by the participants themselves, already implied what are some of the challenges the participating teachers face in their daily work. A careful reading of the data indicated that considering each question separately would provide a segmented picture of the phenomenon and would disregard its complexity and multiplicity. Instead, I identified an overarching theme arising from the data. The varied ways the participants articulated their pedagogical thinking and described their teaching practices pointed clearly towards learner-centered teaching. Therefore, the data is in this section revisited as a whole.

As the theoretical foundations as well as different approaches to teaching vary among learner-centered teaching (see 2.6), it provides a diverse but yet coherent grounds for

discussing the results of the data. For the purpose of structure, in discussing these emerging features of learner-centered teaching in the data, I have adopted the five key changes in practice presented by Weimer (2013) as a frame, which closely relate to everyday work of a teacher and therefore fit the practice-based data. These key changes are: 1) the role of the teacher, 2) the balance of power, 3) the function of content, 4) the responsibility for learning, and 5) the purpose and processes of evaluation.

5.3.1 The role of the teacher

The literature defines the role of the teacher in learner-centered teaching as being a facilitator, who is focused on promoting learning by closely observing the students, their action and needs instead of solely focusing on his or her own work (Cornelius-White & Harbaugh, 2010; McCombs & Miller, 2007; McCombs, 2008; Weimer, 2013). This ideal was evident in many conversations in which the participants explained their thoughts about their role as teachers. For instance, Cecilia explained how she does not want to be the master who just gives students the knowledge they need. Also, Birgitta described that the basis of her pedagogy is built on the fact that “teaching needs to adapt to what the skills are needed for”. Because of the variety of professional profiles within popular music and jazz singing, knowing what is needed for that specific student requires open dialogue between the student and the teacher. In order to reach the learning goals both the needs and ambitions of the student and the work-life knowledge and experience of the teacher need to be present. Still, as Anna explained, the ownership of the knowledge belongs to the student.

The changing role of the teacher was presented and vividly addressed in the conversation of the question “How can we prevent our own vocal interests or challenges affecting our teaching?”. The same notion was included in one participants sticker note stating that the teacher should not project her own issues on the student, which was also mentioned as an important pedagogical skill. Both these ideas and the conversation that followed imply that in learner-centered teaching the interests or challenges of the teacher are not that relevant in teaching because the starting points are the students and their needs. Many participants mentioned that they can make use of their own special skills or knowledge but do not force these topics on students. They also mentioned how important it is to recognise and value the individuality of the student both in the uniqueness of their vocal sound and as learners.

The idea of one’s ‘own voice’ emphasised in popular music and jazz emerged as a topic in which the learner-centered understanding of role of the teacher manifested strongly. What the student’s ‘own voice’ is, according to the participants, is determined by the

student, and the role of the teacher is to guide him or her towards it. In defining the concept of one's 'own voice' the participants valued terminology that suggested student being placed as the centre of action. Through such expressions as "presenting different ways", "allowing and helping students to search", "getting students to hear", and "letting students acknowledge who they are", the participants positioned themselves more as supporters and stimulators of learning. They also emphasised that teachers should reassure the students that they have a valuable voice and a personal way to make music, and that they do not have to take references from outside, not even the teacher. On the other hand, this teaching approach was not considered to be very easy. It was mentioned, that the ideas and ideals of teachers "shine through anyway", even if teachers try to give students the self-driven freedom to "search and find" their own voices. Because of these challenges, many participants used song-writing or improvisation as pedagogical tools to direct the students into singing without vocal references.

The role of the students working on their problems, asking questions, summarizing content and offering critical analysis, appeared as clear themes across the participants' responses. Several participants reflected that in their own learning experiences they had been confronted with situations in which their teachers had imposed strong ideas of "rights and wrongs". This transfer style of pedagogy manifested in the participants' own experiences as students of singing, had led them to search for alternative, less prescriptive approaches in their own teaching practices.

As the compiled question "What do we teach when there is no right or wrong?" demonstrates, the absence of commonly agreed ideal of singing had caused some uncertainty among the participants. They had varying views towards this matter. For some, vocal health and/or stylistic requirements gave a frame to the 'right way' of singing, for others even these aspects were a matter of students' choice but should be used knowingly. Many participants mentioned that they avoid saying 'right or wrong' or 'good or bad', and instead discuss the issue of concern with their students from different perspectives.

It was mentioned several times that teachers should not fix their pedagogical thinking and action in advance. In many comments, participants explained how the individuality of the student can be the focus, when the teacher sees and hears the student in front of them without any preconceptions of for example a particular musical style or certain vocal technique. They emphasised "seeing the bigger picture" and choosing pedagogical tools that were useful for individual students. For all participants this meant moving away from using one vocal method only. Emma for example mentioned how she had chosen not to become a certified method teacher because it would make her too focused on the ideals of that specific method. Daniela explained that using one method only would not be

a solution for all students and situations. All participants valued the knowledge different models or methods have presented to the field. Having knowledge of a wide range of methods and the terminology used by several methods was seen to be important. The participants emphasised that being able to use the same language of singing phenomena as the student allowed the teacher to understand the students' meanings better. The requirement of the teacher to acquire knowledge of the student's language brings forth yet another learner-centered feature in the participants' pedagogical thinking.

The participants mentioned both in the interviews and in the professional conversations how they saw their teaching as seeking and trying different solutions to problems together with the student. This joint inquiry suggests that the participants positioned themselves as learners as well. Anna and Cecilia described how it was challenging to teach students who look for the teachers' confirmation or consider the teachers' words as the truth. It was agreed that students need to find their own truths, and as teachers they had chosen to present their students with different options. The participants' views thus adapted to the notion that learner-centered teaching is not an 'all-or-nothing proposition', that sometimes, in the interest of the student, the teacher needs to take a more active role in the process. The participants had noticed that this active role is needed more in the beginning of the student's learning path, and the more advanced the student is, the more the teacher has to let go of her control. Birgitta described how she considered the intuition of the teacher in guiding the student to be important in learning processes. This view can be seen as opposing learner-centered teaching, but it also indicates that the role of the teacher may shift depending on the situation and the individual. Anna for example suggested that teachers should stop and think about their motivation to teach and consider whether the driving force in pedagogy is the student or themselves as teachers.

5.3.2 The balance of power

The second key change in learner-centered teaching proposed by Weimer (2013) is the balance of power between the learner and the teacher. In general, the data suggests that the participating teachers have taken extensive steps in sharing the power with the student. They expressed on several occasions how in their opinion teachers should be aware of their influence on the students and recognise their own limitations and preferences. The data also includes several comments which suggest that the control and responsibility of learning mostly belong to the student, but that sometimes power needs to be shared. These comments emphasised the importance of giving the students power and freedom but also suggested that the knowledge of the teacher based on experience plays an important role in learning processes.

Considering the different forms of power suggested by Cornelius-White and Harbaugh (2010), expert power, relating to teachers' content expertise and their ability use it in teaching, was mentioned several times. The notion was also disputed in the conversation concerning whether teachers can teach subject matter not very familiar to them. There seemed to be some disagreement about this. One participant suggested that through certain teaching practices such as helping the learner to discover new things through asking questions, one can also teach things that are not of one's own specialty, but not everyone agreed with this notion. According to the participants in favour of teaching through questions, it challenges the understanding of the role of the teacher as the master having extensive skills and knowledge to share. In these situations, expertise exists but is used differently. The second form, reward power, concerns the ability to influence students through reinforcement. This notion appeared slight differently in the data, as the participants mentioned avoiding positive terms such as 'good' or 'right', which very often are used as reinforcement in teaching. Instead, the participants suggested that reinforcement should be found in students themselves. Coercive power, setting behavioural limits through punishment, was not considered relevant among the participants. Instead, attractive power, the belief by the learners that the teachers share their interests and do not teach merely for their own self-interests, can be identified in all professional conversations concerning pedagogy. All participants had adopted this attitude in their professional thinking and during conversations provided insights into different aspects of it.

The participants on several occasions described their efforts in sharing the power with the students, but they had also encountered challenges in doing so. For example, even if Anna wanted to be a teacher who asks questions and makes students responsible, she could see that not everyone was ready for it. The participants had noticed that students need help and some concrete tools to start with in the beginning. This does not oppose the principles of learner-centered teaching, because in it the power of decision should be balanced against students' maturity and ability. In the context of higher education, it was assumed that this requirement of accepting more power over one's own learning processes develops effectively during the years of studying. Thus, the participants mentioned experiences of teaching students who had made tremendous progress during their studies by accepting more power and responsibility.

5.3.3 The function of content

The dual function of the content in learner-centered teaching, both to acquire knowledge and to develop learning skills, was manifested as one important theme in the data. The participants on several occasions expressed their concerns for the lack of time in relation

to all knowledge that should be addressed and skills that should be acquired. According to the literature of learner-centered teaching, merely covering the content does not promote learning or help the students to develop important learning skills (Weimer, 2013; McCombs, 2008). As the compiled questions “How much and what kind of knowledge is needed?” and “How do we deal with the individual differences in students’ instrumental skills with limited resources?” imply, the participants considered that there is too much content to teach and therefore choices need to be made. Anna described how she sometimes, as an act of civil disobedience, does not obey the curriculum, but instead changes the direction of her teaching according to the needs of the student.

The participants were also very concerned about how their students can acquire the necessary learning skills. They identified self-regulated learning and the ability to plan one’s own learning as important skills to be taught in order to enhance students’ lifetime learning. For example, Daniela mentioned how she has had to accept that not all students are “ready” within the time available in lessons and within the years of studying in the program, and she had often wondered how to provide her students with skills they needed to learn things by themselves.

Covering the content in general can be identified as a particularly challenging task for popular music and jazz vocal teachers in Nordic countries, as there generally is no detailed curriculum and teachers are required to use their judgement in choosing the content. The content of teaching typically consists of aesthetics of different musical styles, relevant vocal techniques and various topics related to performance skills. The participants had varying views on whether obeying the traditions of musical styles should be required. For Daniela it was a responsibility to teach her students the tradition and the musical and aesthetic choices within it. She explained that the students need this knowledge so that they can reflect their own choices to it. Birgitta on the other hand thought it was a matter of opinion, and that students should have a freedom to refuse to obey traditions. Daniela linked the issue to institutional teaching by saying that in institutions students need to gain certain knowledge and that teachers should adapt to that. Anna above all valued the idea of the student possessing ownership of the knowledge. In their daily teaching practices, the participants had added methods which instead of covering the content challenged the students to use the knowledge and skills they already have and build their learning processes on those strengths. As methods for such teaching the participants mentioned working in groups and songwriting.

Anna had been thinking about how to build a curriculum for a future that is unknown. This notion relates to the suggestions of a learner-centered curriculum, in which the basic skills are integrated into authentic and real-world problem solving. The participants shared the deliberation that in higher music education teaching needs to adapt to what

the skills are needed for. For an artist it is essential to have in-depth knowledge of the narrow field of their speciality, and for vocal teachers or choir directors it might be more useful to have a wider knowledge base. They thus expressed concerns that there is not enough time to accomplish either one of these goals.

5.3.4 The responsibility for learning

In learner-centered environments student responsibility and activity are emphasised (Weimer, 2013; Severiens, Meeuwisse, & Born, 2015; European Commission, 2009). The responsibility for learning is closely connected to the power relations in teaching and to the role of the teacher. Through the paradigm shift to learner-centered approaches the student gains control, power and responsibility, but this shift requires recognition of practices that make students dependent on their teachers (Weimer, 2013). Birgitta mentioned how not only teachers have to teach students to take responsibility, but they also have to learn not to take responsibility themselves. She described her own teaching as offering her students solutions to different problems and giving the students the responsibility to find what is right for them.

Considering features that promote the development of responsible learners, some notions presented by Weimer (2013) resonate with the data of this study and some do not. Her suggestion of the demand for logical consequences to both action and inaction of the students were present in conversations when the participants described their encounters with students who avoid responsibility and act passively towards their own learning. They expressed differing views whether the teacher should show his or her frustration to the student in such cases. Cecilia explained how she sometimes uses her 'angry face' to make the student understand that they are not working properly. Birgitta on the other hand approaches such situations differently, because she relates getting emotionally involved more to parenting. In general, the participants were concerned about the lack of practice routines among the students, which in turn causes low achievement levels. Daniela for example had found it challenging to turn students' thinking the other way around, in the sense that learning to practice instrumental skills would not be a mere responsibility but an inspiring thing to do.

To the second feature promoting responsible learners—the consistency between what the teacher says and does, being predictable, and holding all students to the same standards—the participants also presented several views. They understood that they should be, and also were, role models to their students. Birgitta for example mentioned how teachers should set an example by trying to stand up against gendered inequality within music business. She mentioned that when students acknowledge this inequality,

they are empowered to do something about it. In general, all participants valued having high standards and expectations for their students, and also a belief that the students can reach their own goals. They also expressed commitment to helping the students to reach their own aims. On the other hand, as the compiled question “How do we deal with the individual differences in students’ instrumental skills with limited resources?” demonstrates, varying skill levels may create challenges in this respect. The participants mentioned this as a problem especially in relation to reaching the objectives of the curriculum, which may not be achievable to all students.

Caring of one’s students is also mentioned as a feature promoting responsible learners. Cornelius-White and Harbaugh (2010) connect caring to warmth and acceptance of learners. Such genuine attitude towards students can be seen as an underpinning feature of all participants’ professional thinking. Students, even the non-responsible ones, were always discussed with appreciation and dignity. It can be gathered from various comments that the participants see themselves as co-learners walking alongside with their students and in general have a close and trustful relationship with them. One-to-one tuition creates natural surroundings for the teacher to get to know the student more deeply and to express genuine feelings of care. The participants seemed to commit strongly to the learning of their students, which Weimer also mentions as an important feature of learner-centered teaching. They also mentioned several times that teaching through learner-centered ideals was not always easy. Students sometimes refuse to accept the responsibility and seek for ready-made answers and frustration-free lessons without “having to think”. They had noticed that many students need practice in becoming more self-determined in their studies. The most commonly used tools by the participants to support development of responsible learners were diaries and rehearsal plans.

5.3.5 The purpose and processes of evaluation

In general, teachers are required to certify the level at which their students perform and in vocal teaching this usually means giving grades to one’s own students as well as to other singers. The scale with which the participants assess singing is the same used in other subjects as well. The challenges of this requirement are clearly seen in the compiled question “What are the right criteria in evaluating popular music and jazz singing?” and also in close relation to the challenge “What do we teach when there is no right or wrong?”. The different conversations revealed, that in the participants’ institutions criteria had not been discussed enough, and in some cases, there was no joint understanding of them. Cecilia explained how in her institution the evaluation was not agreed on because the content of teaching was not agreed on, either. Birgitta mentioned how in her institution two people might get the same grade but with very different reasons. Daniela concluded

that the only way teachers can evaluate is using the curriculum. But at the same time, she thought, that the criteria embedded in the curriculum were only for school and not for real life. The basic notion of evaluation in learner-centered approaches, both providing feedback to the student and also generating learning, was addressed frequently by the participants.

The ways the participants were required to evaluate their students were not according to them very learner-centered, and in general they were not satisfied with the system. Emma stated that giving grades was devastating for the whole learning process. Cecilia mentioned that if she could choose, she would not give numbers at all. The participants also mentioned that some things were easier to assess with numbers or letters. Daniela for example explained that it was easier to assess scales and pitch with numbers. On the other hand, Birgitta explained that she did not focus that much on things she knew could be easily fixed, such as pitch problems related to vocal technique. Cecilia did not value assessment based on intuition only, so she had tried to solve the problem with an evaluation form, which included all sectors of assessment. She assessed these sectors separately and used the average as the final grade. This structure was problematised by other participants, because they wondered whether all things were as important. Still, they mentioned that such a list was good to have as a reference of all things that should be considered in assessment.

The participants found assessing student concerts or exams especially problematic if external adjudicators were used as members of the board. Emma had noticed that in such cases there is “a right or wrong”, because these external board members have their own criteria which they use in evaluation. But since there is no general agreement on the matter, the criteria of the teacher and the criteria of the external board member may be quite different. In such cases, the students do not know with what criteria they are being assessed with. Emma called this a “double standard”. She comprehended that this procedure is against the idea that students are allowed to choose their way and find their own voice.

All participants valued self-assessment highly in their daily practices. Anna expressed that she saw a need of shift in power relations also in assessment. By giving the students the freedom to self-evaluate they are also given strength to trust their ideas and creativity. Anna explained that in such process there is no need for the teacher to be telling what is needed. According to the data, adapting the learner-centered notion of intrinsic motivation for learning and emphasis on cooperation rather than competition between the students, were considered viable solutions by the participants, as they had experienced several ethical and practical challenges in the traditional ways of assessment.

5.4 Social constructivist notions growing out of the data

There seems to be a coherence in considering the ways the participants articulated their development of expertise and the methods they apply in their own teaching. Shabani (2016) proposes that social constructivist notions connect both to the learning of students and teachers within their professional development. Both levels investigated in this study indeed support that proposition. This section presents the emergence of social constructivist notions firstly in relation to the ways Eun (2008) connects them to professional development programs, and secondly in relation to the way they are manifested in the ways the participants described their pedagogical thinking and action.

The project of this study can be considered as a form of social interaction, a Vygotskian key theoretical concept that Eun relates to CPD programs including workshops, colloquia, seminars, mentoring or study groups. Indeed, this project enhanced collaboration between colleagues, and included mentoring and moments that can be described as workshops when the participants shared their expertise to each other. Processes of internalisation, the second key concept relevant in Vygotskian thinking, were constituted in the data when the participants individually reflected on what they learned during the professional conversations. These reflections contained notions of the need and importance but also concerns of social interaction with peers. Some participants also reflected on developed teaching practices as a result of this social interaction. The safe and confidential environment allowed them to make an effort to truly understand each other's viewpoints and through that effort sometimes also get confirmation of their present teaching practices and deeper understanding of the pedagogical choices they had made during their teaching careers.

According to Vygotskian understanding of learning, internalisation of social interaction occurs through mediation (Daniels, 2016; Eun, 2008; Moll, 2014). The peer-group mentoring sessions in this project provided an environment for "social mediation with dialogic negotiation" (Shabani, 2016, p. 3). Out of the three types of mediators related to professional development practices, "tools, signs and other humans" (Eun, 2008), at least two can be identified from the data. In this study, tools, often interpreted as material sources, were for example demonstrations of teaching practices gained during the process and through which the participants reflected on their own teaching practices. The most evident means of mediation in this project was for it to occur through other humans. This "professional network", as Eun (2008) has named the third mediator within CPD programs, allowed the participants to develop their expertise by reflecting on their own practices and creating new understanding of pedagogy in social interaction. The participants' reflections suggested increased willingness to collaborate

with colleagues also in the future. Thus, the ways in which the participants described learning resonates with the notion of scaffolding (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976; Vygotsky, 1978), as other participants provided each other help in individual learning processes. Considering the fourth theme in mediation presented by Moll (2014), that learners are active subjects who create themselves through their social actions, the participants indeed can be understood as ‘active subjects’ in this project. Birgitta mentioned in her reflection that “we actually had to do it ourselves”.

The role of language, a symbolically and socioculturally constructed artefact as defined by Shabani (2016), was one of the essential notions underpinning this study. Firstly, language is a factor in the creation of silos among popular music and jazz vocal teachers, as vocal methods and models have created their own terminologies to describe different vocal phenomena. As a result, vocal teachers subscribing to different methods do not necessarily share a common professional language. Secondly, in this study some participants reflected on their insufficient ability to use English as a hindrance for communication. The use of foreign language in conversations indeed created challenges in meaning-making and must be considered as an ethical dilemma in this study.

The fourth key theoretical concept, new psychological systems, Eun (2008) connects with the development of CPD programs. The data suggests that this project was a successful CPD program for the participants. It was structured according to the needs of adult learners (Craft, 2000; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2012), and situated within education aimed at professional development of teachers enhancing better teaching and better learning of students.

Several implications of social constructivist notions emerged from the ways the participants described their pedagogical thinking and action. They described their teaching processes to be collaborative and taking place in social interaction with the student. The idea of “searching together” with the student instead of the teacher being the master passing on the “right” knowledge resembles Vygotskian notions of pedagogy, according to which the processes of teaching and learning are much more than simple transmissions of prescribed knowledge and skill (Daniels, 2016). The participants emphasised social interaction in their teaching practices, for example when saying that teachers have to learn not to take responsibility themselves or suggesting that teaching has to adapt to what skills are needed for, and indeed positioned students constructing and applying knowledge in socially mediated contexts. They also described the use of several internalisation tools, such as directing the students to keep practice diaries and to record themselves.

Mediation seems to play an essential part in the pedagogical thinking of the participants; it emerged for example in the conversation about how to guide the students to find their own voices. By describing their teaching methods through verbs such as ‘allowing’, ‘presenting’, ‘helping’, and ‘letting’, the teachers clearly referred to the mediation processes of the student instead of focusing on the transmission of knowledge and skills. The participants also brought forth the concept of language in teaching by stating that teachers should learn the language used by the students concerning vocal phenomena in order to communicate with them better.

The importance of secure and trustworthy environment arose from the data both from the viewpoint of the teachers’ own learning and in the ways, they described the teaching environment they aim to create. As an example, their reflections suggest it was important that students felt secure to both succeed and fail in their vocal lessons. The participants also mentioned the importance of providing the students the learning skills they need to develop their instrumental and musical skills in the future. These learning skills can be considered a tool for mediation. Also, the participants described using small group tuition as a teaching practice, which clearly points towards mediation through social interaction.

6 Discussion

The aim of this study was to provide insights into Nordic popular music and jazz vocal teaching in higher music education through a project in which the participants shared their expertise and addressed challenges arising from their daily work. I studied this context on two levels. Firstly, I was interested in how the participants articulated their professional development of expertise during the project (5.1). Secondly, I was interested in how the participants articulated their pedagogical thinking and practices of popular music and jazz vocal teaching within the project (5.2). Section 5.3 described results of how the unifying theme of learner-centered practices arose from the professional conversations, and finally, all data was discussed in relation to Vygotskian social constructivist notions (5.4).

The multiple findings of this study indeed provide an array of insights that sheds light to the research questions. At a general level, the results of this study confirm my presumption of the scarcity of collegial collaboration. Both collaborative and individual reflections of the participants suggest that they consider social interaction with colleagues essential and value the possibility of having professional conversations with peers, and that they have not had enough of such collaboration in their working life. The results thus support literature suggesting that collaborative processes are effective in enhancing professional development and overcoming feelings of isolation in teaching (Barrett, 2014; Cooper, 2013; Renshaw, 2013).

Within the project reported in this study, the participants brought their varied profiles of skills, knowledge, and expertise to the professional conversations (Barrett, 2014). The data also describes how the conversations were cognitively and emotionally charged (John-Steiner, 2006) and how elements of group flow, such as open communication, well-defined goals, and equal participation were present (Sawyer, 2008). The environment was described as secure, confidential, warm, and friendly. Thus, the way the participants worked together was depicted as relaxed and easy-going, but at the same time effective. The data thus proposes that the participants' expectations towards a "unique" project were met and even exceeded and their concerns of participation did not actualise.

In what follows, the theoretical and methodological concepts of this study, development of expertise, continuing professional development, peer-group mentoring, conversational learning, and professional conversations are revisited in relation to the data, followed by the discussion of popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy manifested in the data.

6.1 Discussion of development of expertise

The participants of this study possessed high levels of expertise based on their position in working life. However, popular music and jazz vocal teaching is a field in which the level of expertise is difficult to define as no objective criteria can be found. The retrospective notion, that the level of expertise could be defined through how the outcome of the teacher's action is received, does not suit vocal pedagogy, either, as it would be impossible to determine what parts of students' knowledge and skills are connected to a specific teacher and teaching process. Also, sometimes the results of learning do not appear immediately but take time to actualise in the students' performance. Finally, whether teaching is considered successful is mostly a matter of opinion on the learner's side. The selection of these participants as representatives of high levels of expertise was based on peer-nominations by professionals of the same domain (Ericsson, 2006), as they have been recruited to higher education, a working life position that usually requires a high level of expertise and peer review in the recruiting process.

The focus of this research has not been to identify the level of expertise of each participant, but instead enhance development of expertise at all stages of the participants' careers. This study holds the preconception that development of expertise in teaching is an ongoing process which does not stop even at the level of expert performance. The findings of this study indeed suggest, that even the most experienced teachers benefit from professional conversations. The participants for example reflected that talking about their own pedagogical choices as well as problem solving in different situations provided them with a clearer understanding of the reasons behind their previously constructed pedagogical thinking and practices.

Interestingly, the data of the interviews reveals that the question *What aspects of your expertise you would like to share?* was difficult for most participants to answer. Only one participant, the oldest and the one with the longest experience in higher music education, was able to respond to it directly and describe the kind of expertise she would like to share. Others were struggling to propose what such expertise could be. The matter was discussed further and finally all participants were able to propose at least one aspect of their expertise they could share with others. I identified similar emotional difficulties and reluctance in sharing one's expertise in the internet voting when only one participant volunteered to share her expertise early in the process. Thus, many participants seemed to be insecure of sharing their expertise during the process.

These uncertainties provide an interesting field for discussion as they lead one to wonder why teachers in such positions in working life would feel insecure about

sharing their knowledge and skills. In suggesting some reasons, I here rely on my own experiences of working in the field, and it must be understood that these considerations are only speculative. Firstly, it may be that sharing their knowledge and skills with peers was an unfamiliar practice to the participants because of their isolated working environment. Competition, especially after the arrival of vocal methods or models, has been sometimes harsh in the field of vocal pedagogy. The teaching practices applied by teachers in higher music education have been challenged and accused of being for example teacher-centered (McClellan, 2011), and the reactions of the participants may be comprehended as safeguarding themselves and their pedagogical thinking.

Another aspect explaining the participants' reluctance to share may be the phase of the project in which these questions were asked. During the time of the interviews and the first internet voting the participants had not yet met each other. In their final reflections all participants mentioned the importance of a trustworthy and secure environment for the professional conversations, and this environment had not yet been jointly created at the time.

A further explanatory reason may be also that the participants felt insecurities concerning their own knowledge. Working in isolation does not create opportunities to reflect on one's teaching to that of others, and therefore one may not be confident about one's knowledge and acts with uncertainty. As an example, Emma in her reflection expressed relief that she was not 'way off' in her pedagogical thinking. Still, all participants were able to share knowledge and skills and all of them also reflected that they had learned from each other. Therefore, according to this data the insecurities seem to be based more on the participants' personal feelings of insecurity than on their actual competences.

6.2 Discussion of continuing professional development

The project of this study provided the participants a nonformal environment for collaboration. It was constructed according to many features of effective continuing professional development (CPD) for adult learners emphasised in the literature (Bauer, Forsythe, & Kinney, 2009; Danielson, 2016; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2012). The data suggests that this project as a form of CPD was reflected on as successful because of several reasons. Firstly, the professional conversations focused on subject-specific content instead of more general pedagogical issues. As the participants were able to suggest topics for the conversations, they could address matters of their concern with colleagues of the same educational field. Secondly, the structure of the

project enhanced the participants' autonomous and self-directed self-concepts (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2012) by distributing as much power to them as possible. The data suggests that the participants were able to understand the grounds of the project but were surprised of how much they were in charge of the conversations.

The developmental approach of the project was grounded in student learning, as the topics suggested by the participants were closely connected to their teaching practices and aimed at better learning of students. The project applied problem-centered methods (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2012). Instead of having a leader controlling the conversations, the use of a facilitator and varying facilitative tools were reflected on as positive features by the participants. The structure and timeline I provided were considered supportive elements. As a downside to facilitation and formulating the topics as questions my researcher's diary suggests the perplexity in language. The wordings of the compiled questions at times caused misunderstandings and needed to be clarified.

All participants reflected on intrinsic value and personal pay-offs of participating in the project (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2012). Firstly, many participants reflected on improved teaching practices. This improvement was articulated as having a better feeling of the direction of teaching, increased awareness of teaching, analysing one's own teaching more, and preparing new exercises for students. The participants also described how their eyes were opened, how they got a deeper understanding of different ways of teaching, and how they could see different solutions in their teaching. This new pedagogical thinking was portrayed as broader, deeper and clearer. One strongly emerging theme of the participation was gaining confidence in teaching, for example getting confirmation for the direction of teaching, and understanding that there is no reason for one to think less of oneself as a professional. The participants were thus activated into taking part in collegial conversations in the future. Daniela for example mentioned that after the project she has been more active in contacting other vocal teachers, asking more questions and sharing thoughts of vocal education.

When designing the project of this study I hoped that it would generate a possible model of how teachers could collaborate effectively with colleagues of the same domain. The result of one participant creating a similar project in her home institution in order to develop a common ground for vocal teaching and work on the assessment criteria suggests that this study can be considered successful in that sense, too. In addition, the project in question connected teachers from different musical styles, a notion that sounds very promising as a developmental project within the field.

The few critical comments from the participants concerned for example the fact that there were only women participating in the project. This criticism can be considered to extend to the general situation of gender distribution in the field in the sense that there are very few male vocal teachers in full-time positions in Nordic higher music education. Also, according to one participant, the time available did not allow all conversations to go deep enough into specific questions, which suggests that finding the focus of in professional conversations and going deep into different issues takes time.

The results of this research support one rationale of this study presented in section 1.1, that there is not enough collaboration between popular music and jazz vocal teachers, and that many of them often feel isolated. The administrators of higher music education institutions should indeed take into consideration creating more opportunities of context-specific continuing professional development programs for their employees.

6.3 Discussion of peer-group mentoring

The outcomes of this study support the notion that the relationship between the participants of various ages and with diverse working experience becomes reciprocal in peer-group mentoring (Heikkinen, Jokinen, & Tynjälä, 2012b). The reflections of the participants propose that the project advanced equality and autonomy among them. The respectful and approving atmosphere was mentioned by all participants, and they were able to see beyond age or years of working experience. This observation connects to literature suggesting that parity, if understood as a requirement for all participants to be equal in terms of knowledge and experience (Heikkinen, Jokinen, & Tynjälä, 2012b), can be bypassed through mentoring projects. The juridical parity, the amount of responsibilities, duties and rights, was already addressed in the case selection, in which one prerequisite was that the participants were positioned in similar jobs (see 4.4). There were still some differences in how the participants described their learning, which can be understood in relation to their working experience. The more experienced teachers reported that through these conversations they could better understand the pedagogical choices they had made in their working lives, while the less experienced teachers described that the conversations confirmed their previous choices of teaching practices or assured that they were on the right path.

On the other hand, the data of this study does not support the literature on the sense of community (Pharo, et al., 2012). Even if the collaboration during organised sessions was active and the findings suggest it was productive and beneficial, no sustainable community was created. The internet platform was used only twice by the participants,

and the data does not reveal any other communication among the participants, either. Throughout the project the participants expressed positive feelings towards being part of this group and having time to talk about a variety of matters, yet simultaneously they limited their use time to the organised sessions only. Several geographical, temporal and organisational reasons may have had an effect on the activity being limited. The geographical context of this study, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, may have been one reason for the lack of collaboration, as several participants expressed concerns of communicating via internet. They preferred to collaborate face-to-face and as this was not possible outside the organised sessions, this could explain the absence of collaboration. The geographical context also meant, that the participants did not share a first language and that all communication had to happen in a foreign language.

Many participants spoke of very busy schedules in their personal lives, which could also be seen in how difficult it was to find joint times for the professional conversations. This fact could have affected the collaboration outside the organised sessions as well, because after returning home the participants could not invest more time to stay in touch with others. Another possible factor explaining the absence of collaboration might be how the project was constructed. From the very beginning, the participants were not required to take part in organizing the project and this may have had an effect on the way they felt obligation towards the project. It may be that because of how the project was organised, the participants positioned themselves as members taking part in my project, rather than considered themselves to have ownership of it. The results of this study may thus suggest that a sustainable community cannot be created from outside. The case selection was based on my previous collaboration in international professional networks and it may be that the participants would have collaborated more actively with some other participants.

6.4 Discussion of conversational learning and professional conversations

The project of this study can be considered *a conversational space* (Baker et al., 2002). From the data generated by this conversational space the emergence of the five dialectics of conversational learning approach (Baker et al., 2002) can be identified. Firstly, the reflections of the participants provided insights to the processes of *apprehension and comprehension*. They described thoughts of apprehension, that are concrete, immediate, tacit, and subjective, such as having concerns about not being able to be responsive enough to the views of others or feeling the need to change and develop as a teacher. The notions of comprehension, abstract, conceptual, linguistic, explicit and objective, can

also be identified in the data, for example when the participants wished to hear about the pedagogical thinking of others and get new ideas for teaching, or when the participants described the project as an eye-opening experience. The participants' reflections suggest that the subjective feeling-oriented learning processes and conceptual interpretative learning processes indeed intertwined in this project and that the participants were engaged in both modes simultaneously.

The features of *intention and extension*, which Baker et al. (2002) elaborate as reflection and action, were present throughout the project when the participants were evoked with new ideas and teaching methods through sharing their expertise. They reflected on this new knowledge by considering their daily practices, for example the needs of their individual students. The notions of reflection and action were also illustrated in the final reflections by the participants, in which they discussed how they had applied these new methods in action in their work.

Through the many reflective phases of the project a temporal in-depth insight was provided which illustrates the *epistemological discourse* (Baker et al., 2002). The linear attribute of this project created a natural setting for investigating how the participants joined it with their preconceptions based on their previous experiences. They for example had expectations of great professional conversations, but also fears of not being understood by others. This *precourse* of conversational learning approach was then followed by *discourse*, which in this study meant the professional conversations. The participants on several occasions mentioned how important it was to understand and value views different from their own. As the *postcourse*, the participants also reflected on replicating and adapting ideas they had learned. Thus, in collaborative reflection they envisioned a future for this project or similar other projects. The *ontological recourse*, a cyclical process of conversational learning theory, was present for instance when the participants questioned their previous understandings. A more experienced teacher mentioned how through the conversations she could better understand the pedagogical choices she had made during her earlier years of working as a vocal teacher, and a less experienced teacher reflected on learning new ways to approach certain teaching situations.

Individuality and relationality as the fourth dialectic refers to processes going inside out and outside in. The pedagogical thinking constructed in isolation by the participants was in this project either confirmed or challenged in interaction with others. One participant for example reflected how she was relieved that she was not "off" with her thinking as a teacher, and another reported realizing that teaching is not about the years of experience but rather about the attitude.

The fifth dialectic is concerned with *status* as a social ranking, *solidarity* as equality, and status and solidarity in relation to leadership. The data suggests that the differences in age and skills were tolerated in the project of this study and many participants described a trusting and accepting environment during the project. Leadership in this project was reflected on at many points by both the participants and the researcher. Facilitation was considered an appropriate and successful means of executing the project and it was thought to distribute power to the participants.

6.5 Discussion of popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy

The data concerning teaching popular music and jazz singing in higher music education illustrates a wide, musically and pedagogically rich educational field in which the teachers make daily demanding choices based on their pedagogical thinking and previous experiences. The data of this study supports the existing literature suggesting that teachers should apply learner-centered methods in their teaching (Carey & Grant, 2016; Serra-Dawa, 2014), as the participants in general had found solutions to work-related challenges from learner-centered notions. Similarly to Serra-Dawa (2014), who proposes that teachers adapt to students as the variable element, in this study the participants' adaptation to their students' needs can indeed be identified. On the other hand, this data does not support the findings of Serra-Dawa suggesting that the inversion of roles of the teacher and the student would be based on "the insecure style of attachment" (p. 208) on behalf of the teacher. The inversion of roles in this data was an informed choice as the participants on several occasions emphasised students' responsibility for their own learning. They positioned the teacher as the supporter of the students' learning process.

Several challenges in participants' daily work seem to intertwine and together create a logical continuum of challenges. "How much and what kind of knowledge is needed?" addresses the content of teaching, while "What do we teach when there is no right or wrong?" and "How can we prevent our own vocal interests or challenges from influencing our teaching?" bring forth the notion of values and preferences in teaching that content. "What are the criteria in evaluating popular music and jazz singing?" then addresses the evaluation in the situation when there may not be a right or a wrong way to sing, and finally the question "How can we guide the students to find their own voice?" relates to participants' thoughts and suggestions of how to deal with the previous challenges. The first question demonstrates how the teachers have to make choices of what to include in their teaching and whether to address fewer things in depth or more things on a more surface level. This challenge also relates to choosing repertoire, as there are often no repertoire lists teachers are required to cover. The choices of content were according to

the participants made based on the curriculum of the institution, but conflicting views suggested emphasising what the skills are needed for, not obeying the curriculum, and trying to prepare the students for the needs of the future. The participants identified different needs for different jobs; an artist needs to have a more distinct 'own voice' while a singer working with choirs or as a vocal teacher have different working life demands.

The participants identified four categories of skills and knowledge; music, technique, psychology and pedagogy. The skills or knowledge relating to music mentioned were of a more general nature and were supposed to be taught outside the vocal lessons, e.g. in ear training, sight reading, analysis and music history classes. The participants of this study, as teachers of higher music education, clearly took a stance in promoting the need for such skills and knowledge, even if these requirements in curricula have been challenged in recent educational discussions, especially concerning popular music education (Fleet, 2017). The conversation of musical skills thus addressed the notion of musical styles, teaching tradition and variety within them. The participants presented alternative views on the importance of teaching traditions of different musical styles. The participants connected this challenge to the notion of finding one's own voice, not having a right or a wrong way to sing and emphasised that the students should be allowed to search for their own expressions and make choices that are against tradition. In general, the participants' views seemed to differ based on whether the conversations concerned institutions that focus on jazz only or institutions that offer and require understanding of a wider range of musical styles. From these conversations, I deduce that in jazz knowing and being able to perform according to a certain tradition was considered more important than in popular music.

The question "What do we teach when there is no right or wrong?" provided another angle to content of teaching and pedagogy by asking how teaching relates to something being judged right or wrong. Especially in relation to vocal technique the participants contemplated what is considered right or wrong. Some considered the often-presented notion of *healthy* singing as their aim while others mentioned that *unhealthy* singing is sometimes a choice, although it should be an informed one. There exists various successful vocal performances and even long careers as artists that according to some understandings of healthy singing are conducted in an unhealthy manner. In the context of this study, these thoughts connect to advancements in voice science, through which many vocal techniques previously considered harmful and unhealthy have been studied to be safe and healthy.

The absence of right or wrong indeed raises a question: according to whose *truth* are the students taught? The question "How can we prevent our own vocal interests or challenges from influencing our teaching?" suggests that the participants were

concerned about teacher-centered notions, such as the teacher's own aspirations guiding the teaching. On several occasions they emphasised that teachers should be able to distinguish their own musical and vocal preferences and challenges from their teaching. Thus, in relation to vocal methods or models they emphasised telling their students where the understandings of singing at use come from. In the master-apprentice model the basic principle is for the master to hold the truth and pass it on to the student, and these notions presented by the participants clearly moved away from that model.

There is a natural connection between the absence of right or wrong and evaluation. The data suggests that different Nordic institutions operating in this field have varying processes of evaluation, the biggest variation being in the use of numbers, letters or verbal feedback, and the use of the student's own teacher or an external adjudicator in the board. The conversation of evaluation revealed several ethical dilemmas. In the participants' institutions the criteria for evaluation were either very general and concerned all instruments, was not agreed on at all, or the same grade could be given according to varying criteria. In institutions where an external adjudicator is used, there might not be agreed criteria even between the institution and the adjudicator. Ethical challenges indeed emerge in assessment if the board members do not share an understanding of the desired performance and criteria. First and foremost, this raises questions whether a musical performance can be assessed with grades at all and whether such assessment is transparent and equal. The ways the participants were required to evaluate students did not resemble the learner-centered ideals of evaluation, and many presented strong criticism towards assessing with grades. Also, not having a joint understanding of criteria leads to a situation in which these criteria cannot be shared with students who then in turn have no knowledge what their assessment is based on. The current situation indeed seems to challenge the equality of students and their right for transparent evaluation.

Even if the participants of this study were also open to other means of evaluation, according to my own experiences not all teachers working in this field are willing to move away from grades. Grades have been defended for example with the obligation to provide information on student's know-how to future employers and the institutions' obligation to rank students. Grades have also been seen as ways to motivate students. These arguments may hold some truth, but on the other hand, if no national criteria exist, the evaluation is bound to be institution specific and diplomas from different institutions are not comparable.

The question "How can we guide the students to find their own voice?" on one hand presents a possible solution to dilemma discussed above, finding one's own voice. On the other hand, it brings forth a fundamental feature of vocal teaching as it refers to something that hasn't manifested itself yet and which teachers are not able to describe.

The means of guiding the students were addressed from both the student's and the teacher's perspectives in the conversations. Instead of the verb "teaching" the verbs the participants used in describing this guidance were approbative in nature; "allowing", "letting", "helping", and "searching". In trying to avoid restrictive use of musical references and imitating other singers the participants used songwriting or approaching songs from sheet music as teaching practices. These teaching practices seem to be in slight contrast with a common teaching approach emphasised by many educators, that of mimicking existing musicians e.g. transcribing and learning the performances of famous musicians (cf. Green, 2002). According to this data, guiding of the students to find their own voices requires space and freedom instead of sticking only to rules and traditions.

One of the issues mentioned in the rationale of this study, the effect of commercial vocal methods or models on the field, was also addressed by the participants. The compiled question "How can we navigate between different vocal methods?" addresses encounters the participants have had with vocal methods and models. They have been the focus of many emotional conversations within the field. At the same time as they have brought new understanding of popular music and jazz vocal techniques, they have introduced several ethical issues. The participants of this study had made an informed choice of not being a certified teacher of one method but instead being acquainted with many methods. The data of this study proposes that challenges arise if in formal institutionalised education teaching is given according to one vocal method or model only. In Nordic countries, due to the often-small size of the departments, there indeed are some institutions in which one method predominates the content of teaching up to a point that a student is not able to receive teaching through any other pedagogical approach. When students are taught according to just one preconception of singing and are able to use the terminology of that one method only, moving from one institution to another may be difficult should the predominating method be different, or should the new institution not teach according to methods at all. Also, as different methods provide varying explanations to singing, limiting teaching to one method may inhibit the students' possibilities of receiving diverse knowledge of the field. Thus, teaching according to one method or model only sustains and deepens the silos created by methods and models.

In relation to vocal methods or models the participants mentioned several challenges: "outside pressure" to become a certified teacher of a certain method, resistance to methods by teachers who have a more practical approach, and strong promotion of methods causing anxiety in some teachers. The relevance of these topics is also confirmed by my own experiences. I belong to several professional groups in social media and the discussion around vocal methods or models is often disapproving and sometimes even condemning.

The participants of the project have working life positions in formal higher music education which means that they do not have to find their students within the terms of the market economy. This fact may have an effect on how they consider the need of being a certified method teacher. On the other hand, higher education institutions are today competing against each other in both reputation and getting apt students, and the quality of teaching can be seen as one important asset in this competition. Still, in the Nordic countries, the reputation of individual teachers is not as meaningful as in some other societies and the attractivity rates of higher music education in the Nordic countries have remained high among applicants.

The previous discussion illustrates how in this educational field there are challenges that have caused teachers to act with caution. For instance, when I asked the participants to check the paraphrased quotations, one participant asked her critical comments concerning vocal methods of models to be removed from the report. I deleted them as requested, but this incident raises concerns as it proposes that teachers in the field need to consider carefully their output in relation to vocal methods or models and that they indeed need to “navigate” to avoid running aground. The same need of self-protection can also be identified in how I constructed this study. One of the reasons for not choosing practitioner research as a research design was due to the fact that I had concerns about being exposed to strong criticism based on my teaching practices and pedagogical views. Presenting the preliminary results of this study in conferences and seminars confirmed some of my concerns. At times members of the audience demanded to know the identity of the participants. According to my own interpretation of the situation these persons asking disagreed strongly with some view presented in the data. I have also been asked whether I am withholding some of the positive results concerning vocal methods or models. These experiences have confirmed my understanding that in reporting the results of this study, utmost measures need to be taken in protecting the anonymity of the participants. In general, in suggesting ways to develop and change the current situation of popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy, I promote more scientific and independent research of both pedagogy and voice science, and more open respectful collaboration between teachers in order to create a more positive atmosphere among practitioners.

The conversation of the question “How do we deal with the individual differences in students’ instrumental skills with limited resources?” revealed considerable variation in the amount of one-to-one tuition in participants’ institutions. Having only a few individual one-to-one lessons per semester definitely makes an enormous difference in how teaching practices can be applied. This challenge also connects to what kind and how much knowledge is needed, what is evaluated and how evaluation is conducted. One participant also was alarmed that singers in popular music and/or jazz have fewer lessons than their classical singer counterparts. The conversation did not reveal whether

this pertains to other countries, but it does raise concerns whether popular music and jazz still are considered less valuable and not worth investments in many countries' higher music education.

The data clearly brings forth how the human voice as an instrument differs from all other instruments. For example, it is for the most parts not visible and therefore harder to comprehend, and it changes considerably with age. The participants had noticed that singers tend to begin their vocal studies later in life compared to other instrumentalists because of the anatomic and physiological features related to the development of the instrument. On the other hand, the participants had noticed a change in attitudes towards teaching singing to children. The latest research has challenged the previous conventions of allowing the students to take vocal lessons only after their voice change. The issue of age raises a question how vocal studies can be more adequately organised for singers before the level of higher education in music or culture schools. The participants mentioned that the reason for many singers not to be as advanced for example in music theory as other instrumentalists is that they do not have the opportunity to begin their studies at the same age.

One participant presented her concern of how jazz and improvisation are often taught to singers. Because of different motor programming needs there is a disparity in how vocalists learn for example musical patterns or scales. Her demand for better adapted teaching practices for singers is supported by the existing literature of pedagogy of jazz and improvisation (Bell, 2013; Hargreaves, 2014a; 2014b; Madura Ward-Steinman, 2008; 2014; Wadsworth Walker, 2005).

The solutions to varying challenges presented by the participants during the conversations, such as accepting that students graduate with varying instrumental skill levels, utilizing the time at use differently with different individuals, teaching the students to plan their studies and reflect on their advancement, and teaching the students proper rehearsal skills and practice routines for the future, can be considered learner-centered practices. Furthermore, this connects with idea of curriculum for the future mentioned by the participants. Such pedagogical thinking suggests that the knowledge and skills essential in the future may not be the ones needed today. Therefore, higher music education needs to carefully consider how its curriculum reflects the needs of the future, which according to the data of this study means being able to take over new musical styles, elements, and technology once they emerge in working life.

The participants' considerations of the responsibility of learning also reflect the literature of learner-centered approaches suggesting that the responsibility of learning belongs to the student. On the other hand, many participants mentioned balancing with

this notion to be difficult, as some students reject the responsibility or do not have the learning skills needed. Students who focus on making their teacher happy and looking for the teacher's confirmation reflect the features of dependent learners (Weimer, 2013). A concern raised by one participant, whether the schooling today makes students dependent learners, indeed creates challenges for higher education, as acquiring adequate learning skills that late in education may be time consuming and difficult.

The notion of gender emerged in the interview of one participant. Even if this issue may seem disconnected to the themes of this study, it soon became clear that it is closely connected to the participants' pedagogical thinking. At first, they did not seem eager to address the question "How can we prepare the female students to challenge the gender roles in music business?". This suggests that they found this topic difficult. In the beginning the conversation of the gendered challenges concerned women only, but later it was also mentioned that among some musical styles it connects also to men. The reason for the conversation to concern mostly women may be the gender distribution in participants' institutions, as they mostly teach women. Still, several research reports propose that music and music business are male dominated environments (Connell & Gibson, 2003; Smith, Choueiti, & Pieper, 2018).

A further question arose from the concern that female singers today are often required to adopt more masculine qualities in music business, and on the other hand feminine qualities in their appearance. The conversation also presented some beliefs of the reasons for the position of women in music. Singers may adapt a certain role because of the often-unrecognised differences in the learning processes of singers and other instrumentalists (e.g. Hargreaves, 2014a). Because of these different learning paths singers may not seem as capable to apply certain musical elements as quickly and effectively as instrumentalists. This is supported by the recognition that singers who play an instrument get more respect from other musicians. Playing another instrument is also mentioned in the literature as means for developing improvisation and musical understanding. The participants' ideas resonate with those of Hargreaves (2014a), who argues that the role of a singer in a band has different requirements, especially in relation to communication with the audience and interpreting the lyrics. During the conversation one participant was concerned of female singers adapting the role of a musically ignorant, "a silly girl" as she put it. This suggests that some singers find it easier not to take part in musical interaction and focus mainly on their vocals and performing. The participants proposed that teachers should empower singers through passing adequate knowledge and encouraging them to use their knowledge in band situations. In this the teachers themselves can act as role models. They also pointed out the need of women playing different instruments as role models. Such findings propose that singers in working life

need encouragement and support in building their professional identity as musicians, not only as vocalists.

The conversation linked the issue of gender also to evaluation. The participants had experienced that men and women tend to have different preferences in music, and one participant even suggested that in entrance exams “much more men will get in if we have four men sitting there [in the board], that’s just how it is”. Taking this consideration even further, gender may have a strong influence in evaluation in general. Educators should indeed carefully consider what their preferences in playing or singing are based on. This challenge also closely connects with another conversation suggesting that teachers need to question their predilections and in assessment move away from their subjective preferences. In general, challenges of gender were not discussed in a thorough manner nor were they addressed with the adequate terminology used in literature, but this line of thinking still brings forth how teachers need to be aware of the gender issues and thus raises questions whether music as a profession offers similar possibilities to all regardless of gender. Thus, as the participants were able to point out so many gender-based challenges in the field, the need for more academic discussion of the topic must be emphasised.

Considering all data concerning popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy, the strong emergence of learner-centered approaches in teaching practices extending also to the content of teaching may be explained through the environment in which the teachers work. If the teacher is not able to master all musical styles but is still required to teach them, the teaching might take a form in which it is not based on mastery but in which the student takes the lead. As Lebler (2007) aptly puts it, in such situations “the student must act as a master” (p. 207). Also, if the teacher considers that in singing there is no “right or wrong”, the pedagogy applied must find alternative routes in which the student takes the responsibility for searching for his or her artistic expression. For being able to work in the environment described in this study, the participants emphasised the importance of having an extensive teacher education degree including not only knowledge and skills of music and vocal techniques but also a deep understanding of pedagogy and sufficient knowledge of psychology. Indeed, such degree in vocal pedagogy is common in many Nordic countries’ educational systems, but rare elsewhere.

6.6 Critical comments of methodology and reflexivity

The different methodological and functional choices of a research must be critically addressed. In the case of this study, it firstly has to be considered whether the qualitative approach has been appropriate to investigate the context. According to methodological literature, the qualitative approach is applicable in research that focuses on meaning in a context (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research is also mentioned to be appropriate for studies in which a context is explored through a small group of people in order to present a complex, detailed understanding of the issue (Creswell, 1998). The described notions suit the aims of this study and as these meanings could not have been acquired through quantitative enumerations and statistic conclusions. I chose instrumental case study approach as a method for this research. Along with Flyvbjerg's (2006, 2011) thinking I relied on the notion that through a case study readers are offered insights to context-dependent knowledge and expertise, and that such knowledge and expertise are at the heart of expertise development.

Merriam (2009) proposes several strategies for enhancing the validity and reliability of a qualitative study. Internal validity is concerned with research findings being congruent with reality. Still, reality itself does not provide basis for considering validity, it being "holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing" (p. 213), and therefore unreachable. Validity should instead be seen through the multiple constructions of understandings of multiple experiences of the context by the people under investigation, and through considering whether these constructions have been accessed in the study. Merriam (2009), who represents the interpretive-constructivist perspective to case study approach, suggests that "triangulation remains a principal strategy to ensure for validity and reliability" (p. 216). Data triangulation can first be accomplished by collecting data through multiple methods and then "comparing and cross-checking data collected through observations at different times or in different places" (p. 216). I collected the data of this study through multiple methods, and cross-checked it at several points, for example when considering different phases of data collection together. Investigator triangulation, the notion that there should be more than one investigator collecting and analysing the data could not be thoroughly met in this study (Merriam, 2009). Even if the data collection and analysis were conducted by myself alone, my supervisors were engaged in evaluating the process and the doctoral community of Sibelius Academy was used in opening its possibilities and limitations concerning for example the theoretical underpinnings, chosen methods and implementation.

By external validity, Merriam (2009) refers to the applicability of the results to other situations. In this case study, I did not consider generalizing, finding views that should

represent the experiences of all vocal teachers, meaningful. Instead, I aimed to produce multiplicities and excesses of meaning and subjectivities through the data. In this study the general lies in the particular, in the sense that “what we learn in a particular situation we can transfer or generalize to similar situations subsequently encountered” (Merriam, 2009, p. 225).

Even if the aim was to include all data in the analysis process, the possibility remains that some thoughts were left unnoticed. While reading the data I was attentive to my theoretical and methodological perspectives of voice, truth and meaning (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). It still must be accepted that the existing data is partial and incomplete and does not represent the participants as such, only what they have chosen to tell me and the other participants. The implications of these conditions directed me to consider what can be asked of data as told by the participants. Often in humanistic inquiry methodological aims “are against interpretive imperatives that limit so-called analysis and inhibit the inclusion of previously un-thought data” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. viii). My decision to focus on the overarching theme arising from the professional conversations was based on the critique, that instead of the compiled eight questions, the meanings of the articulations by the participants were the most relevant matters in this study.

One of the biggest issues challenging the validity of this study was the language used. The reason why English, a foreign language to all involved, was chosen has been discussed in section 4.4. Most of the participants had to translate their thoughts to English before expressing them. Even when using one’s first language, Stake (1995) suggests that “translation from experiential language to formal language diminishes and distorts some of the meaning” (p. 86). Therefore, it must be acknowledged that the choice of language has had an effect on the quality, accuracy and amount of the data, and concerned both the output of the participants and myself. In dealing with the challenge of language, I encouraged the participants to use their mother tongue if needed, at times suggested options for words, and translated words directly from the participants’ mother tongue. The challenge of language does not concern the vocabulary only, but also the meanings behind the words. It must be acknowledged that the people involved in the study may have different understandings of the words used. Still, even if there may have been a loss of detailed information expressed in the vivid meanings of spoken language, having a joint language enhanced equality and collaboration between the participants and was crucial to the success of the project. My own action challenging the validity through language, for example paraphrasing quotations, was addressed by having all quotations approved by the participants (see 4.6.1 and 4.6.3). In reporting, the use of a foreign language may have affected the result as it has limited the ways in which I was able to describe different occurrences.

Whether the results are consistent with the data is emphasised by Merriam as the reliability of the research. By this she means that “a researcher wishes to concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense – they are consistent and dependable” (Merriam, 2009, p. 221). In this study, I used excessive time in making sure that all data was included in analysis and that all perspectives mentioned during the professional conversations were reported. In order to strengthen the reliability, all events during the different phases of case selection, data collection and analysis are described in detail. This process also allowed the strengths and limitations of this study and my own action to be visible to the reader. I also had to acknowledge that “the way the case and the researcher interact is presumed unique and not reproducible for other cases or researchers” (Stake, 1995, p. 135). The reliability of this study may also be discussed through asking questions such as *Had the data be different had the context of the study been other than the Nordic countries?* or *Had the outcomes be different had teachers worked in other working life positions?* The answer to both of these questions with the most probability is yes. Higher music education in the Nordic countries provides a very distinct context, and the data collected in this project is therefore unique. The value of this study does not lie in replicability but in the insights it provides.

According to Merriam (2009), the integrity of the researcher should be considered through reflexivity, “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher” (p. 219). As each researcher’s style and curiosity are unique (Stake, 1995) the researcher must explain her “biases, dispositions, and assumptions regarding the research to be undertaken” (Merriam, 2009, p. 219). This issue is also addressed in literature as “bracketing” (Tufford & Newman, 2010) which emphasises surfacing one’s preconceptions arising from personal experience with the research material and monitoring them “throughout the research endeavour as both a potential source of insight as well as potential obstacles to engagement” (p. 85). In this study I selected the case based on my previous encounters with Nordic colleagues and used my judgment in selecting the case according to the criteria I created (see 4.4). Facilitation was used in this process as means of distributing power to the participants during data collection (see 4.2). Literature on the other hand suggests, that even if facilitating is often seen as a way to get around power issues, this seldom is possible. According to Rogers (2010) “facilitating a group involves the use of power and influence – either by the facilitator, by the group or by some blend of these two” (p. 52). The power relations may also change during the process, as in the beginning of the process the authority is more related to the facilitator but during the process swifts to the group itself. At the final stages it may be possible for the facilitator to step aside and leave the group the responsibility of the process (Rogers, 2010). Therefore, it must be acknowledged that the choices made by myself as the facilitator have had an effect on data collection.

My integrity as a researcher is indeed essential in this study as I am a colleague of the participants working in the same field. It must be acknowledged that my position in the working life has created both challenges and advantages to my reflexivity as a researcher. Thus, it may be assumed that the worldview and theoretical assumptions of this study have been informed by my own views. Yet, positioning myself as the facilitator enabled bracketing my personal views in the professional conversations up to a point, despite the fact that my dispositions were still present in all stages of this research. My own experiences and knowledge as a vocal teacher have on one hand helped me to understand the data deeper, but on the other hand have affected what I have heard and what was left unheard. In order to enhance transparency of my position, my own story was presented in section 1.5.

6.7 Ethical considerations

In doing research ethical issues and responsibilities must be considered thoroughly. This consideration aims to discuss how the ethical dilemmas of this study were addressed, and also to reflect upon limitations within this study. At the time of the data collection of this study The University of the Arts Helsinki did not yet have an official ethics board regulating research conduct, and therefore the research design, implementation, analysis and reporting has been conducted according to the recommendations from the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2012). This research was conducted among volunteering adults in which case the recommendation does not require a permission or obligation to report to the authorities. Nevertheless, the methods and conventions applied conformed to scientific criteria and aimed to be ethically sustainable.

Within the case selection of this study, the possible participants were approached with an email inquiring their willingness to participate and providing them with the research plan and information regarding the estimated use of time and effort during the project (appendix 1). The agreeing responses were received via email, and this correspondence was considered an informed consent. The institutions of the participants also signed a letter of intent (LOI) because of the funding applications for the project. After receiving the confirmations about their participation in the project, my aim as a researcher was “to work from a position that is continually, ethically sensitive, to those whose lives we investigate, honoring research commitments made” (Birch & Miller, 2012, p. 106). The participants were also notified that they could withdraw at any stage without consequences. Miller and Bell (2012) argue that “the idea of ‘consent’ should be ongoing and renegotiated between researcher and researched throughout the research process”

(p. 61). This was indeed the case in this study, as one participant withdrew before the project started.

In this study I have been concerned with several ethical issues related to the participants. Firstly, I considered essential that the teachers taking part in the project would be positioned as participants instead of research subjects (Birch & Miller, 2012). Thus, Schreier (2012) proposes that the participants of a study must be treated in an ethically responsible manner, not hiding information from them, or tricking them into telling more than they feel comfortable with. Secondly, in addition to the anonymity of the participants being a methodological choice, it indeed is an important ethical issue. The number of vocal teachers of the target group, teachers of popular music and jazz singing in a Nordic higher education institution working in a full-time position, is quite small. The processes and challenges of anonymisation have been discussed by several researchers (Moosa, 2013; Nespors, 2000). Challenges indeed arise as “the information required to make accounts persuasive and true to central participants can identify settings and individuals even to those less fully involved, including outside observers or people who simply know or work with participants” (Nespors, 2000, p. 548).

Thirdly, in today’s working life vocal teachers are often put in competitive positions and the thought of openly sharing expertise can prove to be difficult. It was therefore very important that the set-up of this research was built in a way that it would not have a negative impact on the teachers’ careers. Qualitative case study is a highly personal research approach in which personal perspectives and interpretations are encouraged (Stake, 1995, p. 135). The previous knowledge of the researcher implied that openly sharing one’s opinions, thoughts and insecurities might expose the participants to negative public attention. Therefore, in reporting, the names of the participants as well as any clues to the nationality or home institutions of the individuals were anonymised at an early stage. Also, any specific teaching methods of participants were left out in reporting as individual teachers could have been recognised. Another attempt at concealing the participants identity was to arrange the face-to-face collaborative sessions in Finland where I could organise them discreetly. Still, the physical presence of myself and the participants at a public location could have revealed the identity of the participants. Thus, even if the issues of confidentiality of all professional conversations were discussed with the participants it may be assumed that they have discussed their participation with their families or colleagues.

Ethical considerations connect closely to the data collection as well. Interviews “may imply a certain simplicity, but this simplicity is illusory” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 15), as interviews are not conversations between equal partners, but defined and controlled by the interviewer. In using interviews as means of collecting data, I had

to acknowledge that the knowledge produced “depends on the social relationship of interviewer and interviewee, which rests on the interviewer’s ability to create a stage where the subject is free and safe to talk of private events recorded for later public use” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 16). My position in the professional conversations also created an ethical challenge. The use of facilitation and transparently reporting my facilitative choices have been the means to conduct my investigation in an ethical manner. In general, I acknowledge that I cannot learn about people’s experiences but instead about indirect representations of those experiences (Silverman, 2006). In the case of this study this means, that the data represents the descriptions of the participants’ thinking and teaching practices, but not direct observations of them.

There were advantages and disadvantages in my role in the data collection. On the one hand, my position as a colleague working in the same field helped me understand the structures and underpinnings behind the used words and allowed me to find a delicate balance between my concern for pursuing interesting knowledge and ethical respect for the integrity of the subjects (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). On the other hand, my own perceptions and preconceptions challenged my ability to perceive matters not familiar to me. I also had to acknowledge that there may have been a risk of social desirability affecting the conversations and the results, and the existence of a video camera may have affected the interaction between people. All available means were used to create a trustworthy and secure environment for the participants. According to the participants’ reflections on the project, I was successful in this pursuit. Finally, in the beginning of the project questions concerning archiving and/or destroying the data after my dissertation was finished were discussed together. The participants decided that all data will be removed permanently from any storage devices and all paper documents containing data will be destroyed.

7 Conclusions

I began this investigation with an interest to provide insights into popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy in Nordic higher music education from the teachers' perspectives. The Nordic countries are a specific geographical and cultural context in which education of popular music and jazz has already for decades been given in higher music education institutions through degrees in performance, composition, music education, and during the recent decades also in music production and songwriting. The departments of popular music and /or jazz are often small in size, and many teachers work in an isolated environment without colleagues from the same field. Also, many of the teachers are required to teach several musical styles in these institutions. Being a teacher of this particular field myself, I had identified several challenges which I aimed to address in this dissertation, such as isolation of teachers, lack of academic research of pedagogy, and lack of collaboration among teachers across the silos created by vocal methods or models.

As a study combining the notions of development of expertise of teachers and popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy this dissertation has covered varied theoretical and methodological grounds including social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978; 1986), expertise (Chi, 2006; Ericsson, 2006; Ericsson & Lehmann, 2006), development of expertise (Berliner, 1988; Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986), collaboration (Barrett, 2014; Gaunt & Westerlund, 2013; Renshaw, 2013), continuing professional development (Hookey, 2002), peer-group mentoring (Heikkinen, Jokinen & Tynjälä, 2012a; 2012b), conversational learning (Kolb, Baker & Jensen, 2012) and professional conversations. Thus, this thesis connects the data to the notions of adult learning and the nexus of formal, informal and nonformal learning. I chose instrumental single-case study with an exploratory design as a design as it enabled drawing a large and rich data through multiple sources from the case. This study offers up-close and in-depth insights into popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy, as well as provides new understanding to processes which support the development of expertise of teachers.

As representatives of the rapidly changing profession, the popular music and jazz vocal teachers are required to take on new knowledge and skills provided for example by educational research, emergence of new musical styles, voice science, and new technology. This current situation brings forth the need for adequate continuing professional development programs for vocal teachers through which they are enhanced to further develop their professional expertise. I was particularly interested in investigating the notion as a socially constructed process. By organizing a series of peer-group mentoring

sessions in which the participants engaged in professional conversations my aim was to enhance sharing of knowledge and skills among the participants. The qualitative research approach allowed me to investigate firstly how the participating teachers articulated their development of expertise within the collaborative project. The results derived from this data support the previous research on the importance of learner-centered learning opportunities for teachers, as well as professional development of teachers at all stages of their careers. All participants emphasised the importance of having the time and possibility to engage in professional conversations with their colleagues in a safe and confidential environment addressing matters that they had chosen themselves. According to this data, collaborative processes can be used successfully in overcoming teacher isolation, be it due to national borders, institutions, or vocal methods or models. The participants reflected on various pay-offs as results of participation in the project, such as improved teaching practices, increased awareness of pedagogy, confidence in teaching, and clearer understanding on one's previously adapted teaching practices. On the basis of these findings, I encourage all popular music and jazz vocal teachers to take part in professional conversations with colleagues, and, should a safe, confidential, and non-judgemental environment emerge, share their knowledge, skills and pedagogical concerns with others and search for solutions together.

Secondly, my interest was focused on how the participants articulated their pedagogical thinking and teaching practices within the project. The data illustrates a musically and pedagogically rich and varied field, in which the teachers have to make challenging decisions in relation to for instance the content of teaching, evaluation, and according to what or whose aesthetic values the teaching is given. On the basis of the conversations concerning the eight compiled questions derived from the individual interviews, a paradigm shift from master-apprentice model to learner-centered teaching can clearly be identified. According to this data, the participants have applied learner-centered ideals creatively in their teaching practices and they emerge as contemporary teachers applying the latest knowledge of learning and singing, use their professional reasoning in choosing what content and concepts to apply with individual students, and enhance students' responsibility and ownership of their learning process.

The project organised in this study presents one possible structure for a developmental project, which can be applied in any educational context. This possibility was confirmed in the data as one participant mentioned having organised a similar project crossing the boundaries of musical styles in her home institution. According to this data, a reasonably large amount of work on the organisers' behalf and adequate funding are requisites for organizing similar projects in the future. On the other hand, the cost of this project was rather high because of the chosen geographical context: had the anonymity of the

participants not been an essential issue, a similar project could have been organised nationally with less expenses.

There are several implications of this study to music education in general and specifically to popular music and jazz education. The practical and theoretical findings of this research, for instance the strong emergence of learner-centered teaching, suggest that new and effective ways of instrumental teaching replacing the previously applied teacher-centered approaches may indeed be found in the field. This study provides popular music and jazz vocal pedagogy with alternative ways of thinking about responsibilities and power relations in one-to-one vocal tuition and some practical ideas of how to apply learner-centered notions in teaching practices.

The results of this study provide the employers and administrators with significant grounds to enhance participation of teachers in adequate continuing professional development programs designed for teachers' needs and aspirations. This is essential especially for teachers that may be the only representatives of their field in their institutions. The data is in harmony with literature suggesting that investment in applicable CPD programs with most certainty pays off, if the teachers are enhanced to develop their expertise in their specific domain, and if they have control over the content of conversations or workshops.

This study also brings the issues of vocal methods or models in formal institutionalised music education into the discussion. The notion of only one commercial vocal method or model prevailing in publicly funded music institution should be considered critically. My claim, based on this study, is that educational programs should consider developing pedagogy on the available independent academic research and apply more than one vocal method or model in teaching in order to provide the students with a more comprehensive understanding of this diverse educational field.

Two implications for future research should be highlighted. Firstly, more academic research is needed of the teaching practices of popular music and jazz singing in general. Investigations on several themes, such as the content and desired outcomes of teaching, the assessment of musical performance, and development of curricula to meet the future needs would benefit all teachers and students in the field. Secondly, as this study presents some promising and confirming notions of learner-centered teaching from the teachers' perspectives, further investigations are needed on learner-centered teaching of popular music and jazz singing from the perspective of the student.

Popular music and jazz education has in the Nordic countries established itself as a prominent field of music education at all educational levels. Therefore, to people of all

ages and skill levels singing in various environments wanting to learn more of popular music and jazz, this data suggests that they indeed can benefit from vocal lessons with a professional popular music and jazz vocal teacher.

Summarising the main contribution of this dissertation, according to this study popular music and jazz vocal teachers working in higher music education in the Nordic countries are committed to the needs and goals of the student, and do not impose their own aesthetic ideals of singing on the students but instead offer their professional expertise for the students in order to help them find their own voices. In this work, they need adequate collaborative CPD programs to develop their professional expertise further and continuously improve their pedagogical thinking and teaching practices for the benefit of the student.

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Appendix 1: The letter of consent

Hi everyone,

This mail is sent to XXXXXXXX from XXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXX from XXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXX from XXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXX from XXXXXXXX, XXXXXXXX from XXXXXXXX, and XXXXXXXX from XXXXXXXX. I plan to get a few more people participating but this group is a great start.

I have told you all a little bit about my project (XX XXXXXXXX XXX XX XXXXXXXXXX) and asked if you care to join in. Attached is the recent version of my research plan, which I wrote for my “Nordic Network for Research in Music Education” presentation next Tuesday. In it you can read more about my aims, plans and research questions.

So, what I’m asking for you is

1. a semi-structured interview around next August, which is possible to do with skype, themes/questions will be sent to you beforehand
2. two two-day-seminars together in October-November, possibly located in southern Sweden, which is about in the center of Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden :-), discussing topics that you have raised up in the interviews
3. individual written reflection before, in between and after the seminars (not long stories, maybe a couple of sentences once a week)
4. your activity in a closed internet platform where we are able to discuss between the seminars and share thoughts
5. stimulated recall interview in the beginning of 2016 (in which I ask you about the process and some detailed questions in which we may use video recordings of the seminars)
6. not money but your time - as I will apply funding to organise the seminars and to pay for your travel and accommodation expenses

To be able to apply funding from Nordplus Higher Education by 2.3.2015 I need a letter of intent from you all. How I understand this letter, it is namely a letter of intention meaning that you intent to participate in the process. If there should come problems along the way (for example with schedules) I will not hold you to this LOI. But for now, and for the funding I really need it. So, if you still intent to participate, will you please print the attached form, sign it, scan it and send it back to me during this week (latest by 27.2.2015).

I will be more than happy to answer any other questions that may arise from this material. I'm doing this PhD because I think our field is worth of a scientific research and that the teachers working in it should be heard!

Appendix 2: The interview guide

- a) Age, educational and musical background?
- b) What kind of and how long working experience do you have in popular music and jazz singing pedagogy in general and specifically in higher education?
- c) What is your present job description and what are required outcomes of your teaching?
- d) How do you understand sharing knowledge in your profession both to students and colleagues? What aspects of your expertise would you like to share?
- e) What are the biggest challenges of popular music and jazz pedagogy in higher music education you wish to raise up for discussion and development?

Appendix 3: The questions for written reflections

- 1) What were your expectations towards this project and how were they met?
- 2) What are the effects of this project on your professional thinking and/or action?
- 3) In your opinion, what were the things that facilitated and/or constrained this project?
- 4) Is there anything else you wish to mention?

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