

Teacher educators' visions of pedagogical training within instrumental higher music education. A case in Finland

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The purpose of this study was to examine the visions of teacher educators of instrumental pedagogy ($n = 12$) in higher music education regarding 'good' teaching and instrumental student teacher preparation. The theoretical basis for the study was research on teachers' visions (Hammerness, 2006): teachers' own conceptions of ideal teaching practices. The data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analysed by qualitative content analysis. The interviewed teachers' visions of good teaching of instrumental pedagogy were closely related to their visions of good teaching of instrumental or vocal music, which they attempted to communicate to their student teachers. The process of teacher development was primarily understood as acquiring a package of skills and knowledge that are partly instrument specific, partly generic, and strongly influenced by the labour market. Teaching practice was considered essential, and was perceived as building connections between theory and practical application. The findings support prior research within Nordic teacher education (Hammerness, 2012), in that faculty members' visions related to teaching are individual and only partly negotiated with their colleagues.

Introduction

Scholars of education argue that in order to improve the quality of teacher education, faculty members must be given opportunities to reflect upon their educational thinking, practices and visions (e.g. Carr, 1989; Brooks & Brooks, 1993; Hammerness, 2006). Likewise, a coherent and shared vision of teaching is considered an important characteristic of high-quality teacher education programmes (Darling-Hammond, 1999, 2006). In the context of music teacher education, this calls for studying music teacher educators' pedagogical thinking, visions and values, since these factors – along with the curriculum itself – may be seen to determine what, why and how student teachers should learn. It also increases the need for a continuous discussion about the aims of teaching and training and about teaching practices and approaches, as well as their theoretical and philosophical foundations.

The purpose of this study was to examine the visions of teachers of instrumental and vocal pedagogy ($n = 12$) in higher music education regarding 'good' teaching and instrumental student teacher preparation, giving teachers an opportunity to reflect upon past experiences as well as pondering the potential for future improvement. The study took place within a single higher education institution of music in Finland, and focused on instrumental pedagogy in the Finnish context. The research question was formulated as follows:

What kinds of visions regarding ideal teaching practices and teacher preparation do teachers of instrumental pedagogy in Finnish higher music education express?

Hammerness' (2006) notion of 'teachers' vision', entailing teachers' images of an ideal teaching practice, was considered a relevant point of departure, as it enables an holistic understanding of teaching. It is a comprehensive perspective on teacher quality, drawing together teachers' knowledge of the content they teach, their pedagogical skills, the social and political values that underline their teaching, and the consistency of their teaching (Shulman, 2006, p. iix).

The study draws from a larger project which studied the pedagogical traditions embedded in higher music education courses in instrumental teaching, as compared with classroom music teaching, in music teacher education in Finland, Sweden and Norway.¹

Earlier studies

Several studies have attempted to describe and understand instrumental teaching and learning within institutions of higher music education (e.g. Graabræk Nielsen, 2002; Mills, 2002; Nielsen, 2004; Nerland, 2003; Mills & Smith, 2003; Young *et al.*, 2003; Zhukov, 2006, 2007, 2013; Gaunt, 2008, 2009; Holgersson, 2011). However, the question of *how to teach the teaching of (instrumental) music* has not received the same attention in music education research. Only a few researchers have focused on examining the pedagogical training of future instrumental teachers. Some of these examine the role of teaching practice on teacher development. For example, Elgersma (2012) reflects on her experience of teacher training in the field of piano pedagogy, focusing especially on student teaching. She considers practical experience in teaching to be at the heart of effective teacher training, and suggests (1) devoting less time to the quantity of teaching experiences, and more to quality, and (2) recommends that music pedagogy instructors ensure that their own teaching style models the learning tactics espoused to students. In addition, Haddon's (2009) findings suggest that instrumental and vocal students learn to teach through increased experience rather than formal training. Paul *et al.* (2001) examined the relationship between the frequency of particular authentic-context learning (ACL) activities during undergraduate instrumental music teacher training, and the initial teaching performance (ITP) of undergraduate instrumental music student teachers. Significant correlations were found between ITP and most ACL activities. In addition, those with a high level of ACL experiences were significantly better teachers than those with medium or low levels of ACL experiences. Finally, Schmidt (2004) examined undergraduate pre-service teachers' lesson planning for the classes they taught in a university string project. Suggestions for teacher educators included: acknowledging the complex non-linear relationship between planning skills, teaching experience and professional knowledge; structuring guided experiences with a variety of lesson planning formats (e.g. written, mental, verbal); and maximising opportunities for pre-service teachers to reflect on connections between their experiences as students and as teachers.

Earlier research on education suggest that student teachers have preconceptions of how teaching should take place based on their own experiences as a student, and that teachers tend to teach as they were taught (e.g. Zeichner & Gore, 1990; Kelchtermans,

1993; Smith, 2001; Fung & Chow, 2002). Within music education (Mills & Smith, 2003), instrumental teachers reported that their teaching was significantly influenced by the ways in which they were taught in their higher education. However, teachers also state that good teaching in schools differs from good teaching in higher education.

The identity formation of instrumental music teachers within pedagogical studies has been studied, for example, by Ferm (2008) and Johansen (2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2012). Ferm (2008) concludes that, in the process of becoming a teacher, imagining oneself as a music teacher and the goal of being able to say 'I can teach music' are essential elements. Haston and Russell (2011) examined the occupational identity development of undergraduate music education majors enrolled in string pedagogy and instrumental methods classes, as they participated in a yearlong authentic context learning experience situated within a professional development school. The researchers identified four emergent themes: the development of general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of self, performer/teacher symbiotic outcomes and professional perspectives.

A categorisation of required competencies for music teachers related to music, teaching and learning, education and organisation has been formulated, for example, by Ferm Thorgersen (2010). In her study, the students compared the competence to teach with the competence to improvise, and thought that presence, commitment, imagination, response and curiosity were similar components in both activities. Since the competencies required in instrumental/vocal teaching are considered situational, rather than listing specific competencies, the Polifonia working group (2010, p. 46) suggested that the main working competencies are: (1) cognitive competence involving the use of theory and concept, as well as informal tacit knowledge gained experientially; (2) functional competence (skills or know-how), those things which persons should be able to do when they are functioning in a given area of work, learning or social activity; (3) personal competence, involving knowing how to conduct oneself in a specific situation; and (4) ethical competence, involving the possession of certain personal and professional values. In their publication, the Polifonia Working Group also mapped the primary characteristics and challenges of teaching and learning in instrumental/vocal teacher education, as well as European traditions and practices. However, despite these efforts the question of how to teach the teaching of (instrumental) music requires further attention in music education research.

Theoretical foundations

Teachers' visions

In this study, teacher educators' thinking was approached through the notion of *teacher's vision* (Hammerness, 2006). Teachers' visions are images of an ideal teaching practice. The concept of vision brings together teachers' hopes, cares and dreams, together with their understanding of their field. It also embodies beliefs, values and the wider purpose of education, thus offering a 'capacious and comprehensive view to teacher quality' complementing and drawing together other competing views (Shulman, 2006, p. viii). As such, visions embody and combine the things that guide and animate teaching, and can be conceived of as the awareness of possibilities (Hammerness *et al.*, 2005; Hammerness, 2006).

Visions are as much about how we understand our past and present as they are about developing images of *what might be*. They call for wild and idealistic imaginings of ‘new and better’ teaching practices, however they do not always function as such. Vision can also be culturally biased and exclusionary, perpetuating stereotyped solutions and suppressing alternative possibilities (Hammerness, 2006).

Vision is also a socially transmitted element. Shulman (2006) argues that teachers working together influence each other’s teaching quality, and that the transmission of visions of teaching itself is one of the most communicable attributes. He maintains that teachers with powerful visions of the possible and the desirable can imbue their colleagues with ideals that make a real difference in a learning community (p. ix–x).

While directing thoughts towards the future, vision also entails reflection upon past practice. According to Hammerness (2006) teachers use vision as not only a guide for the future and a motivating image of the possible, but also a means of looking back and reflecting upon past work and purposes. Hence, vision offers a possibility for critical reflection on past experiences, and even on the teaching tradition on the whole.

Didactic triangle

A second theoretical framework utilised in this study is drawn from Finnish educational science. A *didactic triangle*, as defined by Kansanen and Meri (1999), is a theoretical tool through which the data concerning teachers’ visions of ideal teaching practice (in this sub-study) can be discussed. It helps to map and understand the relationships between the teacher, the student, and the content. The didactic triangle includes two main relationships: the *pedagogical relationship*, the one between the teacher and the student (Fig. 1), and the *didactic relationship*, the teacher’s relation to the relation between the student and the content (Fig. 2).

In a narrow sense, the *pedagogical relationship* touches upon the quality of interaction, as far as it addresses a student’s learning and motivation, emotions, self-efficacy and the meaningfulness of studies (Hellström, 2011). In a broader sense, as understood here, it engages all the qualities of interaction between the teacher and the student. According to van Manen (1994), the pedagogical relationship is at the heart of good and effective teaching. However, it is not necessarily an equal relationship. By nature, the pedagogical relationship is one between a more mature/experienced and a less mature/experienced person (van Manen, 1990). It thus places the more experienced person in a hierarchically elevated position, consequently enabling the teacher’s ability to exercise power in ways unavailable to a student.

The relationship between the student and the content is visible as studying, i.e. doing something in order to achieve the set aims and goals. The invisible part of this relationship may be learning itself, as well as other consequences of the instructional process, which form the most essential aspect of the relationship between the student and the content. To bring about learning is the central task for the teacher. However, the teacher can only guide the act of studying, since controlling learning is impossible. In other words, the teacher has a relation to studying and at the same time this relation is also to the learning and other changes. That very relation may be called *didactic relation* (Fig. 2). In the didactic relationship the teacher’s so-called subject competence is the main focus. The

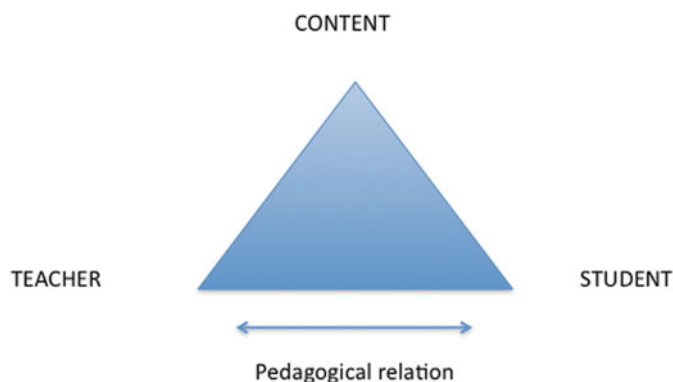


Fig. 1 (Colour online) The pedagogical relationship in the didactic triangle (Kansanen, 2004, p. 79)

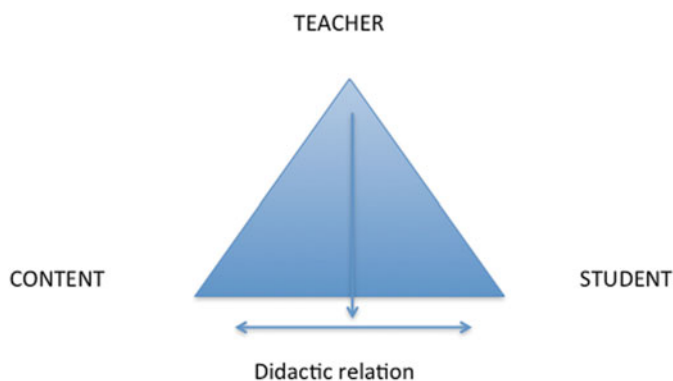


Fig. 2 (Colour online) The didactic relationship in the didactic triangle (Kansanen, 2004, p. 80)

most important issue from the point of view of pedagogical training, as well as of teacher education in general, is the balance between subject knowledge and pedagogy. Hence, the didactic relationship is about the teacher's pedagogical ability to apply subject competence in a way that promotes the student's learning (Kansanen & Meri, 1999, p. 113).

Context: pedagogical courses within instrumental and vocal studies curricula

The basic music pedagogy courses, called *Musik didaktik* in the Nordic countries, incorporate structures and principles for the planning and analysis of music teaching, including planning-execution-evaluation models and concepts such as objectives, content, methods and assessment (Kertz-Welzel, 2004). In these courses, the students are expected to learn how to teach music from a variety of practical, theoretical and philosophical perspectives. Depending on the needs of the student's major subject(s), separate courses

are offered in fields such as classroom music pedagogy, instrumental pedagogy and choir and orchestra conducting, to mention just a few.

The study of *Instrumental pedagogy 1–2* (usually 10 credit units each) in the institution in question is optional, but made available to all students of *Classical music instrument and vocal music* at any stage of their undergraduate degree. These studies aim to provide students with the basic skills required to teach instrumental or vocal music in state supported, communal or private music schools. Based on the curricula of 2010, the content of the courses primarily featured practical issues pertaining to teaching such as course planning, teaching methods and evaluation practices. The studies include lectures, group discussion, and supervised teaching-practice with a student (a weekly one-on-one lesson usually organised at the institution), as well as written and oral reflective assignments.

Methods

The study reported in this article was an interview study. Its purpose was to gain detailed insights into the educators' visions, by offering the possibility for the interviewees to think aloud and construct knowledge together with the interviewer through the interview interactions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The data were collected in the form of a semi-structured qualitative interview in late 2010 and early 2011. The semi-structured interview format was chosen because it focuses on specific themes while also allowing new ideas to be brought up openly during the interview. Inspired by Hammerness' (2006) model, the questions in the interview guide were formulated in ways in which it was possible to approach teachers' visions from different angles. The questions focused on the interviewees' visions of the ideal teacher, ideal teaching, context-specific teacher preparation and the main goals of the department and the curriculum. These themes were accompanied by questions asking how the educators perceived their visions in relation to the visions of their institutions and their colleagues. The educators were interviewed individually, in Finnish, and in their institution, the interviews lasting for approximately one hour each. Interviews were recorded in mp3-format and later transcribed. These transcripts were then used as the data for the analysis.

As Denzin (1994, p. 501) points out, methods of making sense of experience are always personal, and the interpretation of the results is always a complex and reflective process. The strategy utilised in our study for organising and making sense of the data was based on qualitative content analysis, as described by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2004, pp. 93–95). I started the analysis by reading through each interview as a whole, in order to obtain an overview of the collected data. After that, as suggested by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2004), I made a decision about what was interesting in the data: I then chose to concentrate on themes concerning ideal teaching practices, the ideal graduate, and teacher development. The first two coding categories emerged from the interview questions, and the third from the data. Next, a coding procedure to organise the data according to these categories was applied. The data which had no connection to these categories were left out of the analysis at this point. Data were then reduced and analysed by meaning condensation according to the categories (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The data were divided into 'meaning units', which were defined as specific units of text, either a few words or a few sentences, with a

Table 1 *Some characteristics of the research interview participants*

Pseudonym and male/female	Department	Teaching experience (in years) in pedagogy at the institution
Mary (F)	Piano, Accordion,	26
Michael (M)	Guitar, and Kantele	8
Laura (F)		24
Rose (F)		6
Tom (M)	Strings	16
Julia (F)		18
Fiona (F)		2
Susan (F)	Wind instruments,	24
James (M)	Percussion and Harp	6
Eric (M)		27
Ann (F)		25
Erin (F)	Voice	24

common meaning. In the analysis of 'ideal teaching practices' the theoretical tool known as the didactic triangle was applied. Finally, the main concepts contained in the meaning units were identified. When writing the text elements associated with the results, I translated the direct quotes from the data (which were in Finnish) into English.

Ethical considerations

Participation in the study was voluntary. The methods and overall goal of the research were explained to the teachers when they were given the opportunity to participate in the study. A guarantee of anonymity, and a promise that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequence, were carefully explained. An agreement was also made that each participant would have an opportunity to comment on the results and research report before submission for publication.

My position as a researcher and teacher (of music education and research subjects) in the *Music education department* at the same institution meant that I was an insider; on the other hand, not being a teacher of instrumental pedagogy gave me some distance from the participants' teaching worlds. My position afforded me informal access to potential participants and the possibility of generating an atmosphere of trust throughout the research process.

Participants

All teachers of instrumental and vocal pedagogy in the programme of *Classical music instrument and vocal music* were invited to participate in the study. The invitation was sent by e-mail. Altogether 12 out of the total of 30 teachers agreed to participate. Some basic information pertaining to the participants can be found in [Table 1](#). The pedagogical courses in question were usually just one part of their teaching responsibilities. At the time of the

study, all of them also taught instrumental or vocal music, mostly in one-on-one situations, in the institution and/or outside. Seven of the participating teachers worked full-time (or equivalent working hours) at the institution.

Findings

Visions of ideal teaching

It is important to note that there are several understandings of what constitutes 'good teaching'. There is no normative, shared understanding of 'good' or 'ideal'; they are relative adjectives that have different meaning for different people. However, according to Jyrhämä (2002, p. 36), every teacher has at least an implicit perception of good teaching, and the ways in which teacher duties should be carried out in order for learning to take place. These *images* of how teaching should be carried out, and what good/bad teaching is, are holistic and practical images of teaching processes, atmosphere, premises and the eventual results of teaching.

In the interview, teachers were asked to describe their vision of good teaching. The interviewed teachers' visions of good teaching of instrumental pedagogy were closely related to their visions of good teaching of instrumental or vocal music, which they attempted to communicate to their student teachers. These images of ideal instrumental/vocal teaching were discussed within the pedagogical courses in question, but the teachers also practiced them in the teaching of those courses. Teachers described their visions of good teaching in terms that can be described as entailing two main characteristics: on one hand, the visions reflected teaching that was didactically well carried out, related mostly to the methods and assessment of teaching. On the other hand, the teachers' understanding of good teaching could be described as 'pedagogical vision', defined earlier in the text, referring to an ideal teacher–student relationship in teaching practices. In the following, I will present the results concerning the teachers' visions of good teaching in terms of pedagogical and didactic relations.

Visions of pedagogical relationship

Most teachers (10) emphasised the importance of good interaction, and described the ideal relationship between a teacher and a student as an equal partnership aiming at learning together. A teacher was perceived as a coach, searching together with a student for various possible solutions to emerging problems, rather than a master already in possession of the right answers:

Michael: Teaching is interaction between two people. A teacher has a responsibility for what happens in the lessons but needs to listen to a student a lot.

Erin: Although teaching is still based on a master-apprenticeship tradition, a student and a teacher learn and grow together.

Julia: Teaching should be a democratic interaction, and not include using power.

The teachers also considered it important that the teaching atmosphere felt secure and fostered enjoyment:

Fiona: The goal of teaching is that the student can express what (s)he has inside, which means that the technique and other required things have been learnt. The teacher's responsibility is to create an atmosphere in which a child/student can feel secure, and so good that (s)he wishes to express himself.

Rose: The teaching situation must be confidential and secure; this is the primary consideration, the results are secondary.

James: A good teacher creates an atmosphere and a sense of security for a student to listen to his/her own ideas.

Erin: Teaching should first and foremost bring joy and enjoyment.

Furthermore, according to the teachers, this feeling of security and trust is built by acknowledging and being interested in a student as a person.

Ann: A teacher needs to take into account the student's personality, which in turn creates an interaction in which the student dares to express himself. By trusting a teacher a student dares to be him/herself.

Erin: Interaction has to be student-centred; a teacher has to have an interest in a student as a person.

Visions of didactic relationship

Teachers' visions of good teaching, regarding both instrumental and pedagogical studies, reflected an ideal of teaching that is didactically well prepared and carried out – not viewed through routines and bureaucracy. Also, it was felt that the student should be the focus in the didactic relationship. Most teachers (10) stressed that educational knowledge forms the foundation upon which the teacher is able to build personalised and context specific solutions for diverse individual learners:

Laura: It is especially important that students' skills are developed according to their phases of development. Teaching also needs to take into account a student's personality, learning style, health issues, bodily state, etc.

Julia: The teacher has to find what is difficult for a student, where the problems lie. Teaching also takes into account the student's wishes.

James: Good teaching manages to consider the student's various needs.

Susan: Good teaching starts from where the learner is and takes account of the student's preconditions, skills, and special needs.

Michael: In good teaching you know how to pull the right strings – what works for a certain student in each situation. Teaching has to reflect situational variables.

Erin: Good teaching is student centred, in which the teacher is able to create the correct conditions for each individual student.

Some teachers also emphasised the student's active role in teaching/learning.

Mary: Teaching activates a student's own thinking, and thus offers tools for students to find solutions to problems themselves.

Tom: Good teaching offers tools that allow students to solve problems and challenges by themselves, although it is difficult. Learning happens together, and the teacher also learns.

Rose: Good teaching guides a child to learn in ways that help him/her to practice and learn by him/herself, and at home as well. A teacher needs to recognise a student's learning style and teach accordingly; only then can teaching be methodologically meaningful.

Michael: A teacher does not have all the answers. A teacher can discuss possible solutions with a student, make a note of student's own aims, and try to fit them in the framework of learning.

The following comment by Mary illustrates the recent student-centred perspective in Finnish instrumental teaching, which seems to be strongly reflected in the teachers' visions of good teaching, regarding both pedagogical and didactic relations:

In general students have also become the focus in instrumental teaching – a new development breaking away from substance oriented and repertoire centred teaching. Music institutions have also taken a more human approach, and do not only aim to train professional musicians. Of course it is always down to the teacher to recognise the student behind the music, to put the human interaction in focus.

Visions of the ideal graduate

Since the study of classical music at the institution in question is performance oriented, and most students aim at becoming performers rather than teachers, the jointly shared vision of the ideal graduate was that of a proficient all-around musician – a true master of one's instrument. The teaching profession was seen as a secondary option for the most part, or as an additional or obligatory option, since career opportunities as a performing musician are extremely limited in some instruments.

Michael: The ideal graduate has developed their instrumental skills as far as possible. (S)he has performed a lot, is deeply skilful, and has self-confidence. (S)he also has pedagogical knowledge and experience, although pedagogy plays only a small role in the students' life.

Erin: The ideal graduate from the voice department is a performing singer who gets work in the field. Being a teacher is not considered ideal. The smartest ones of those who primarily want to perform realistically also acquire skills to teach. So, an ideal graduate is a singer who masters voice pedagogical content and understands that singing well and teaching well are different things.

As teaching was regarded almost as an unavoidable part of the students' future profession, basic skills and knowledge in pedagogy were considered an important requirement for all graduating students. However, according to three teachers, pedagogical studies should not take too much time and focus from instrumental studies, which were considered of primary importance:

Julia: A graduating student has to be a versatile musician and performer; has to be skilful orchestra player as well as chamber musician. (S)he also needs broad pedagogical competence, since all performers teach at some point. Pedagogical studies should offer a strong basis for this, but not take too much time.

Since professional performance options vary between instruments, the visions of students' career trajectories varied accordingly and included both performing and teaching; one or the other was seen as primary, although the order was not always evident. For teachers of voice, guitar, strings, percussion and wind instruments, a student teachers' career as a professional performing musician was seen as the primary focus. Despite this, a future career as a freelance musician was considered challenging. Eric noted:

Working as a freelance musician is not a potential or meaningful career option, since there are so few possibilities to have gigs. Of course there are exceptions . . . for those profoundly skilled musicians.

For instruments that have less regular performance options (such as piano), a teaching career was considered the more realistic option for graduates:

Rose: I see a diversified path of teaching as a possible career for my graduates. A realistic starting point is that everyone will work with some pedagogical activities in some environment, for example, in music school, elderly homes, hospitals, etc. It is another thing, however, how fashionable this perspective is for the students.

Overall, teachers saw performing and teaching as concurrent possibilities. Eric expressed this in the following way:

Eric: The work as a musician and a teacher go side by side. For a musician instrumental skills are the most important, and a teacher also needs knowledge of technique and music as well as a pedagogical toolbox.

Some teachers (3) hoped that their students would have more interest in a teaching career. For example, Laura stated:

I wish that more students would concentrate on pedagogy, so that there would be more research and new material in the field. For instance, more teachers who compose and write teaching materials would be desirable. However, there is no clear distinction between teaching and performing.

Some teachers also stated that the programme as it existed was aimed primarily at securing the students' employment as professional musicians, and did not necessarily provide enough pedagogical skills and knowledge, or all-around musicianship (e.g. mastering various styles of music, music subjects and teaching methods), which are crucial in current teaching careers.

Visions of teacher development

The process of teacher development was primarily understood as acquiring a package of skills and knowledge that are partly instrument specific, partly generic and primarily determined by the labour market: the knowledge and skills the graduating students are expected to possess in order to cope with their future teaching profession. For most interviewed teachers (9), the most important skills for the instrumental/vocal teacher were instrument specific:

Julia: The pedagogy is instrument specific. For example, in violin intonation is a question of coordination. In addition, solfège and notation has to be taught differently for violinists.

Eric: A teacher needs a toolbox from which to find a suitable pedagogical tool for each situation.

The most important qualities of an instrumental music teacher were perceived as the teacher's musical and instrumental skills. Mastering one's instrument at a very high level was seen as vital requirement for good instrumental teaching:

Rose: An ideal instrumental teacher masters his/her instrument as well as possible. The understanding of one's instrument should be so profound that one can develop one's craftsmanship further on.

Susan: A teacher must be an absolute master of his/her instrument. (S)he must have taken a grip on his/her musical instrument comprehensively; technically, but also as a tool for musical expression.

According to all interviewed teachers, the mastering of a musical instrument to a very high level not only enables one to understand the technical challenges of playing that particular instrument, but also encompasses concepts and skills related to artistic expression. In this light, musical craft, understanding and artistry were seen as a main source of inspiration for finding the 'right' didactic solutions and thus for good teaching. In addition, the skills of a comprehensive musician, such as an ability to improvise, to arrange, to play chamber music, and to conduct, were also regarded as necessary elements. It was felt

that the required knowledge for future instrumental teachers focused upon a knowledge of music repertoires and teaching methods. Consequently, teacher competence was seen as formed by instrumental and artistic skills, as a sort of *experiential knowledge*, rather than in terms of knowledge related to teaching itself. Yet, half of the teachers (6) in this study stressed that possessing only instrument-specific and musical knowledge would not be enough for future teachers, and that they would *also* need propositional knowledge and a wider understanding, especially related to a child's physical, psychological and social development, as well as learning processes. These teachers thought that the existing pedagogical courses (at the time of the interviews) did not provide this knowledge base to a sufficient degree, and that courses should be developed along those lines.

Eric: Pedagogical skills build primarily on knowledge, as well as on earlier experiences as a musician and a teacher. Knowledge is important, but 'book learning' is not enough.

James: Teaching builds on understanding that results from experience and inner reflection. A teacher needs to have such a deep professionalism that it enables teaching to proceed situationally, to work like a doctor.

Ann: In addition to musical skills, a teacher needs to master theoretical subjects, music history, basics of psychology, aesthetics, philosophy, skills in arrangement and group teaching (for example, for chamber music), creative skills and so on.

Rose: Nothing replaces experience, but the road is shorter if you have knowledge.

All teachers in this study agreed that teacher development never ends. Teacher education was conceived of as offering the basic tools and skills, which would then be in need of constant updating and development during the actual practice of teaching. Julia expressed this in the following way:

You grow into being a good teacher. Graduating is a start, a basis for teacher development, that functions as background knowledge for your own ideas and creativity. And you need a good basis. You may become a good teacher around the age of 50. Yet, in order to get there you have to constantly update your skills and knowledge, go to conferences, etc.

Regarding instrumental music teacher preparation, all teachers in this study emphasised the role of teaching practice. For example, they maintained that teaching practice allows students to have 'real life' experiences of teaching:

Tom: Teaching and interaction can only be learnt in real situations.

Ann: You can learn interaction only with a real student.

Rose: Students should get to experience what teaching really is, how to plan teaching, how to carry it out and assess it, and so forth.

Teaching practice was also perceived as building connections between theory and practical applications; gaining experience in how to respond to real teaching situations, and to learn to think-in-action:

Laura: Many things that a student has learnt in theory, that would otherwise stay that way, become practical; a student teacher is obliged to translate theory into practice, so as to make things understandable to a student.

Julia: In teaching practice, a student teacher starts to think in interaction with his/her student, and also receives immediate feedback from the student.

James: Teaching practice allows a dialogue between what is planned and what really happens – between thinking and doing. It makes a student teacher ponder why something did not work or what could have been done differently.

Fiona: It offers realistic experiences of its daily routines; one has to analyse teaching situations, different ways of learning. On the other hand, it enables a dialogue between planning and an actual teaching situation. Furthermore, lots of things happen in the lesson that cannot be planned in advance.

Four interviewed teachers stressed that the advantage of teaching practice is that it allows one to see the progress of the student and the nature of learning:

Mary: It enables students to follow a pupil's growth and development over a longer period of time, and makes students realise how slowly learning proceeds and things change, and how teaching requires patience and does not involve easy solutions.

Michael: From the student's point of view, it makes it possible to see how slowly learning and change take place; teaching requires patience and there are no easy solutions.

Two teachers emphasised the possibility of testing new ideas and alternative solutions:

Susan: Teaching practice allows one to experiment with various ways of solving problems. By analysing teaching situations and experimenting, one can find alternative ways to teach and solve problems.

James: In teaching practice one can try out even the most outrageous ideas.

Four interviewed teachers stressed that teaching practice may override previous models of teaching, by finding one's own ideas and ways to teach and making one aware of what needs to be developed, thus generating motivation for further learning.

Laura: While making it possible to find one's own way to teach, teaching practice also helps students to become aware of their own strengths and faults in teaching, which in turn formulates further goals for teacher development.

Susan: It activates students to think, to realise how little they still know. After realising how much they are missing, the teacher candidate is much more open to new things and knowledge.

In addition to acquiring the required skills, knowledge and teaching experience, the teachers emphasised the need to develop a strong teacher personality as a part of teacher development. Finding a personalised way to teach was also considered important, in order to motivate and inspire students. It seems that, for the interviewed teachers, personality also implied identity. However, it was interesting that the word *identity* was not mentioned specifically in the interviews at all:

James: The best teachers inspire student with their personality. A teacher has to find a personalised way of doing things.

Fiona: The teachers that are remembered have inspired you in a very personal way, and they are all different. You have to expose yourself, be truly who you are; copying another person would not work.

Eric summed up his understanding of the teacher development process in the following way:

Teacher development, or 'teacherhood', consists of four things: knowledge, skills, experience and personality. Almost everything can be placed in these categories. The work of the musician and that of the teacher go side by side. The ability to play is the most important thing for a musician; a teacher also needs knowledge, for example, of music and technique.

Personal visions

All teachers maintained that their visions related to teaching were personal. These visions were similar but not necessarily the same as their colleagues', and were only in some cases discussed and negotiated with their close colleagues teaching the same instrument. Accordingly, there was no clear agreement between the various visions of teaching, other than that the institution itself did not have a shared vision:

Michael: In this institution we are all in our own lockers; teaching is considered a private issue.

Ann: The department does not have a shared vision; teachers have their own, partly instrument specific visions.

Erin: The department does not have a vision. Different teachers have their own strong visions regarding good teaching. There is very little collaboration.

James: The department does not have a shared vision; each teacher teaches in his/her own way. In pedagogical studies there are a bit more consistent practices.

Rose: The department does not have a vision. Some teachers have their own strong visions of good teaching. There is very little of collaboration.

Susan: There are no shared views in the department, no collaboration.

The teachers' visions were constructed through their own experiences of being a teacher and a musician. The teachers felt empowered by being trusted and given the responsibility to construct the practices of their pedagogical courses according to their own personal strengths, interests and ideas, as guided and restricted by the aims and goals defined in the curriculum. On the other hand, teachers felt a need for additional communication amongst colleagues and programme leaders, although in some departments teacher-initiated discussions had already started over recent years. According to the interviewees, the biggest obstacle to collaboration amongst colleagues was having so many part-time teachers in pedagogical courses. Since most of them were responsible for only a few hours of teaching and were thus occupied with other duties much of the time, they seldom took part in the staff meetings and developmental work. Some teachers also felt that not all teachers were willing to share their pedagogical expertise and/or talk openly about pedagogical issues. Teachers had even experienced tension between colleagues with preferences for different pedagogical approaches.

Discussion

The instrumental teaching tradition is still largely described by scholars in the field as based upon the master–apprenticeship relationship (e.g. Gaunt, 2009; Jørgensen, 2009; Hanken & Nerland, 2011; Burwell, 2013; Callaghan *et al.*, 2012). Coming from – and still being part of – this tradition, it was interesting that almost all the teachers in this study strongly emphasised the importance of a democratic and dialogical relationship between teacher and student, in both instrumental and pedagogical studies. This possibly reflects the more democratic nature of relationships between teachers and students typical in Scandinavian countries (Nerland & Hanken, 2002). A learner-centred approach that ‘reminds us to think about learners rather than only about subject matter’ (Bradford *et al.*, 2005, p. 52) was also emphasised.

The teachers saw the practice of teaching as situational, in terms of the teacher's responsibility to find the best solution for each particular teaching situation. In this respect, several teachers referred to the adaptive actions required of a medical doctor when talking about good teaching practices. Regarding teacher development, teachers mentioned the variety of musical, instrumental and pedagogical skills and knowledge that future teachers would need to succeed. In addition, students were assumed to be creative and innovative, and also to possess social, communicative, educational and a number of other extra-musical skills in order to succeed in the future professional world. Inevitably, one of the biggest challenges facing the higher education sector is the expectation that we must prepare students more carefully for employment in an increasingly competitive environment. The teachers were aware that recent developments in the labour market require music teachers to have a wide range of skills and competencies in order to cope with the new challenges of modern music teaching.

The findings of this study also support Hammerness' (2012) recent findings in the context of Norwegian teacher education, in that the programme or the faculty members in question did not have a shared or negotiated vision of teaching – teachers' visions were personal. This individuality may evolve from the master-apprenticeship tradition. Teachers are used to being 'the masters' and making the decisions concerning teaching on their own, a process not usually to be shared and discussed. Moreover, this strong emphasis on a teacher's personal and individual manner of teaching, a quality emphasised in Finnish music teacher education (Juntunen & Westerlund, 2011), and the teachers' freedom and responsibility to make choices regarding the content and 'methods' of teaching, a feature likewise considered a strength of education in Finland (Niemi *et al.*, 2012), may for its part contribute to the individualised nature of teaching. This, however, should not exclude understanding teaching as a reflective practice (Zeichner, 1994, pp. 9–10; Loughran, 2002, p. 36), necessitating continuous effort for development.

Although the notion of vision did not seem to entirely encapsulate the teachers' thoughts on their practices – a conclusion which Hammerness (2012) also arrived at in her study in a Norwegian context – teachers were content to share their thoughts, and it seemed that the interviews initiated an imagining of *what might be* as a way to develop their teaching.

Concluding remarks

It is commonly understood that good teacher educators equal good teachers (Swennen & van der Klink, 2009, p. 221). The knowledge base about teaching teachers is still highly fragmented, and music teacher educators are in need of a more comprehensive pedagogy of teacher education. This is especially important in instrumental teacher education, which is currently facing new challenges. Some of the key questions, raised and discussed by the Polifonia Working Group (2010, p. 57), require urgent and thoughtful attention: What kind of instrumental/vocal teachers should we be educating? Why are they needed, and by whom? Who will employ them? A clearly articulated vision of teaching and learning contributes to an awareness of the preferred qualities in teaching, and it can contribute strongly to shaping student music teachers' learning by influencing the kinds of conceptualisations, practices, tools and dispositions the professors would like their students to absorb and acquire. A clear vision of teaching can be seen as a strength of a teacher preparation programme, and yet still allow and support personal teaching practices and individual ways of teaching. In addition, the quality of teaching necessarily improves when teachers collaborate – when teachers do not try to manage alone but share challenges and know-how with other teachers.

While the list of necessary competencies for instrumental/vocal teachers seems to be becoming continuously longer and longer, Barnett (2009, 2012) argues that even the profession of *teacher* as well as that of a *doctor* is currently being transformed into something that is no longer controlled. The profession requires more than profound skills and knowledge, since one might have much knowledge and many skills but be inert, inept and ineffective; or one's knowledge and skills may prove to be inadequate tomorrow, he asserts (Barnett, 2012). Gaunt and Westerlund (2013) also maintain that 'higher music education needs to prepare people for both the present and the future, rather than simply

give them the technical or historically-rooted knowledge for a particular subject'. The world has become so super-complex and filled with uncertainty that the characteristics of meaningful higher education have themselves become inherently disputable, as have all other significant matters in such a world. Drawing upon graduates' reflections on the context of higher education, Barnett calls for a cultivation of the characteristics required to manage in a modern world. He includes in such characteristics, for example, a *will* to engage, to learn, and to imagine, a *preparedness* to explore, to keep going forward, and a *willingness* to hold one's self open to experiences (Barnett, 2012). It yet remains a challenge to discover how we may enhance these qualities in our future (music) teachers.

Notes

- 1 This larger, still on-going Nordic research project includes various phases: in the first stage of the project we analysed curricula and syllabuses for instrumental and classroom music pedagogy courses (Authors, 2010), and in the second stage we carried out interviews with the 12 music teacher educators who taught those courses at each academy (four teachers from each) (see Ferm Thorgersen *et al.*, 2010, [in press](#)). The study reported here is an extension of this sub-study, focusing on instrumental pedagogy in the Finnish context. The on-going third phase of the larger project will include observations and a questionnaire survey.

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