

**Improving Systematic Teaching and Learning in  
Folk Music Kantele Pedagogy: A Study of  
Student-Centredness and Pedagogical Tact in  
Higher Music Education**

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Improving Systematic Teaching and Learning in Folk Music <i>Kantele</i> Pedagogy: A Study of Student-Centredness and Pedagogical Tact in Higher Music Education	
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<b>Abstract</b>	
<p>With this study I bring ideas how to improve systematic teaching in folk music <i>kantele</i> pedagogy in higher education and try to find its connection between the concepts of <i>student-centredness</i> and <i>pedagogical tact</i>. I will discuss topics such as structuredness and openness, lesson planning, teaching resources, continuity, technical versus artistic expression development, and stereotypes. My research question is: how to improve systematic teaching and learning in <i>kantele</i> pedagogy from the standpoint of student-centredness and pedagogical tact in higher education?</p> <p>The empirical interview data was collected by three interviews with small <i>kantele</i> and <i>kannel</i> teachers and musicians from Estonia and Finland. The data was analysed through the concepts of <i>pedagogical tact</i> and <i>student-centredness</i> before the discussion on the following categories: structure and openness in <i>kantele</i> pedagogy; pedagogical materials and systematicity; supporting student's professional development and the development of <i>kantele</i> pedagogy in general.</p> <p>The main findings that came out from the research were that openness in folk music teaching is valuable for many reasons. The story behind the player; communication with the audience during the concerts and finding own's artistic expression with that heritage are few examples of it. Balancing between structure and freedom in lesson planning can mean to leave the lesson situation open. It helps to be more present in the situation, opening up opportunities that would help students discover different ways to pursue their goals. Structuredness and openness are not opposites, but it's still important to discuss about the values and the goals in folk music pedagogy, because they might be contradictory. Though the methods of learning folk music differ from classical music, they are formal, because there is the research-oriented aspect behind it. There is no need to standardize everything, simply because the teaching takes place in academy; in fact, the traditional music brings individuality in it.</p>	
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<i>kantele</i> pedagogy, pedagogical tact, student-centredness, systematic teaching	
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# 1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to analyse how to improve systematic teaching and learning in *kantele* pedagogy from the standpoint of student-centredness and pedagogical tact in higher education. *Kantele* has for centuries been the most typical Finnish folk music instrument. Similar instruments, have, however, been found among other Balto-Finnish and Finno-Ugrian peoples, the Balts and Russians. There are many different types of *kanteles* in Finland and each of them have own playing style, specific to the various group or geographical area. Small *kantele* is a diatonic folk music instrument, which was revived (the Karelian *kantele* playing style) in Finland during the 1980s, under the leadership of Heikki Laitinen and Hannu Saha (Kastinen, 2025). Due to the instrument unique specifications (diatonic scale, limited range) and its repertoire, the ways of developing the technique for teaching this instrument differ from other classical instruments that are taught in music schools.

Historically, the folk music *kantele* players have had their own playing style depending on the region, and the tradition has been transmitted orally and informally from families and neighbourhoods (Hill, 2009). Still, there has been some individuality in each player's manner. This combination has often developed into a unique playing style, and a mastery. Could this idea be also applied to current nowadays Master-apprentice model teaching methods in folk music education, where considering the student's individuality could contribute to increased mastery?

As written in the Sibelius Academy's folk music department's homepage (2026): "We research and revive historical singing and playing styles and use them to create something new. We educate multitalented experts in folk music to become independent actors in arts and culture, integrated in the communities and society of today." Despite a shared vision among faculty and leadership regarding the values, beliefs, and goals, the department has not yet implemented a formal, systematic pedagogical framework (Hill, 2019). As a folk music *kantele* (small and *kotikantele*) student in higher education, I have experienced, that this, on the one hand, makes learning as a student versatile, if you have the privilege of learning from the best experts in their

field, but on the other hand, can make the whole learning process quite challenging when it comes to systematicity.

Since the history of teaching the small *kantele* in higher education is quite short and learning this instrument in professional level is not that popular, I find important to touch these topics by interviewing *kantele/kannel* teachers and musicians of higher education from Estonia and Finland.

Therefore, this research might be useful for the small *kantele* teachers and players, who want to find out more about systematic pedagogical approaches in folk music *kantele* pedagogy in higher education; how are the systematic teaching and learner-centred approach related in higher education *kantele* pedagogy and what is the benefit of systematicity for small *kantele* players or teachers who want to develop themselves as versatile as possible. Through asking these questions, I also investigate the role of communication between student and the teacher at folk music higher education level.

In chapter 2, I will introduce the research context by giving an overview of the folk music *kantele* pedagogy at the Sibelius academy and *kantele* instrument in general. Chapter 3 describes the conceptual framework of this study. First, I will present the concept of ‘student-centredness’ and then ‘pedagogical tact’. Chapter 4 presents the implementation of the study: research purpose and question. I will also describe the methods that I used as well as methodology and the process of data analyse and collection. At the end of this chapter, I discuss the ethics of this research. Chapter 5 presents the findings of this research followed by conclusions and discussion in Chapter 6.

## 2 Research context: folk music kantele pedagogy in higher education

The folk music department started as a degree program in Sibelius academy in the fall of 1983. The main reason, why the own line was established was that the department operates at a university and that the primary aim of education is to prepare performing artists and traditional music educators for their life's mission. Research has also gained its focus from that's perspective. The main goals of teaching and research were obvious from the start: on the one hand, on the basis, beyond the two-hundred-year-old art music application of folk music, to create a new kind of folk music of the future. In the latter task, musicians have taken upon themselves all the rights that musicians, including folk musicians, have always had: to create their own new, individual music in subjective clash of tradition and the influences and stimuli around them. The results have been many kinds of fusions. Archives are the most important research object in the study of historical folk music. The purpose is to search for another musician behind the archive source (Laitinen, 2003, pp. 311–313). Department heads and initial students, who often eventually joined the faculty, were granted the liberty to develop their unique folk music curricula and instructional techniques (Hill, 2009).

### *Kantele*

Finnish *kantele* and Estonian *kannel* belong to Baltic Psaltery instrument large family. Sounds are produced on them by plucking a string stretched between two fixed points. The oldest, single piece of wood carved *kantele* forms' number of strings varied between 5 and 15, and the so-called box *kanteles* with more than 20 strings, came with the changes in music culture by the mid-19th century. New playing techniques were adapted to the new music (Kastinen, & Piirinen, 2011, p. 4). The instrument increased in size and technical improvements were made (Asplund, 1983, p. 80).

*Kantele* is played in folk music, art music and popular music, in a multitude of ways appropriate to these contexts (Rahkonen, 1989, p. 7). As previously mentioned, this research focuses on *kantele* pedagogy in terms of folk music. In Sibelius academy's folk department, there are possibilities to specialise in small *kanteles*, box *kanteles* or modern *kanteles* (*kotikantele*, concert *kantele*).

The official status of the Sibelius Academy has brought many new challenges to the *kantele*. *Kantele* makers are trying to develop *kanteles* with a stronger sound, or *kanteles* with a tuner lever mechanism that works more precisely and accurately. Contemporary players already have the opportunity to specialize in particular *kantele* model or playing technique, for example, Arja Kastinen, who earned her doctorate in *kantele*, specializes in hollow-out *kantele* and Kalevala improvisation (Saha, 2006, p. 418).

### *The background of different kantele types*

There is a variety of different *kantele* types in Finland and each of them have own playing style, specific to the various group or geographical area. Roughly, these diverse playing styles can be separated into two categories: those suitable to smaller *kanteles* carved from a single piece of wood and those suitable to bigger *kanteles* constructed from multiple pieces of wood (Rahkonen, 1989, p. 73). Haapavesi, Saarijärvi, and Perhonnjokilaakso are noted *kantele* regions in historical records, primarily because of the research conducted by Finnish ethnomusicologist Erkki Ala-Könni. Even though these areas are well-documented, the *kantele* was prevalent throughout Finland, with its traditions being maintained, relocated, or lost across different locales (Tenhunen, 2010).

### *Small kantele*

Regarding old plucking technique, Väisänen has written, that in the beginning of the 1900's different *kantele* players used different fingerings. The fingering may be changed according to the tonic. Kastinen and Pirinen (2011) point out that players' personality affects the sound, because different playing techniques able to get amazing amount of different timbres out of the *kantele*. These new techniques can be used for example in new music, improvisation and chord-based variations. The ancient tradition is kept alive by encouraging players to use improvisation and variation.

## 3 Conceptual framework

In this chapter, I introduce the concepts of *student-centredness* and *pedagogical tact*. I will also present the main theoretical viewpoints for these concepts as regards my paper.

### 3.1 Student-centredness as holistic approach to kantele pedagogy

Music education is viewed holistically as an essential part of achieving a fulfilled life. When considering what is required to live a meaningful life through music, Elliott and Silvermann (2015, pp. 17-18) argue that the primary focus of music pedagogy ought to be individual empowerment, “to develop the abilities and dispositions required to pursue important life goals and values for themselves and others“, heading to so-called “human flourishing“ through inventive, participating music creation (or education).

A music educator acts as a professional promoter who supports an individual's artistic and creative development, alongside their learning and self-expression. This pedagogical approach, which centres on the student and effective teaching practices, is viewed holistically as something that involves the person's entire self (Huhtinen-Hildén & Pitt, 2018, pp. 6–7). Sawyer (2011) sees teaching as an improvisational activity, constantly evolving instead of reaching a fixed destination. This professional field seeks to maintain a precise equilibrium between structure and improvisation. Numerous teachers worry that the current focus on standardized testing has led to a decline of creative teaching and learning. The increasingly widespread use of script-based teaching methods, sometimes referred to as direct instruction, is especially concerning as it threatens the equilibrium found in high-quality education. Every teacher and every school face the difficulty how to find the balance of creativity and structure to best support student learning. Thinking of teaching as improvisational activity emphasizes collaborative and spontaneous nature of successful classroom practice sheds light on the link between lesson plans and actual instruction and explains why teaching is improvisational activity (Sawyer, 2011, pp. 1-24).

Custodero (2010) writes, “The ease in which music can be associated with strong feelings has implications for music learners, suggesting both much potential for personal growth and also a need to approach musical choices with caution and sensitivity” (p. 66). Learning outcomes are primarily focused on the outcomes. Teaching professionalism has been approached as the ability to plan lessons carefully. However, it can be problematic to focus on outcomes, because this method may not meet the needs of the students, encourage their engagement and sensitive creative dialogues. In contrast, a clear structure for the lesson is also important for the structure in the learning process. (see Huhtinen-Hilden, 2017).

Instead of setting learning goals, there would be more using the idea of developing learning opportunities, which would open up new possibilities. Instead of emphasizing what learners should achieve through activities, there would be more interest in opening up opportunities that would help them discover different ways to pursue their goals (see Huhtinen-Hilden, 2017). The “quality” practice often doesn’t consider the caring elements of teaching; however the for loving bond between teacher and student is fundamental (Huhtinen-Hildén & Pitt, 2018, p. 44). We rarely question the concept of quality practice, though it is so common in education. Gunilla Dahlberg, Peter Moss and Alan Pence (2007) dispute that quality is a task to be performed rather than an idea to be critically examined. They view "quality" as stemming from Enlightenment thought aligning with contemporary understandings of children and education. It is a socially created idea that generates a quality-centric discussion focused on quantifiable results.

One reason, what hinders student-centredness in education system, is that systems are aimed at the total control of what human beings do. Some policy makers want schooling to be resilient, secure, and foreseeable – they see it through statistics and performance data and want it to be secure in every way. Biesta (2013) states that education always includes a risk. The risk is there because education involves encounter between human beings, not robots. In case there would be a perfect match between “input” and “output” and we would take the risk out of education, then most likely we would take out education altogether (Biesta, 2013, pp. 1–2).

### **3.2 Pedagogical tact as a means for ethical teaching in kantele pedagogy context**

Ethos, a term from Greek, denoted originally to “habitat” or “place” as well as to a “state of being” reflecting the inner source of a place. This can be compared to the educational atmosphere that governs there (Van Manen, 2015, p. 181). Ethics is centred on critical reflection and purposeful action, acting as a guide for personal choices that resolve vital life queries. It invites to assess life's direction and determine what it means to truly 'flourish' according to our principles. Due to the engaging with the world through shared contexts and languages, ethics is inherently social, practical, and reflective. While personal ideals vary, the ethical choices concern the daily challenges faced in personal and interpersonal lives, making it a cornerstone of both individual identity and social belonging. This centrality extends to the musical and educational spheres, where ethics guides the development of our musical and educational paths, shaping how we form identities, musical collaborations and our educative teacher-student encounters (Elliott, & Silverman, 2014, pp. 19-20). Professional ethics is primarily centred on the development and advancement of standards of good practice and codes of conduct within various professional disciplines and practice (Van Manen, 2015, p. 181).

Van Manen (2015, p. 17) points out that pedagogy is the ability to actively distinguish between what is good or appropriate and what is less appropriate or inappropriate for children or adolescents, which he summarizes with the concept of the pedagogical moment. This is the precise moment when pedagogical action is needed. To develop a tactful teacher, it is necessary to cultivate pedagogical thoughtfulness and approach each situation with respect and attentiveness. Tactful educators have developed the ability to approach every situation, child, and individual life with caring attentiveness. Tactfulness is a sort of pedagogical shape, the capacity to deal immediately with unexpected situations (Van Manen, 2015, p. 91).

The concept of pedagogical tact refers to the active alertness, ethical awareness and practical adaptability that teachers show during daily interactions with students. Thus, its practical importance is not found in instrumental action, efficiency, or technical efficacy (Van Manen, 1997, 2014).

## 4 Implementation of the study

In Chapter 4, I present the research task and question. I will also describe the methodology and methods of data collection and analysis. At the end, I discuss the ethics of this research.

### 4.1 Research task and question

The research task is to identify and analyse, how are the systematic teaching and learner-centred approach related in higher education folk music *kantele* pedagogy. Therefore, my research question is:

How to improve systematic teaching and learning in folk music *kantele* pedagogy from the standpoint of student-centredness and pedagogical tact in higher education level?

The three main issues in folk music *kantele* pedagogy that I am focused on this research, are: 1) structure and openness; 2) pedagogical materials and systematicity, and 3) supporting student's professional development and the development of *kantele* pedagogy in general.

### 4.2 Methodological starting points

This paper is a qualitative study which typically utilizes inductive techniques for knowledge construction and meaning generation (Leavy, 2014). Researchers use this approach to investigate social phenomena, interpret the significance people assign to their experiences or surroundings, and develop a profound understanding of social existence. The core principles of qualitative research emphasize the value of individual perspectives and thorough data collection from limited groups, making it particularly suitable for exploratory or explanatory research goals (Leavy 2017, p. 5).

Since the topic of this final paper is under-researched, it is exploratory. Exploratory research allows researchers to address missing information regarding novel or poorly understood subjects, or to look at them through a fresh lens to produce original findings. If a review of existing literature reveals a lack of data, this deficiency typically suggests that an exploratory study is necessary (Leavy, 2023, p. 5). I used the semi-

structured interviews for collecting the data, where the questions were open-ended to examine the topic as thoroughly as possible.

### **4.3 Data collection**

For this research, I carried out three interviews with small *kantele* and *kannel* teachers and musicians from Estonia and Finland. All of them play or teach other types of *kanteles/kannels* as well. Two of them work as pedagogues in higher education level and one is an academy-level student. I chose the participants based on those criteria, to research this topic from the perspective of student and teachers both, and to give it wider perspective by interviewing experienced teachers from neighbouring countries.

Two interviews were held in person, and one was online via Zoom. Participants were informed about the research topic but not the interview questions (see the interview guide in Appendix 1). Two of interviewees answered the questions in Estonian and one in English. The interview had 16 questions which were divided into three different subcategories. The subcategories were: structure and openness in *kantele* pedagogy; pedagogical materials and systematicity; supporting student's professional development and the development of *kantele* pedagogy in general.

### **4.4 Data analysis**

The data analysis is based on qualitative content analysis (Leavy, 2023, p. 159). Two of the participants were interviewed in their mother tongue – Estonian – and one in English. As English isn't native language of the last interviewee, then, rather than concentrating on specific words, I prioritized the information found in descriptions and clarifying explanations.

From each interview, an audio file was collected. The length of the interviews varied between 47-120 minutes. To transcribe the interview from the audio file to a written document, I used Microsoft Word's transcribing tool. When correcting this automatic transcription, I started to group the data according to the three different themes of interview guide: structure and openness; pedagogical materials and systematicity; supporting student's professional development and the development of *kantele* pedagogy in general. A coding process was used to reduce and classify the data generated (Leavy,

2023, p. 165). To facilitate this, I highlighted the phrases that answer to the research question. As codes I used these keywords that rooted from the three different themes; for example, *openness*, *values* and *continuity*. Findings were finally reported and put in dialogue with the conceptual framework.

## **4.5 Research ethics**

The research is conducted according to the principles of Finnish National Board on Research Integrity guidelines TENK 2023 and TENK 2019. The reference to those sources was necessary because researchers operating in Finland must comply with the ethical principles of research with human participants (TENK 2019, p. 48). First, the participants were asked verbally if they wish to take part in the interview and after their confirmation, the Participant information sheet, the Participant consent form, and Data protection form were sent to the participants. A printed or digital version of them was read and signed by the interviewees before the interview. Research participants' privacy is protected by pseudonymization instead of using their real names. All participants took part in the survey voluntarily and they have right to discontinue or withdraw their participation in the research at any time (TENK 2019, p. 51).

All the publications used for writing this research is cited and brought out in the reference list. Most of the literature used is peer reviewed articles and published books.

## 5 Findings

My findings are grouped into three main topics. First, I analyse the participants' answers that concern structure and openness in *kantele* pedagogy. Second, I describe their opinions on pedagogical materials and systematicity in *kantele* pedagogy. Finally, I examine participant's thoughts on supporting student's professional development and the development of *kantele* pedagogy in general.

### 5.1 Structure and openness in kantele pedagogy

When considering what is required to live a meaningful life through music, Elliott and Silvermann (2015, pp. 17-18) argue that the primary focus of music pedagogy ought to be individual empowerment, heading to so-called "human flourishing" through inventive, participating music creation.

Starting from the beginning, my interest was, how the interviewees understand the concept of student-centredness. All of them agreed that the students are very individual and that learning journey goes through the student, and in artistic education, the person who is studying, is indeed in the centre. Sometimes, it might be that teacher adjusts the curriculum or plans according to the student development level. Teacher 1 describes as follows:

All students are very individual and in fact, often it doesn't help what I think, how we should move forward or what I want, that it will only become clear during the work, that I have some kind of goal, but this journey then goes through that student, what their abilities are and it may also be that I am not used to it, but what I now have to get used to, because circumstances have changed, that students are very sensitive. (Teacher 1)

Student-centredness as a term is connected to holistic approach to music education, which sees learning music as an underlying element of living a fulfilled life. As Teacher 2 states:

...that sounds very much of the things that I value [...] That's an artistic happening what we have there when we have a lesson. [...] I'm teaching when it's

something that hinders the artistic expression. [...] And then it can be that to achieve that, there is a need to do very detailed...For example, playing a technical thing...but sometimes it's the technical or the detail might be in the mind or of the attitude or the fears or whatever happens in the mind or in the body. [...] My feeling is that this is maybe more holistic. [...] Also learning tunes and learning the cultural heritage that gives us tools to have artistic expression. [...] But for me, it's key interest to incorporate that to the teaching. And I feel that this part is the holistic thing to have in the timeline, to have a background. [...] And that is something I also want to incorporate in the education and I'm trying to give like the standing place and place for the artist to be in this field. (Teacher 2)

A similar opinion comes from Teacher 1, who thinks that students are holistically supported, when they get a real feel of the environment, or experience of expeditions - providing students with that background context. Also, visiting the village musician at home or organizing his workshop at a college.

When asking about the structuring elements in lessons, the participants described balancing between structuredness and freedom. In terms of structure, they highlighted elements such as having a broader plan; or in the beginning providing students with some techniques for certain songs that have specific fingerings. More specifically, Student brought out that if there's a plan, it helps you know what's coming next - you have clear goals and a clear direction. In terms of freedom, Teacher 2 brought out that it is also planning when leaving the lesson situation open, because it helps to be more present in the situation and reflect or hear, what is the situation or what are the goals of the student. Sawyer (2011) sees teaching as an improvisational activity, constantly evolving instead of reaching a fixed destination. This professional field seeks to maintain a precise equilibrium between structure and improvisation.

All the interviewees agreed that the role of oral tradition is important in folk music pedagogy, though notation or recorded archive material are just tools to help us go on finding own's artistic expression with that heritage. It might be related to the importance of role model, which sometimes gives motivation to get more skills from the need of artistic expression.

Yeah, for me the artistic expression is the boss that leads. [...] But if there is something, for example, in the hand positions or that kind of things, or, for example, tuning, or how to maintain the instrument so that it sounds good, I think all these come there immediately if the artistic expression can't come out without making these better. (Teacher 2)

Student and Teacher 1 views about the balance between technical and expressional exploration in lessons were more conservative. Student answered that in her lessons, they're just searching for that traditional playing style – how to make it more precise and dance-like. They don't really engage with that creative aspect in that sense. Teacher 1 answered, that at the beginning, you need to get a handle on the technical side of things and then can move on to finding your own style or using it freely in your own songs. But how to find your own style and use it freely in your own playing? Teacher 2 brings out the importance of finding out what important is there in the cultural heritage and how the artistic expression is possible with that:

And it can be so that to own it and in order to understand it and in order to incorporate it in one's own expression, one needs to imitate and one needs to play or sing or dance a lot to understand it, to feel what is here for me. And that's something the teacher can't say. (Teacher 2)

This relates to Huhtinen-Hilden's idea of student-centredness: Instead of setting learning goals, there would be more using the idea of developing learning opportunities, which would open up new possibilities. Instead of emphasizing what learners should achieve through activities, there would be more interest in "opening possibilities for learning" that would help them discover different ways to pursue their goals (see Huhtinen-Hilden, 2017).

One interesting thing that came out from the answers, was that an advantage in learning folk music is that it doesn't necessarily have to come from the school – student need players to whom they could look up to. Especially, when there are teachers who get stuck at a certain level, and from where they don't look further or move on to see what other possibilities there are. Then the student might be inspired by an artist to do it also, if no one is teaching that to her.

## 5.2 Pedagogical materials and systematicity in kantele pedagogy

The material used for teaching or learning that were brought out by the interviewees were archival recordings (Student, Teacher 1&2), folk dance experience, but also understanding the historical background of the players or regional characteristics (Teacher 1&2). Teacher 2 also uses the publications of some albums that are new recordings of archive material to give a perspective how other artists are using this material. More specifically, he pointed out using A.O. Väisänen publication *Kantele- ja jouhikkosävelmiä* and then the same material published in another form by A. Kastinen and others in *Kizavirzi*. Using improvisation as part of his lessons feels natural for him, because it's part and starting point of the material (a tune or motive from the archive), and to give example, how the freedom and the material is combined. And then there is the question is how not to ill-treat the material:

...our motivation is different probably [from the collectors] because the time changes, the culture around us is different. Because the material is not neutral. It has things in it. And we are not neutral. So then we can reflect that what is our relationship to the material. The material is not our boss [...] in a way, we are the bosses for our art. [...] I feel that that's the highest value. I don't fear that the tradition and cultural heritage is going to be ruined. And that's connected to the material. I value it, but it doesn't mean that I couldn't use it any way I like. And of course, then there is the questions of how to value it and how to not ill-treat it. That's another thing. But as artistic material, I feel that you're free to use it any way you like. (Teacher 2)

The following question about adapting the teaching material links with the above-mentioned thought. For teacher 2, adaption means how we try to understand the books and how to use them, how to play without the materials, how to create own material and how to both use it and not use it. Because it's obvious that *Kantele- ja jouhikkosävelmiä* book is not meant for teaching or learning it, it's meant for preserving it.

Teacher 1 describes, how she first took small *kantele* learning materials from Finland, Latvia and Lithuania and then tried to adapt the playing technique accordingly for Estonian tunes. It was different with the diatonic *kanteles*; there were still village musicians alive from whom one could learn. She teaches many instruments—small ones, chromatic ones, diatonic ones, and all sorts of variations. They each have such rich

worlds of their own that she really likes being able to bring them all together in performing situation and adapt the repertoire according to the playing opportunities of each instrument. The Student has been involved in the adaptation process by making imitations of Estonian diatonic accordion, which instrument player her teacher is. She finds it interesting and positive to learn different embellishments of this specific instrument. Teacher 2 describes how he wouldn't start right away learning from the materials, though as a learning method, it can be very valuable. He thinks so, because it's so far away from that tradition. A similar thought about combining traditional folk transmission approaches with more formalised teaching resources in her lessons came from Teacher 1:

This folk music aspect kind of gives me the right to say that I don't have to conform to the standards of classical or academic music, simply because I'm in college; in fact, this traditional music brings so much individuality to it, and when we go to watch a musician, we watch that musician. We don't immediately start teaching or analysing it, saying you're playing wrong or you're speaking wrong; I have to be able to fit myself into that system and translate what he's saying into a language I can understand. That's what I kind of demand from these students as well—that they should actually master these various systems, or at least accept that one is the one you use to write your research and, so to speak, put it down on paper, but the second is how you interact with the musician or with this traditional music material, because there you can't just go in with the same approach. (Teacher 1)

Discussing about combining traditional folk music transmission approaches with more formalised teaching resources, an important issue – education attitudes and stereotypes that we have learned – came up. Teacher 2 acknowledges, that he as an artist and as a teacher, needs to again and again think out to unravel that what is actually what he's thinking or feeling about something; Do I want to teach those attitudes also to the students or do I want not to teach them? And how to do it if I want to change it? I think the Student reflection is a good example of trying to be more aware of attitudes in terms of learning resources in higher education:

It's kind of unnatural when you think about folk music, the fact that we analyse it, interpret it, and study it—it's already like a form of intellectualization, so it's already very formal or structured. It's no longer like I

hear a guy playing and I just play along with him—it's long since moved so far beyond that, because we're dealing with something that's also from a bygone era. Well, it's so historical, so in that sense it's actually very formal. Well, I mean, some things are already very well established here at the school—ethnomusicology is so strongly present, acting as a supportive backdrop.

I'd say it is formal after all, because, well, it's just like a different way of learning, whether I learn from sheet music or by ear, but there's still a structure to it. Well, that's what I'm dealing with now. For example, with a certain type of instrumental piece or learning by ear—in that sense, I think it's very formal. (Student)

The Student confirms that informal learning materials like peer-to-peer learning play important role in her studies, though there aren't any other *kannel* students in the department. Therefore, she has much thinking but also independence in the process when adapting other repertoire for her instrument (for example, in a duo with violin). As a diatonic *kannel* player, you often need to adapt the material when playing with other instruments. Teacher 1 gives example, that she is trying to figure out how to adapt the song to the *kannel*, not the other way around. She's not trying to tackle some super complicated piece on the *kannel* just to improve her technique. Another common learning environment for folk musicians is a jam session, but as Teacher 2 points out, these are often challenging for *kantele* players, because of the instrument's soft sound.

In terms of teaching resources, both teachers brought out the influences on their teaching from their own background as a musician. As being a professional musician, but not professional folk musician, Teacher 1 sees everything through the eyes of a professional musician. In fact, she doesn't see a problem in keeping them separate or doing at the same time. Teacher 2 points out that he has a music education background and therefore has a knowledge, what is music education, practicing, what is a mistake and an actual achievement. Besides archive recordings, supporting tool can be also recording your own playing:

Because the improvisation as a performance and artistic method and compositional method is such that so many things happen at the same

time, in a moment. [...] So it might be challenging to go back and think what happened, how it went, what was valuable, how would this become your art? The question is not what is bad and what is good. The question is that what happened? What was there? What can I do? Do I get inspiration? [...] Your focus might be, for example, how you feel, did you do mistakes or did you have good ideas or whatever. But there are so many other aspects there that I think a recording can help in that. [...] It can separate your memory and your feelings and fears and joy and whatever were there from what it sounded. [...] It could be also something like deeply valuable in your artistic expression, but you wouldn't recognize that it's actually there. And I think recording can help in that, that you realize that how to go on, but also that you already had it. That's my strong feeling. (Teacher 2)

Asking about method books, Teacher 1 answers that she has learned folk music on her own (through visiting many workshops, learning from living village musicians etc.), and therefore this kind of person-to-person learning and the story behind the player has been important for her or, in other words, if she has heard a tune from someone, she always makes sure to mention that person. She doesn't teach folk music so much that she has to pore over books; she has enough material to teach it directly.

Regarding the question about ensuring continuity and progression, both teachers answer, that they as a person change and it influences how they teach. Therefore, for Teacher 2, continuity is in the communication - being in the present and listening to the situation is the thing he needs to rely on. This relates to Van Manen's idea about pedagogical tact: To develop a tactful teacher, it is necessary to cultivate pedagogical thoughtfulness and approach each situation with respect and attentiveness. Tactful educators have developed the ability to approach every situation, child, and individual life with caring attentiveness (Van Manen, 2015, p. 91).

For Student, the continuity depends on how much she puts effort on the learning, and if the teacher already knows what they might do next, then that's fine. At the same time, she admits, that the teacher has an important role in guiding this process. As Teacher 2 expresses, often, when the learning process starts, both the student and the teacher might have very empty plates, except that there is some focus area, which gives

the starting point. It can be challenging in the start, especially for the student if there is the feeling that teacher is not giving exercises or clear things that what they are doing. In this situation, he tries to accept that they are still seeking, what to do with the material, and they are both exploring it as learners and teachers. He joins with Student's thoughts about the student's own responsibility - if the goal is to have artistic education, then the goal is that the student finds out the decision.

When asking about a need more structured learning materials for small *kannel* players, Teacher 1 answers that if we had materials that were, pedagogically speaking, step-by-step above, that would certainly be very exciting to see. She admits, that has fewer teaching experience in higher education, therefore her answer stems out from teaching younger students:

We don't have them [teaching method books], so of course we start with simpler tunes—or rather, I'd say, simpler techniques. And as for what I have, I can't really describe it at a college level, but if I have a 7-year learning cycle with the kids, then I start with chord playing, then comes fingering, and then comes improvisation, and with a larger *kannel*, you can play the same piece for maybe 7 years, and the whole time it develops—well, it's also structured for me, or in other words, you start with the simpler stuff but still reach a second level by the end of your studies, but we don't have that kind of material directly—we create the materials ourselves.

Teacher 2 doesn't have a big need for more structured pedagogical materials for small *kantele* in his own teaching, because for this artistic education, it's the artistic expression and artist's work what he's teaching. He gives example, that small *kantele* pedagogy has very likely something about improvisation, and if there is material without the improvisation, he thinks it's a bit lacking. The Student, as being herself a teacher at the same time, values freedom in teaching folk music, but at the same time still likes, when there are, for example, certain thematic blocks like a specific technical approach or the music of a certain region.

Systematicity in learning relates with the independent work. When asking about developing as a small *kantele* player as versatile as possible, Teacher 2 pointed out the

importance of trying out many kinds of playing techniques, styles and different types of *kanteles*:

But one of the really important things is, I think, the sounds of so different instruments, so that the one's own mind and body have experience of different musical sounds and shades and colors and volumes and expressing possibilities. [...] Because the variation is not only in the music, it's also in the instruments. And from there, a very important part of the variation comes to your hands and to your mind, because the colors and the possibilities of the sound and rhythmical and all kinds of possibilities come there. [...] And how to do it? It's, of course, not always possible to have lots of instruments and to have access to those. [...] One way of doing it, also there is a limitation of playing it, is to see what is in the museums. And that has been for me also very inspirational and like educational [...] to see that like amazing variation with this instrument.

[...] So how to choose? That comes down to your own motivation and trying to hear your own voice. But that's how you can hear it. [...] But then it's a very strong experience that I didn't know that I am like that. The instrument itself gave it to me.

And also, if possible, if you have access, to give time, because you can't immediately know. It's the same thing with, for example, the Karelian *kantele* tradition, the tunes and the materials. It's not very familiar music to us. We are not surrounded with that kind of music. [...] And of course, then there is the connection. What is your connection to that specific instrument? Is it from your home area? Is it elsewhere? What is the connection?

The Student answered the same question by saying that, playing with other musicians, forming ensembles, or joining a music group, any workshops or camps, playing music to the dance, going to concerts to listen to other musicians have supported her development. Teacher 1 joins with the support for culture of jam sessions and mutual admiration—it always gives the whole thing a sense of purpose. The students really come

alive during these jams and gatherings, and that's a value in itself and something that a school system doesn't give you.

### **5.3 Supporting student's professional development and the development of kantele pedagogy in general**

When asking about assessing student's progress in the context of folk music education, which values both openness and structured learning, Teacher 1 replies that these are represented equally and that they could be given equal weight. Teacher 2 also points out the possibility of their coexistence:

I would like to comment that there is probably not one way or what folk music education means. And it's good that there is not one way, at least in my mind. I feel that it's good that there is no goal to standardize everything. But then it's also good to discuss about the values and the goals and then there might be goals or values that are contradictory and that's fine. I don't feel that it's they can't coexist. (Teacher 2)

Student brings out the assessing process more precisely:

Every semester, we have this kind of major exam where we must play two pieces of our own choosing. And there's a whole list of pieces we've covered that semester, and then one of the teachers on the committee gets to choose, to say, "Now play this piece," and then you must be ready to perform that piece too—everything that's written on paper. In the fall, I had over 10 pieces listed there, and I had to be ready for anything, but it was a good challenge.

Teacher 2 adds how he deals with these things in teaching situation: he tries to open the teaching during the lessons as well and point out that teaching is what is happening there. When he chooses to leave some things very open, then he might explain why he does it, to give some understanding to the situation. He feels that that's part of the artistic education, that we can be critical about the situation what we have and the decisions, also the teaching decisions. He feels that if the goal is to have artistic education, then the goal is that the student finds out the decision. He might, if the student

asks some instructions, sometimes bounce back the question. Then if he feels that there is a tension with that, then he tries to explain why he does it.

All the above relates to the situation where a person already studies the *kantele* at a higher level, but are the factors that influence their decision to pursue or not pursue this field of study?

When thinking about Finland, Teacher 2 describes that *kantele* is one of the most usual instruments, because of the schools that children are playing it. The reason behind it might be that it is possible to almost immediately start playing. The aim is not in the developing professional skills, but to play immediately.

If we look what kind of music we hear as a professional music, it's very hard to imagine based on that, that what the professional could do with the, let's say, five string instrument. [...] if you are a small *kantele* professional, then probably that cultural heritage in some way is part of your professional life. And then it comes to that cultural heritage which *kantele* and *jouhikko* and *runo*-singing are part, that it never disappeared because it's still there but it's so minor wave in our flood of music - people really don't know that it exists. So, I think it comes also to that, that how to become interested in that if you don't know...

[...] maybe one way would be to affect the school education with the instrument. But that [cultural heritage] is not the main motivation to have it in the schools. So, I don't know how well it fits to that education, because the music itself is the reason why *kantele* is there. It's not there because of the cultural heritage. That kind of improvisation or that kind of tunes or styles, it's probably present a bit there, but that's not what is the goal to make children and young people to learn that.

[...] In the folk music education in Finland, that was the discussion when the education started, which way to support that music in Finland, that should it start from the schools and music institutes and then to the higher. But that was probably obvious that to reach that from the ground up to the higher level, it probably will never happen. So we need teachers. And that's why we need higher education if we want to change

something in the other levels. So if we then wait to schools to start teaching this, I wouldn't trust that it happens. So we need some people to go other way around.

[...] Well, I value the cultural heritage and the history and that all very much in *kantele*, but maybe my viewpoint is the artistic work and the artistic expression. And I feel that there are so strong possibilities for artists to be artists with that instrument.

Teacher 1 supports the idea, that there is quite broad base of people playing the *kantele*, but that doesn't seem to produce any really good players. However, in her opinion, they have some complicated arrangements in the Folk Music Celebration as part of the Song Festival in Estonia, that these groups can play. So, it's really the die-hard fans who end up at the university, which isn't a bad thing, because she doesn't think that they would have a job to offer in Tallinn. If there were a surplus of the small *kantele* players, it would be difficult for them to find work. The graduates are offered kindergarten teacher positions and little interest clubs, but also, for example, a job at a university. She thinks that if they've graduated from college, earned a master's or doctorate, then they're supposed to be teaching at a college, but they end up falling through the cracks again. Therefore, Teacher 1 concludes that youngsters still make different choices; they don't go to college to study that instrument, maybe partly because, it's a tough road to success, and there's no point in studying it if you can't do it any other way.

The Student joins with Teacher 2 thoughts, that people might have a certain impression on small *kannel*, that you can't really do much more than playing three chords with it. The fact that it's played like that in music class, or in kindergarten, may leave that image. Despite that, maybe for some students, it sparks an interest to keep learning. To improve the situation, Student suggests having more role models - players who would break the boundaries and make this music reach wider audience. How could that be done? She brings out that small *kannel* festival in Estonia is already a great thing—especially if there are workshops, theme days or events dedicated to the *kannel*, so that those who are even slightly interested can go there and get some new inspiration. Teachers should take their students outside from school and encourage them to

participate in competitions, attend camps, and join dance clubs, so they can see what the real world is like.

The music pedagogue serves as a professional promoter who facilitates another's artistic and creative growth, as well as their learning and self-expression. By focusing on the students and the teaching methods that support learning, pedagogy is understood through a holistic perspective that is embodied in the entire being of the person (Huhtinen-Hildén & Pitt, 2018, pp. 6-7).

Teacher 1 has conflicting feelings about this statement:

It's kind of melancholy with this modern sensibility and student-centred approach—that I don't dare to say anything, because I don't know how it'll affect the student, and it might really throw some people off track. And well, God forbid that should happen, if for some reason they... stop playing music, I don't want to do that. [...] I don't impose my will on the student, as in an artistic sense. [...] There aren't really any complaints about the artistic quality of the performance, especially in the context of folk music, as people seem to agree with this student's concept. But I'll tell you, I've only had two graduates there in Viljandi - the ones I'm responsible for. Later, all have been separated with other teachers.

Teacher 2 notes, that it sounds very familiar to him – he feels that in teaching art, he wants to try to make things move. If one thinks about the word promotion, promoter, there is draw, so doing something for something to make it happen, and then there is motion. That's why promotion is a good word for it in his opinion. For Student, her teacher is like a mentor and expert, both as a musician and as a scholar of traditions, who guides her and she has possibility to ask how to handle a situation.

All the participants value the openness in folk music pedagogy. The Student says, that there's [in academy] an increasing focus on making it more research-oriented and in such a way, it's very structured, and not only open. There's an ethnomusicological – and, so to speak, scientific, aspect behind it. Teacher 1 likes that the openness in folk music is currently being appreciated. Even in classical music studies, an improvisation is now introduced, performers communicate with the audience during their concerts, but in traditional music, it has always been a part of the tradition—it's about openness,

about interacting freely with the audience. Therefore, she thinks it's better to preserve the good what's already achieved in the folk music education.

Teacher 1 hopes, that structuredness and openness are not opposites, that the openness could be part of the structure. And if that's possible, both should be developed more and have structures that are open. When he thinks of his own teaching, when he's saying that he tries to decide in the moment, he has some plans, but probably he won't follow them if the situation is different. In this case, he wouldn't say that there is no structure, he would say that there is the structure. He brings out interesting parallel between improvisation and teaching:

I feel that teaching and playing is very similar. That I have ideas, I have inspiration, I have plans, I have practiced some things, I have experienced some things, and this is what I use when I improvise either music or the teaching. I feel that I am improvising the teaching, but it doesn't mean that I wouldn't plan, or I wouldn't think about it or practice or work for it and like for a longer time. And I don't know how much does this come from the cultural heritage, but it's easy to see that because it's so important, at least for me, this kind of improvisation to have like different motives and different expressions, and then repetition, and then your own, not only input, but your own view to it. And doing it in the moment, but still have it like planned, even if you don't go according to the plan. The one plan is to abandon the plan anytime it's needed. So, then it goes according to the plan. So, I suppose there is a link to that culture.

The Student's thoughts on how the cultural context of folk music influence her approach to structure and openness in teaching *kantele* pedagogy, were following:

What I've really come to realize is that here at school I understand the necessity of structure and the knowledge that comes with it. But it seems to me that this cultural mindset encourages the opposite. [...] Who's more artistic, who's more original, who appeals to the masses—yeah, in that sense, it's a very liberal approach. But well, maybe that's a good thing because otherwise, less people would learn or engage with folk music—and unfortunately, that might help, since there aren't many of

those “nerds,” so to speak. [...] I think that's exactly how it affects a lot of people—it makes them feel free to approach things that way.

## 6 Conclusions and discussion

The aim of this research was to examine the connections between folk music *kantele* systematic teaching, student-centredness and pedagogical tact in higher education. Through asking the research question – how to improve systematic teaching and learning in *kantele* pedagogy from the standpoint of student-centredness and pedagogical tact in higher education – I got multiple answers, based on what I can conclude, that there is not necessarily a need for more systematic teaching, because the openness in folk music is a value that brings the individuality in it.

Although three interviewees are small amount to understand the full picture, the data is rich and helps to understand better the pedagogical choices behind folk music teaching in higher education. I suggest for further research to investigate this topic in a wider context of folk music higher education, to investigate the relations of folk music openness versus academic more structured nature. The openness and structure can coexist, but there might be values and goals that are contradictory and therefore, it's important to have discussions on it, for example within the department.

The participants were from two different academies of neighbouring countries which gives the research broader scope, though comparing their data as equal is questionable. The conclusion of this study does not draw from my personal experiences and comes only from the data gathered from the interviews. As this topic is quite wide, in the beginning it proved to be difficult to set the focus of this study.

All the participants value the openness in folk music pedagogy. The positive sides related to openness that participants brought out, are that the story behind the player is valued in person-to-person learning; a real feel of the environment (to have the timeline, to have a background) as a holistic support and the standing place for the artist to be in this field; an advantage that learning folk music doesn't necessarily have to come from the school; notation or recorded archive material as tools in folk music pedagogy to help finding own's artistic expression with that heritage.

In terms of planning, the teachers brought out balancing between structure and freedom. It can mean to leave the lesson situation open, because it helps to be more present in the situation. Paraphrasing Teacher 2, in order to own the tradition, understand it

and incorporate it in one's own expression, one needs to imitate and one needs to play or sing or dance a lot to understand it. This relates with the concept of student-centredness by Huhtinen-Hilden (2017): Instead of emphasizing what learners should achieve through activities, there would be more interest in opening up opportunities that would help them discover different ways to pursue their goals.

Though the methods of learning folk music differ from classical music, they are still formal, because there is the research-oriented aspect behind it. The fact that students analyse it, interpret it, and study it is already a form of intellectualization. It's a different way of learning, whether learning from sheet music or by ear, but there's still a structure in it. It's good that there is no goal to standardize everything, especially because the role of oral tradition is important in folk music pedagogy.

Learning materials, that were described by the participants, were archival recordings, folk dance experience, and understanding the historical background of the players or regional characteristics. More specifically, A.O. Väisänen publication *Kantele- ja jouhikkosävelimä* and in *Kizavirzi* by A. Kastinen and others were mentioned. Using improvisation as part of lessons and recording your own playing, were common in Karelian *kantele* heritage teaching, but person-to-person learning (teaching directly) was one of the main methods for another teacher.

Adapting the teaching material plays also important role when teaching or learning – how to understand the books, use them and create own materials; how to adapt the repertoire according to the playing opportunities of each instrument, for example how to imitate Estonian diatonic accordion on *kannel*. There is much thinking but also independence in the process when adapting other repertoire for small *kantele*.

Regarding combining the formal and informal teaching materials, there were two interesting thoughts from both teachers, I'd like to point out. One of them was that folk music aspect gives the right to say that there is no need to conform the standards of classical or academic music, simply because the teaching takes place in academy; in fact, the traditional music brings individuality in it. Another interesting thought was related with the education attitudes and stereotypes that we have learned. An arts teacher needs to again and again think out to unravel, what is one actually thinking or

feeling about something and does one want to teach those attitudes also to the students or not to pass them.

As it came out, informal learning materials, like peer-to-peer learning play important role in folk music studies. Playing with other musicians, forming ensembles, or joining a music group, any workshops or camps, playing music to the dance, going to concerts to listen to other musicians are some examples of that.

In terms of continuity and progression, both teachers brought out the influences on their teaching from their own background as a musician; also, that they as a person change and it influences how they teach. Moreover, continuity is in the communication - being in the present and listening to the situation. For Student, the continuity depends on how much she puts effort on the learning, still the teacher has an important role in guiding this process. As Teacher 2 expresses, often, when the learning process starts, both the student and the teacher might have very empty plates. He joins with Student's thoughts about the student's own responsibility - if the goal is to have artistic education, then the goal is that the student finds out the decision.

From the interviews, it came out that there isn't an urgent need for systematic teaching materials, because they create the materials themselves; for this artistic education, it's the artistic expression and artist's work what is taught. Furthermore, one values freedom in teaching folk music, but at the same time still likes it when there are, for example, certain thematic blocks like a specific technical approach or the music of a certain region.

Based on the answers, structured learning and openness are represented equally and they could be given equal weight. In terms of assessing student's progress, the answers were that they have major exam with a whole list of pieces, or another, to open the teaching during the lessons as well, to give some understanding to the situation. That's part of the artistic education, that we can be critical about the situation what we have and the decisions, also the teaching decisions.

If we look what is the reason behind why it's not so popular to learn the small *kantele* in higher education, the interviewees pointed out that it's very hard to imagine what the professional could do, for example, with five string instrument, because this kind of music that we hear as a professional music, is so different. It comes also to that,

how to become interested in it if you don't know. To improve the situation, having more role models; players who would break the boundaries and make this music reach wider audience can help. People might also have a certain impression on small *kannel*, that you can't do much more than playing three chords with it, because it's played like that in music class, or in kindergarten. Despite that, maybe for some students, it sparks an interest to keep learning. Though there are strong possibilities for artists to be artists with that instrument, it's really the die-hard fans who end up at the university. It's not a bad thing, because if there were a surplus of the small *kantele* players, it would be difficult for them to find work. Still, if we want to change something in the other levels, and the teachers, to support folk music education, we need higher education. Besides educating professionals in higher level, an important role plays festivals that are dedicated to *kannel*, so that those who are even slightly interested can get some new inspiration. Activities out of school, like competitions, camps and dance clubs, can show perspective what the real world is like.

“It's kind of melancholy with this modern sensibility and student-centred approach”—admits one teacher and adds, that she doesn't dare to say anything, because it might really throw some people off track. Therefore, she doesn't impose her will on the student, as in an artistic sense. There aren't really any complaints about the artistic quality of the performance, especially in the context of folk music, as people seem to agree with this student's concept. Another teacher, in fact, feels that in teaching art, he wants to try to make things move. If one thinks about the word promotion, promoter, there is draw, so doing something for something to make it happen, and then there is motion.

Regarding openness, classical music performers have started to communicate more with the audience during their concerts, but in traditional music, it has always been a part of the tradition—it's about openness, about interacting freely with the audience. Therefore, it's better to preserve the good what's already achieved in the folk music education system.

What Student really came to realize at school, was that she started to understand the necessity of structure and the knowledge that comes with it. But it seems that this cultural mindset encourages the opposite. Who's more artistic, who's more original, who appeals to the masses—it's a very liberal approach. Perhaps it's a good thing, because otherwise, less people would learn or engage with folk music. Unfortunately,

since there aren't many those "nerds," then that's exactly how it affects a lot of people—it makes them feel free to approach things that way.

Another opinion on how the cultural context of folk music influences one's teaching, was the method that links with the cultural heritage – improvising the teaching. It doesn't mean that there is no planning, thinking, practicing or working on it for a longer time. It's related to the importance in improvisation, to have different motives and expressions, repetition and your own input and view to it.

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## Appendix (or Appendices)

There were three interviewees: two were teachers and one was a student in higher education. For this reason, the questions adapted for the student are set off with a slash.

### Appendix 1. (Interview guide)

Theme 1: Structure and openness in *kantele* pedagogy

- 1) How do you understand the concept of student-centeredness?
- 2) How much do you rely on lesson planning and leave space for improvising the lesson content, what is the balance between them? / How are the structuring elements in your lessons supporting your learning?
- 3) What pedagogical actions do you think support the learners from the holistic perspective? / Have you experienced support from your teacher from the holistic perspective? Please describe them, and if there were any benefits for the learning process?
- 4) What role does oral tradition (learning by ear, imitation) play in your teaching / learning, and how does it relate to structured approaches like notation?
- 5) How do you decide when to prioritise technical skill development versus expressive or creative exploration?
- 6) What challenges and advantages do you see in folk music education in terms of developing *kantele* pedagogy?

Theme 2: Pedagogical materials and systematicity in *kantele* pedagogy

- 1) What kind of materials do you use in your lessons to support teaching? / What kind of materials has your teacher used to support for your learning?

- 2) Do you modify or adapt existing teaching materials? If yes, how and why? / Does your teacher modify or adapt existing teaching materials? If yes, how and why?
- 3) How do you combine traditional folk transmission approaches with more formalised teaching resources? / Is your teacher combining traditional folk transmission approaches with more formalised teaching resources?
- 4) How do teaching materials (books, recordings, digital tools) support or limit systematic learning in *kantele* pedagogy?
- 5) How do you ensure continuity and progression in learning if you do not rely heavily on “method” books? / How does your teacher ensure continuity and progression in learning if he/she doesn’t rely heavily on “method” books?
- 6) What role do informal learning materials (e.g., listening, peer learning etc.) play in your teaching or learning process?
- 7) Do you see a need for more structured pedagogical materials for small *kantele*? Why or why not?
- 8) What are your recommendations for small *kantele* players specifically, who want to develop themselves as versatile as possible? What methods have you used to support your learning as a small *kantele* as versatile as possible?

Theme 3: Supporting student’s professional development and the development of *kantele* pedagogy in general

- 1) How do you assess student progress in the context of folk music education that values both structured learning and openness? / How is your teacher assessing your progress in the context of folk music education that values both structured learning and openness?
- 2) What do you think is the reason behind that there are not many students learning the small *kantele* in higher education levels? What could be done to improve it? Why it should be improved (if so)?

- 3) The music pedagogue can be seen as a professional promoter of another's creative and artistic processes, learning and expression (Huhtinen-Hildén & Pitt, 2018). How do you see yourself as a professional promoter? / How do you see your teacher as a professional promoter? Can you give examples?
  
- 4) Do you think folk music pedagogy should become more structured, or should it preserve its openness? Why? How does the cultural context of folk music influence your approach to structure and openness in teaching or learning *kan-tele*?