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Focus on Participation: What Can We Learn from Student Teachers Participation in Curriculum Design and Implementation? A Case Study

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Abstract

While several studies focus on university students' participation in their educational paths, fewer studies deal with students' participation in the processes of curriculum design and implementation. This qualitative case study explores how more equal practices can be implemented at universities, using the Framework for Participation (Black-Hawkins, 2010) and the case of music studies in primary teacher education. Inclusion, participation and culturally relevant curricula are keys to promote sustainable social development. This is particularly important in the sparsely populated northern areas, and we need develop ways in which we can engage our student teachers in this exploration.

The first part of the data was collected and analysed in the spring semester 2013 focusing on the ways in which the students were involved in the different phases of the curriculum: enacted and experienced curriculum. Based on the findings of the first part, during the curriculum renewal period, and after participating in developing a music course curriculum, the second data were collected in the autumn semester 2017.

Our findings indicate that students' experiences of participation vary, for example, according to their opportunities to use, challenge and develop their musical skills in action.

Keywords: Teacher Education Curriculum; Curriculum Design; Inclusion in Higher Education; Participation; Case Study

Introduction

Diversity and inclusion have been discussed and researched extensively over the past few decades (e.g. Ainscow *et al.*, 2006; Booth, Nes and Strömstad*,* 2003; Florian, 2008, 2014; Mitchell, 2008). The inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education has been researched widely, particularly in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia (e.g. Bird Claiborne, Cornforth, Gibson and Smith, 2011; May and Bridger, 2010). The research focus has widened to broader diversity among students (e.g. Clayton-Pedersen, O'Neill and McTighe Musil, Undated; Hockings, Cooke and Bowl, 2007; Schmaling, Trevino, Lind, Blume and Baker, 2015). In this study, inclusion in higher education is understood as a process that is grounded in valuing diversity. In Finnish higher education, inclusion is understood as physical, psychological and social accessibility (see ESOK-network u.d.) and thus requires the ongoing scrutiny and improvement of access in all aspects, particularly access to the higher education curriculum, which often remains in the background when physical accessibility is addressed. For example, the European Agency for the Development of Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2011, p. 63) pointed out in its report 'Teacher Education for Inclusion across Europe' that 'student teachers have different attitudes and values as well as varying views about and experiences of "effective" teaching and these must be taken into account and used as a resource for further development.' The report also called for research on inclusive practices in teacher education as well as on how teacher education and its content and pedagogy can be developed to better respond to student diversity.

While immediate links between inclusion and sustainable development may not seem obvious, we see inclusion as an integral part of sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development can be used to describe a process to attain a more sustainable future. It is a vision of the future in which environmental, social and economic interests and concerns are balanced—a particularly important aspect in the fragile environmental context of the Arctic. It not only deals with the environment around individuals but is also about equity between individuals and groups as well as between generations. Furthermore, it is concerned with values of human dignity and human rights (McKeown and Nolet, 2013). Participation and civil rights as parts of human rights are, thus, key concepts behind inclusive education and sustainable development.

The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948) asserts the right to participation but also duties towards one's community. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) highlights this right as the child's right to express his/her opinion and have a say in matters affecting the child. In this respect, education has been viewed as a way of preparing young people to understand how their community, or society at large, works, and how they can contribute in various ways. Education, essentially, prepares individuals for exerting one's rights but also for making meaningful contributions. (Osler and Starkey, 2005.) For example,

in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (NCCBE Finnish National Board of Education [FNBE], 2014, p. 21) this idea is formulated as: 'Culturally sustainable life and living in a diverse environment necessitate cultural knowledge which is based on human rights, skills in respectful interaction, and means to self-expression'. While participation rights are fundamental human rights, they also present challenges for implementation in diverse communities. A body of international literature has highlighted these challenges in education, for example, from the point of view of minorities (e.g. Allen, Bonous-Hammarth and Teranishi, 2006; Hjörne, van der Allsvoort, and de Abreu, 2012) or children (e.g. Gal and Duramy, 2015; Hallet and Prout, 2003; Liebel, Hanson, Saadi and Vandenhole, 2012; O'Neill and Zinga, 2008). A common idea in these studies is that communities are built and created by all community members through interaction in which the community members are enabled to participate in defining shared ideas and to decide on their own ways of participating in the community (see also Väyrynen, 2005). We maintain that inclusive education can be seen as a means to engage with sustainable development, through participation in learning communities. Participation and community are thus intertwined, and institutions such as universities have to define how the participation of all members of the university can be ensured.

One way of looking at participation in educational institutions is to examine the curriculum. In addition to the objectives of the learning contents, curricula in different educational institutions define, more or less explicitly, values and principles about teachers' and students' roles in teaching-learning situations. The students' abilities to participate and levels of participation may not be written in the curriculum but become apparent when enacting the written curriculum (see Brubacher, Case and Reagan, 1994). McKernan (2008) highlighted that all members of an educational institution should be invited to develop the educational community and its curriculum. These aspects are also proposed in the quality assurance guidelines of the University of Lapland (2015), which is the setting of our study. The guidelines outline that teaching staff should take into consideration students' individual characteristics and diversity, and that teaching should be student centred. Students should be seen as collaborators in the university community and active participants in planning, evaluating and developing teaching. However, students are expected to be independent and responsible for their own studies, with the appropriate tutoring (University of Lapland, 2015).

Despite the good intention of increasing student participation in universities, Nieminen and Tuijula (2011) pointed out that universities have generally started to resemble effective degree-producing factories instead of stressing their academic values or student diversity. In their study, students perceived the university as a location where they went to carry out their lecture attendance duties and take exams. This perception may result from institutional, sociological, epistemological or pedagogical factors that limit students' participation and engagement in their studies. These factors include preconceptions about university studies in

general and requirements for building one's knowledge or independent learning (Hockings, Cooke and Bowl, 2007). In Finnish universities, students are encouraged and required to plan their own studies because the university degrees may be composed of different modules and disciplines. In many studies, there is no strict order for courses, or a considerable variety of optional studies might be included in the degree. However, students' active participation in planning the content and modality of their studies is mainly a result of guidance and active encouragement by the teaching staff and the pedagogy they decide to use. Unlike open and interactive pedagogy, teacher-centred, closed pedagogy leaves very little space for students' own decisions (Nieminen and Tuijula, 2011).

Open pedagogy does not solve the key challenge, which is that teacher educators and student teachers enter learning situations with different expectations and come from different life worlds (Rasi, Hautakangas & Väyrynen 2014). While Finnish primary school student teachers are carefully selected from the applicants (only about 10% of all applicants are accepted), their skills, knowledge or interests in various school subjects are not tested in the teacher education aptitude test. This creates natural diversity among the student teachers that should be accommodated and responded to during course work. After graduating from university, all primary school teachers are supposed to be able to teach all the school subjects according to the school-based localised curriculum derived from the NCCBE (FNBE, 2014). Regardless of their skills or interests, they need to engage themselves in music studies, which is the focus of this case study.

As part of the subject studies in Finnish teacher education, students study the NCCBE sections related to different subjects (e.g. music) and transversal competences (e.g. participation, involvement and building a sustainable future; FNBE, 2014). While the NCCBE provides the wide frames for teaching and learning, municipalities and schools develop their own localised curricula to encourage connections to learners' lives and living environments. Taking into account the diverse social, geographical, demographic and cultural aspects of Finland, local emphasis is considered extremely important. Määttä and Uusiautti (2015) stated that the learning environments of the Arctic region are intertwined with physical, mental, cultural, geographical, linguistic and environmental elements, and that they occur within the transition from a traditional to technological environment. Furthermore, the indigenous populations of the Arctic necessitate special cultural sensitivity in education. Because of the particular features of the Arctic region, interaction, shared leadership and expertise emerge as key aspects in pedagogy—teachers sharing responsibility for problem solving and building a community to 'counteract' the conditions of the Arctic (Väyrynen, 2015). During their studies at the university, the student teachers are therefore expected to develop a sense of locality while understanding the wider national goals and how the different dimensions of local-global inclusion and participation build up sustainability in education.

In this case study, we ask the following questions:

1. How did student teachers experience participation in their music studies in the enacted and experienced curriculum?
2. How can student teachers' participation increase their understanding of primary learners' participation?
3. How did student teachers perceive locality and 'northerness' in their studies and as future teachers?

Theoretical framework

Our theoretical framework for inclusive pedagogy is based on Black-Hawkins' (2010) Framework of Participation. The framework helps to explore factors that enable or restrict participation in learning environments. The framework was originally developed for the school context, but we have modified it for the university context (Black-Hawkins, 2010, pp. 28-30):

1. Participation refers to all members of the community and all activities.
2. Participation is a process closely related to the identification and removal of barriers to participation.
3. Participation is based on the acknowledgement of diversity and opportunities for active, collaborative learning for all.
4. Participation is about the right to be included in groups or activities.
5. Participation is about mutual respect and acceptance.

In this case study, we focus on inclusion from the point of view of increasing and developing student teachers' participation as a way to facilitate their understanding of a culturally relevant curriculum as a tool for increasing primary learners' inclusion and participation. In previous research, curricula have often been blamed for preventing inclusion by including overly strict instructions about what and when to teach and learn (e.g. Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey, 2010). This is the motivation for this study to focus on whether the teacher education curriculum is enabling or hindering inclusion in higher education. We set three objectives for the case study: first, the study aims to clarify the role of the curriculum in enabling or hindering the inclusive approach to both teaching and learning music in teacher education. Second, the study aims to offer future teachers personal experiences of various solutions concerning teachers' and students' diversity as well as inclusion in learning environments (e.g. Kaikkonen, 2012), as we assume that personal experiences can increase their understanding of primary learners' inclusion. Third, this study aims to test the possibility of developing democratic and equal practices in teacher education by examining diversity and the inclusive approach through participation in the optional Advanced Music Programme (25 credit points) as a case study.

In addition to Black-Hawkins' (2010) framework, we look at the curriculum in three phases (Brubacher *et al.*, 1994, pp. 70-74):

1. Planned or written curriculum - This phase includes the curriculum as a collection of the values, principles and guidelines.
2. Enacted or implemented curriculum - This phase includes the actual activities in the learning situation. It is based on the teacher educator's interpretations of the learning environment and decisions about pedagogy.
3. Experienced curriculum - This is based on students' experiences of the learning situation.

Methodology

Forlin (2010) suggested that curricula should fit within teachers' pedagogical solutions. This is the case in basic education in Finland: the written NCCBE (FNBE, 2014) guides the teachers to allow and encourage the pupils to take initiative, share their opinions, create their ways of learning and solve problems in innovative ways. These guidelines have partly been applied and examined in primary school teacher education. The principle behind the application is that during their studies in teacher education, student teachers should have personal experiences of various pedagogical approaches that they are supposed to use and develop as teachers in the future. To explore how the curricular solutions (written curriculum) and implementation (enacted curriculum) enable or hinder inclusion among the student teachers, we applied a case study approach, using music studies as a case. Music studies were chosen, because one of the authors is one of the music lecturers at the University of Lapland. More precisely, we consider this study an instrumental case study, although the curriculum development is based on elements of action research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). According to Stake (2000), an instrumental case study aims to provide insight into an issue; the case is of secondary interest. We aim to understand student teachers' own experiences of participation and how these might manifest in their understanding of participation and curricular choices while the university music curriculum is being revised. In this study, music teaching and learning situations are studied in depth, but the main focus is on the phenomenon of inclusion in higher education (Silverman, 2010; Stake, 1995).

Study phases and data collection

In an attempt to weave inclusion into the teacher education curriculum, the Faculty of Education of the University of Lapland requested that the curriculum be reviewed from the point of view of inclusion (Faculty of Education u.d.). The music lecturers had already made changes to the written curriculum. In the implementation of the curriculum, they wanted to encourage students to share their ideas, form their own groups for collaborative work and define their own level of music skills rather than expecting the lecturers to define the level or breadth of the assignments. The pedagogical solutions were mainly based on the lecturers'

questions about the students' desires and needs in each course. Additionally, the lecturers allowed the students to take initiative and make decisions about how to work towards the course objectives. Following these principles, in the first phase of the case study in 2013, we focused on the student teachers' views about the enacted and experienced curriculum of the Advanced Music Programme. Eleven out of the 12 students in the programme provided anonymous feedback in a questionnaire about their experiences of music studies, particularly the benefits or barriers related to the different teaching approaches adopted by the music lecturers. They were also asked about their experiences of using their personal characteristics, skills and knowledge as resources in different type of tasks (in group, paired and individual work). The questionnaires were filled out in a natural classroom situation (Cohen *et al.,* 2011) in the form of course feedback. The 11 students who answered the questionnaire gave their permission for their responses to be used in the research. The first student group was composed of these 11 students. Based on the responses of the first student group, the music lecturers have revised the curriculum several times. Each new revision of the written music curriculum takes into account students' ideas about how the courses are implemented, whereas the enacted curriculum is student centred and the music lecturers mainly have a guiding role in the learning process.

This paper is based on the data from the second phase of the study in 2017. We decided to focus on two optional music courses in the Advanced Music Programme, assuming that the students were motivated, at least in principle, to engage themselves in various activities in the revised written curriculum and then enact it in a more participatory way. In the first studied course, 'Elements of Music', the students designed and implemented demonstrations including interpretations of the musical elements (rhythm, melody, harmony, tone colour, dynamics, tempo and the forms of music) based on listening to, singing and playing pieces of music. The lecturers assisted each student's participation by supporting each idea formulated by the students individually or as a group. The lecturers tried to reduce the student-teacher power dynamics as much as possible by allowing the students to create ideas and decide the contents and ways to develop their ideas into products (e.g. competitions, arrangements and pedagogical interventions as some course themes) but observing the processes and providing support when needed.

The current data (December 2017) was collected as common feedback from the student teachers after the two consecutive music courses had been carried out. The four-page questionnaire included: a) questions on students' personal experiences of participation using statements from Black-Hawkins' Framework for Participation, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = hardly recognised, 5 = very clearly recognised); b) an open-ended question on identifying barriers to and levels of participation at different phases of the curriculum (i.e. reflections on their own experiences); c) open-ended questions on the key concepts related to inclusion (participation/community) and context (locality/'northerness'), how these were present in

music studies and how these would be present in their own teaching; and d) open-ended questions on the students' experiences of shared expertise. Students' responses to the open-ended questions were rather brief, typically from one to four sentences.

To uphold the ethical principles of the study, each student was asked to sign a separate consent form if they wanted to participate in the research. All students (14 in the course Elements of Music and 13 studying the course Playing in the Band) participating in the courses signed the consent forms and completed the questionnaire.

Analysis

In the analysis, we focused on the students' ratings of and reflections on their experiences and their descriptions of the key concepts.

We first compared the range of students' ratings of their experiences and how their ratings compared to the mode of participation. Due to the nature of a case study and the small number of students, these figures were only used to provide an indicative review of the range of students' experiences and feelings about participation during the courses.

For the qualitative content analysis of students' reflections on their experiences and descriptions of the key concepts (participation, community, locality and northerness), we first translated the students' answers from Finnish into English, focusing on the meanings rather than the literal expressions (Bazeley, 2013). The analysis was carried out by segmenting the reflections and descriptions according to Black-Hawkins' Framework for Participation, using concept-driven coding. This phase represents what Schreier (2014) calls the coding frame. The reflections and descriptions were then categorised under each aspect of participation in the framework and further coded to illustrate different perceptions of participation (Bazeley, 2013). As the open-ended reflections and descriptions were mostly brief, it was not possible to construct highly developed abstract concepts, but we could identify the students' common as well as diverging perceptions.

As a part of checking our analysis, we used the music lecturers' usual daily collegial practice: one of the authors was the lecturer in the course 'Elements of Music', and she shared our ideas with the other music lecturer, responsible for the course 'Playing in the Band'. These exchanges were used as triangulation, which strengthened the reliability of the study (Lincoln and Cuba, 1985; Silverman, 2010).

Findings

Students' ratings of their experiences of inclusion and participation were varied (see raw data in Tables 1 and Table 2). Students rated their participation experience highly in terms of mutual respect and acceptance in both conceptual and experimental studies (Table 1

Elements of Music) and the practical production of their own music (Table 2 Playing in the Band). The largest differences in experiences were related to the acknowledgement of diversity and opportunities for active, collaborative learning for all. These differences in experiences were explained in the students' written responses regarding the barriers to participation, where several students identified the diversity of skills in joint musical activities as a barrier.

Elements of music (N=14)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Participation refers to all members of the community and all activities.	0	1	3	7	3
2. Participation is a process, closely related to the identification and removal of barriers to participation.	1	4	6	3	0
3. Participation is based on acknowledgement of diversity and opportunities to active, collaborative learning for all.	0	3	7	2	2
4. Participation is about the right to be included in groups or activities.	0	1	3	5	5
5. Participation is about mutual respect and acceptance	0	0	4	5	5

The rating on the Likert-scale was from 1 (hardly recognised) to 5 (very clearly recognised).

Table 1: *The student teachers' experiences of participation in the course: Elements of music*

Playing in the band (N=13)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Participation refers to all members of the community and all activities.	0	1	2	5	5
2. Participation is a process, closely related to the identification and removal of barriers to participation.	0	3	2	6	2
3. Participation is based on acknowledgement of diversity and opportunities to active, collaborative learning for all.	0	4	2	1	6
4. Participation is about the right to be included in groups or activities.	0	2	4	3	4
5. Participation is about mutual respect and acceptance	0	0	4	3	6

The rating on the Likert-scale was from 1 (hardly recognised) to 5 (very clearly recognised).

Table 2: *The student teachers' experiences of participation in the course: Playing in the band*

It was also clear from the students' ratings of their experiences that participation as a process of identification and removal of barriers rated lower than other aspects of inclusion and participation. In the enacted curriculum process, this aspect would involve identifying each student's actual skills and providing opportunities to participate based on these skills (or providing opportunities to develop the skills). It is possible that in the teaching-learning situation, the students did not perceive curriculum adaptations—providing opportunities to overcome a lack of skills by having the students play only known instruments and keeping arrangements simple enough—as a part of the process of inclusion even though the lecturers

made efforts to achieve this goal. The ratings of experiences were particularly varied in relation to Playing in the Band, where students' music skill levels probably contributed to the assessment of their participation experience. For example, Students 1 and 5 highlighted that it may be a barrier to participation when a lot of courage is needed to play unfamiliar instruments. They stated that eventually, 'those who can, will play' or the more skilful players will 'take the stage' and make the others outsiders.

Students' ratings of their experiences show a range of variation, but their descriptions of the key concepts of inclusion and how they were present in the enacted and experienced curriculum reveal a more nuanced picture of their experiences and perceptions of participation. We will explore these in the following sections.

Community necessitates participation and engagement

'Participation' (*osallisuus* in Finnish) encompasses two dimensions: 'osallistua' (to attend, also to be involved in something) and 'osallistaa' (to make somebody participate). These expressions indicate that participation is personal activity (to attend) but may require support or encouragement from others (to make somebody participate). We wanted to understand how dimensions are understood by the student teachers.

Students described communities mainly through external characteristics—such as space, locality or different groupings (e.g. classes, study groups and study discipline)—and the individual's presence in those communities. These external characteristics alone did not seem to make a community, as a personal feeling of belonging and positive feelings about the group were instrumental in creating a sense of community. Students described these feelings as follows:

> *It is about feeling like a part of a community and having a close relationship.* (Student 12)
> *Every member of the group feels meaningful to the group.* (Student 4)
> *Experience of belonging to something; to be part of a group or a larger (or smaller) group.* (Student 3)

Therefore, mere attendance – as the Finnish expression for participation literally means - does not seem to be viewed as 'participation'; rather, participation entails task orientation and engagement in collaborative work or activities. In teaching, this means that a sense of community may develop through participation. In the daily collegial discussions, one of the music lecturers shared this view and highlighted that students seem to yearn for challenges and opportunities to participate in their own way, to develop their skills or to explore the limits of their skills. They do not appreciate participation that is defined by someone else. The element of citizenship (Osler and Starkey, 2005) was embedded in these descriptions.

Participation is a process closely related to the identification and removal of barriers to participation

Barriers to participation did not come out explicitly in the students' descriptions, but their responses indicate that they realise that participation might require a proper investigation of these barriers from the perspective of learners and in terms of the learning environment and other aspects:

> *There are attempts to make everybody participate. Participation is encouraged.*
> (Student 7)
> *Learners will get the support they need.* (Student 5)
> *Dealing with the structure of learning and discussions together.* (Student 1)

While the students' ratings of their experiences of identifying and addressing barriers varied, the written definitions or descriptions were enlightening because they indicated a recognition that it is the teacher's responsibility to enable participation through the design of activities, encouragement, support, dealing with broader issues of learning (environment) and engaging students in discussions:

> *Students' ideas and potential have been well used [in the course design].*
> (Student 1)
> *While everybody can participate, it is important to enable [participation].*
> (Student 6)
> *We should listen to each student's personal learning goals and make efforts to respond to them—quality education for each and every one.* (Student 11)

From the students' descriptions, it is hard to determine the extent to which students' views are based on what they have experienced in the learning situation and the extent to which their views are based on their observations of the enacted curriculum.

Participation is based on the acknowledgement of diversity and opportunities for active, collaborative learning for all

In line with the students' definitions of community and participation, it is clear that communities are created by action and recognise individuality. In the descriptions, participation, 'being involved' and working together were highlighted:

> *I encourage children to work together.* (Student 10)
> *Working together, brainstorming together.* (Student 9)
> *Working together, accepting diversity.* (Student 6)
> *The group is working together.*

Participation was generally seen as 'an activity':

> *People are encouraged to act.* (Student 10)
> *I encourage children to try.* (Student 10)
> *Everybody participates and is challenged.* (Student 2)
> *Meaningful activities for all, but also challenges.* (Student 6)

While participation was seen as 'an activity', not being active may be perceived in a negative manner within the group:

> *Participation has been limited in cases when somebody has not been willing to participate in certain activities.* (Student 11)

Nonetheless, in the students' descriptions, participation was not limited to just carrying out activities; the students also emphasised that the activities should be meaningful for them, and they should have a say in designing and developing the activities. One's capabilities, background, cultural or social factors, and interests or motivations did not come out as sources of diversity in learning, but references to meaningful tasks or 'challenges' (in the level of skills) were referred to, like in this description:

> *The most limiting factor to participation was certainly the level of skill in playing [instruments]. If one didn't have skills, it limited [participation].* (Student 13)

Despite the emphasis on participation as an activity, the students recognised that 'participation' may also relate to different forms. Student 8 reflected on the opportunities for participation through his/her experience in Playing in the Band:

> *A possibility to participate and sometimes stay aside just to follow the action. This was present in the band.*

Participation is about the right to be included in groups or activities
An interesting possible contradiction in students' definitions emerged from thinking about the right to be included. Students perceived the right to inclusion as granted by general access to activities:

> *Everybody may participate.* (Student 8)
> *Everybody has an opportunity to participate.* (Student 6)

They also highlighted participation in terms of skills:

> *Everybody may participate according to one's own skills.* (Student 7)

Although these criteria can also exclude some students, this problem was not mentioned. The right to participation was also alluded to as the roles and responsibilities within and for the group:

> *Everybody has a certain role in the group.* (Student 11)
> *Everybody is engaged in an important task or role.* (Student 4)
> *Everybody will have and take responsibility.* (Student 11)

In this conceptualisation, it seems that being a member of a community requires a commitment to the group, and membership is granted based on one's contribution to the group. A contradiction may arise from student teachers' understanding and perception of 'participation as an activity', as pointed out above—that is, each student should perform certain behaviour for their actions to be counted as 'participation'.

Participation is about mutual respect and acceptance

Students' descriptions of community highlighted respect, tolerance and acceptance—some of the key values of inclusion (Booth, 2009):

> *Good relationships with everybody.* (Student 10)
> *Respect, acknowledgement.* (Student 6)
> *We are one group in which we encourage good behaviour and encourage one*
> *another; we take care of each other and learn nice behaviour.* (Student 5)
> *Encouraging and supporting one another.* (Student 1)

When the students reflected on their experiences in their own music study group, these aspects rarely came out in the responses to the open-ended questions. Emphasis was placed on activities, skills and contributions rather than on values. When describing the key concepts, however, values were mentioned. This may suggest that when reflecting on experiences, the connection between values and practice does not play a role, whereas when thinking about practice, values informing actions are easier to trace (Väyrynen & Paksuniemi, 2018).

Locality, northerness and culturally relevant curriculum

To depict inclusive education as a means to support sustainable development, student teachers, as future teachers, need to develop a culturally sensitive curriculum in whatever subject they teach. In the Arctic region, this is particularly important. In our feedback questionnaire, we wanted to explore the students' conceptualisations of locality and northerness and how they connected these with the curriculum.

In terms of locality, the most common perception was related to a geographical place, primarily the north of Finland, with set cultural and traditional features. The responses did not elaborate on the presumed cultural features, but they appeared to be rather monocultural, assuming distinctive cultural and traditional features and values 'owned' and maintained by people living in the area:

> *It is something to do with where the culture and tradition of one's own region are present.* (Student 12)

> *Home environment.* (Student 4)

> *Locality or how teaching features local resources, environment, culture, etc. Northern values, respecting nature.* (Student 11)

> *Respecting and maintaining local values and traditions.* (Student 11)

> *Attitudes towards work and other people, culture as richness.* (Student 9)

In some responses, students identified institutions or current issues as localities in a particular culture. They also pointed out differences between localities:

> *The school community (especially in the rural areas) is a part of the village community, regardless of the teacher's or learners' place of living.* (Student 8)

> *Familiarising oneself with the local provisions (e.g. town orchestra).* (Student 6)

> *We can use local current themes.* (Student 2)

While the students emphasised engagement in their perceptions of participation and community, these aspects did not appear in their ideas of locality and northerness. Some students highlighted their northern origin with pride, while a student from the south of Finland—which is geographically considered the north—did not recognise northerness as a personal experience. Northerness was also described in brand terms used by the tourism industry and social media.

Discussion

To come back to the focus of our paper, we now reflect on what we can learn from students' participation in curriculum design and implementation.

According to Black-Hawkins (2010), the Framework for Participation acknowledges that participation is never 'fully' attainable and that it changes over time and situations. This was evident in the experiences of the two groups of students. Our findings indicate that participation starts from the individual's definition of the frames of his or her own participation. It is about engagement in different forms: having a say in the curriculum content and implementation, defining personal goals and making decisions about the forms of participation. Students do not appreciate participation that is defined by someone else. From the point of view of curriculum design, the music lecturers pointed out that it is essential for the written curriculum to enable students' own ideas and interpretations about the course themes so that they can contribute to the enacted curriculum. Although the current written curriculum does not take into account the lecturers' situational, pedagogical responses to the students' needs, these responses materialise in the enacted curriculum.

The students identified barriers to participation in their experiences. These barriers were related to different skills, motivations or other intrinsic factors. However, the students did not identify the processes through which these barriers were addressed. Some of these processes might have been present in the enacted curriculum—though not in the experienced curriculum (see Brubacher *et al.*, 1994). Black-Hawkins (2010) stated that the processes of identifying barriers and increasing participation are not always easy to identify because they are often complex and ambiguous. Planned activities in a course may increase participation for some students but reinforce barriers for others. Commenting on the findings, the music lecturers emphasised their attempts to create learning situations that enable equality and equity of participation, as well as their view of the diversity and heterogeneity of the group as an opportunity and a resource for learning. Therefore, the implementation of the curriculum necessitates discussion between the lecturers as well as between the lecturers and students about the experiences and definitions of participation. Equally important is the discussion about the opportunities for and barriers to participation as part of the process of inclusion. This will contribute to a more open and democratic university culture (Nieminen and Tuijula, 2011).

In their descriptions, the students highlighted visible activity and engagement as prerequisites for participation. This suggests a certain perception of the ways of participation, probably related to a school culture that might exclude some students and learners in schools if they do not find or have appropriate ways of being part of the community. To some extent, connection to this aspect of participation may come from their experiences in their early school years. In a previous study (Hietanen, Koiranen and Ruismäki, 2017, p. 240), one student teacher at the University of Lapland shared the memory of his/her early school years: 'I did not play because I could not … The teacher guided the pupils who already had some skills in playing'. In the same study (p. 242), another student teacher mentioned that he/she had been able to participate, but shared the following memory about some peer learners: 'If I

remember right, those [who were] "less talented" were not allowed to participate as much as us talented ones; if you could play an instrument, you were able to play, while the others just listened'. Based on some other course feedback from several academic years, in teacher education, it has unfortunately been somewhat normal in Finnish comprehensive schools that only those who already have some skills are allowed to participate in playing instruments. A similar experience of the limited right to participate may have influenced some students' answers in the present study as well. In the current study, there seems to be a dilemma between 'activity' and 'just being a part of the community'. On what conditions can the right to be a member of the community be fulfilled? This issue could be considered in forthcoming studies, possibly through interviews with student teachers.

With regard to a culturally and locally relevant curriculum, students' responses were rather limited in terms of using locality or northerness as a basis for the curriculum. Students' responses reflected the lack of a well-structured and holistic idea of how the broader goals of the written curriculum of teacher education at the University of Lapland are actually implemented. While northerness is launched as a cross-cutting idea at the University of Lapland (University of Lapland u.d.), the enacted and experienced curriculum seems to be far from embodying this idea.

Conclusion

This case study showed that cross-cutting issues (e.g. a culturally or locally relevant curriculum) and broader goals (e.g. northerness or Arctic pedagogy) have to be explicitly integrated into all the teacher training curriculum phases to help students make connections between pedagogy and practice and to explore how these key ideas can be integrated into the developing craft of teaching. In Finland, teaching is steered by the NCCBE, with its local adaptations. Therefore, it is essential that students understand the connection between an inclusive pedagogy and a culturally relevant local curriculum, as well as develop a more diversified understanding of locality. The challenge for teacher education remains: How can the content (pedagogy, subject studies and general studies) and the broader cultural and social goals be woven together? This might be worth developing further in teacher education programmes—for example, in collaboration with teacher educators teaching different contents of the primary school teacher education curriculum. These developed interventions emphasising participation and sustainability could be the focus of future studies.

This case study focused on the experiences of a group of student teachers. The main limitation of the study is the small number of informants (13 in the course Elements of Music and 14 in the course Playing in the Band) and studied courses (2). Due to this limitation and the nature of qualitative case study, we do not claim that the shared experiences can be generalised (see Cohen *et al.,* 2011), but they reflect a process of developing a more inclusive higher education pedagogy in music studies. They also remind us that teacher

education requires ongoing research and self-evaluation. The music lecturers realised the importance of understanding how students experience participation. In the enacted curriculum, opportunities for participation were provided in many ways, and students' activity was perceived by the lecturers as participation. The findings revealed that students need more opportunities to define their ways and levels of participation; at the same time, they are responsible for expressing their needs. To conclude, an open dialogue, listening to the students' voices and finding space for everyone should be at the heart of curriculum development.

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