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Navigating between traditional and innovative music teaching: Analyzing practicum conversations through practice architecture theory

Silje Meling Bjørnevoll

Ph.D. candidate, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

Contact corresponding author: Silje.Meling.Bjornevoll@hvl.no

Abstract

There is limited research on the practicum component of music teacher education in Scandinavia. I address this gap by investigating practicum conversations preservice music teachers (PMTs) engage in during their practice-based placements in Norwegian primary and lower secondary schools. Through an analytical lens based on practice architecture theory, I illuminate how differing discourses, expectations, and relationship patterns among PMTs and teacher educators (functioning as mentors) influence the selection of certain music activities. The main findings indicate how differing discourses and expectations led to continuous negotiations about which repertoire and content to choose. At the same time, musical interaction and engagement in spaces of “shared” knowledge between PMTs and mentors served as alternative ways to select activities in practicum conversations. Based on the findings, I emphasize the importance of providing more spaces for PMTs’ voices and resources to renew and change the content and repertoire of the music subject in schools.

Keywords: *music teacher education, practice architecture theory, practicum conversations, preservice music teachers, teaching practicum*

In this article, I investigate practicum conversations preservice music teachers (PMTs) have as a part of their practice-based placements in Norwegian primary and lower secondary schools. Practicum conversations are a meeting point between preservice teachers

and their mentors where the dialogue becomes important for future teachers' professional development (Eide et al., 2017; Munroe, 2021; Smith, 2010). University-based mentors, and not least school-based mentors, are among the most influential stakeholders in pre-service teachers' everyday practicum context (Edelman, 2021). A central aim of practicum conversations is to facilitate preservice teachers' critical reflection on their teaching practices (Johnsen-Høines, 2011; UHR, 2018b). Still, research studies indicate how preservice teachers act as apprentices with limited spaces to make independent reflections (Aglen, 2021), often replicating practices without opportunities for development, growth, and change (Powell & Parker, 2017). Therefore, the need to investigate the content of practicum conversations regarding reflections and questions about how teaching should be planned and carried out has been called for (Sørensen & Bjørndal, 2021; Thorgersen, 2012). There is a particular lack of research into the practicum component of music teacher education in Scandinavia. I address this gap by examining practicum conversations between PMTs, school-based and university-based mentors in music practicum contexts. Particularly, the focus is on how these stakeholders discuss and justify the selection of content and activities in the music subject.

There has been a growing interest in examining mentoring practices and relationships with PMTs in recent decades (Abramo & Campbell, 2019; Bond et al., 2023; Davis, 2017; Draves, 2008; Palmer, 2018; Pellegrino, 2015). For example, Palmer (2018) addressed the importance of mentors becoming familiar with student teachers' personalities, preparation, and musicianship prior to practicum placements in order to help establish positive relationships. Other researchers have highlighted how PMTs and experienced teachers rated personal skills and knowledge as essential for successful music teaching (Edelman, 2021; Kelly, 2010; Teachout, 1997), being enthusiastic on behalf of music and classroom management (Sætre et al., 2016) or facilitating pupils' experiences of mastery (Nysæther et al., 2021). In a Scandinavian context, popular music repertoire in primary and secondary schools seems to influence music teachers' classroom practices (Christophersen et al., 2017; Christophersen & Gullberg, 2017; Dyndahl & Nielsen, 2014; Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010; Sætre et al., 2016). However, according to Ellefsen (2022), there is a need to challenge the taken-for-granted-ness in music teachers' choices of educational content that construct specific discursive formations of knowledge in the music subject.

Norwegian music teacher education is characterized as traditional by reproducing certain teaching discourses (Sætre, 2014), indicating tendencies toward resistance to change and determined practices within the field of music education (Aróstegui & Rusinek, 2015; Christophersen, 2021; Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010; Väkevä et al., 2017). Therefore, there is a need for transformation in music teacher education (Conway et al., 2019), in which stakeholders must be challenged to act as critical reflective thinkers, take risks, and push for new learning contexts (Conway & Hibbard, 2019). A new reform implemented in 2017 transformed Norwegian general teacher education (GTE) into a five-year master's

degree, with a central aim to strengthening the practicum part of the educational program (Skagen & Eldstad, 2020). Furthermore, national guidelines for the GTE program emphasized among other things the need for preservice teachers to develop “change competencies” to handle complex tasks in a constantly evolving profession, such as music teaching (UHR, 2018b, 2018a). A timely question to ask then is how (and if) PMTs, school-based and university-based mentors “push for renewal and transformation” (Conway et al., 2019; Conway & Hibbard, 2019) regarding the music subjects’ repertoire and content in the ever-changing world of music education (Heuser, 2014). Two research questions guided this study with intention to answer the following:

RQ1: How do preservice music teachers and mentors discuss and justify the selection of music activities in primary and lower secondary schools during practicum conversations?

RQ 2: How are spaces for renewal and change made available in practicum conversations?

I conducted an instrumental case study (Stake, 1994) of four PMTs in a Norwegian GTE program during their practicums (Years 4 and 5) at two practice schools. Empirical data was collected through video and audio-recorded observations of practicum conversations, observations of music teaching settings, and focus group interviews with the PMTs. The theory of practice architectures (Kemmis et al., 2014; Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008; Mahon et al., 2017) provided an analytical lens for exploring the complexity of practicum conversations and how particular architectures prefigured and influenced PMTs’ and mentors’ selection of activities in the music subject. By focusing on the encounters between PMTs and their mentors, this study is relevant for the field of general and music teacher education to understand how practicum placements foster preservice teachers’ professional development. In addition, findings may illuminate examples of current discourses and traditions that influence and condition music teaching practices in Norwegian primary and secondary schools.

The theory of practice architectures

In practice architecture theory, practices are understood as socially established, cooperative human activity involving participants’ utterances and understandings (*sayings*), modes of action (*doings*), and ways of relating to one another and the world (*relatings*) that “hang together” in characteristic ways (Kemmis et al., 2014; Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008; Mahon et al., 2017). Practices are shaped by participants’ actions and prefigured arrangements that exist beyond each individual, namely *cultural-discursive*, *material-economic*, and *social-political* arrangements (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008). Interestingly, when the participants in this study encountered one another in practicum conversations,

they expressed themselves through music as well as verbal language. The participants' ways of acting and communicating can be understood in light of the concept of musicking (Small, 1998), where relationships (relatings) are performed and transformed between sounds, participants, and places. Also, from a music psychology perspective, the musical approach in communicating situations from past or future music lessons can be described as musical communication (Miell et al., 2005). The participants' musical approach during practicum conversations in this study thereby holds the potential to develop the practice architecture's key concepts at the intersection of sayings, doings, and relatings.

Practice architecture theory describes the social world as composed of three dimensions of intersubjectivity (Kemmis et al., 2014; Mahon et al., 2017). Cultural-discursive arrangements are realized in the *semantic space dimension* that enable or constrain how PMTs and mentors express themselves through the social medium of language. Furthermore, material-economic arrangements in the *physical space-time dimension* enable or constrain how the participants engage in music activities, which are also shaped by available resources in music classrooms. Finally, social-political arrangements in the *dimension of social space* enable or constrain how the participants connect and contest with one another through the social medium of power and solidarity during practicum conversations.

Seen from the practice architecture theory, the current GTE reform in Norway represents educational transformation that may have transformed educational discourses and activities connected to the music subject among stakeholders (Kemmis et al., 2014). Transforming music teacher education, therefore, implies a willingness for stakeholders to change, for example, traditional discourses in music activity selection. Importantly, PMTs undergo an educational learning process to become practitioners of music teaching and also "change agents" (Carmi & Tamir, 2021; O'Neill, 2018) who are able to extend such practices. Thus, making spaces for new or alternative music activities also implies a willingness to try out various patterns of relationships between PMTs and mentors apparent in practicum conversations. Practice architecture theory as an analytical lens can provide insight into the complexity of practicum conversations and illustrate examples of emerging justifications, various approaches to discussions, and how the interplay between PMTs and mentors influences decisions regarding the music subject's content.

Methodology and methods

Data generation

The overall aim of this instrumental case study (Stake, 1994) was to examine a single case (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018) of four PMTs' practicum experiences, particularly in

this article, their encounter with mentors in practicum conversations. The PMTs were aged between 23 and 24 years old and enrolled at master level (Years 4 and 5) in a five-year generalist teacher education in Norway, training as teachers for 5th to 10th grade with a specialization in music. The practicum placement was conducted at a primary school for three weeks in their fourth year of study (one week in the autumn of 2020 and two weeks in the spring of 2021). In their fifth and final year of study, the practicum was carried out at a lower secondary school for two weeks in autumn 2021. The PMTs selected a gender-neutral name for this study and were presented as Taylor, Ashton, Payton, and Dylan.

Primary data resources included video and audio-recorded observations of practicum conversations (approximately 17 hours and 30 minutes) that allowed me to explore the participants' interactions and transcribe the conversations. I took on a role as a non-participant observer during practicum conversations and in teaching settings. Additional data included field notes from lessons taught by PMTs that became important to understand the content and context of subsequent conversations. Transcriptions from three focus group interviews with the PMTs were relevant to this article, where I had opportunities to ask questions regarding their practicum experiences in general, and particularly about various episodes from the practicum conversations. The focus group interviews were conducted after each period of practicum ended, resulting in three interviews (lasting approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes each). By facilitating group conversations through a non-governing interview style (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015), I intended to encourage a variety of viewpoints and let the PMTs talk about their practicum experiences. Through my instrumental case study approach, I relied on multiple sources that triangulated information from observations (practicum conversations and teaching settings) and focus group interviews, that together with the prolonged engagement with the participants, increased the credibility of the research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

All data were anonymized. The PMTs, university-based mentors, and school-based mentors at both practice schools were informed about the study and signed a declaration of consent, agreeing to be observed and interviewed. The study was conducted in line with the Norwegian guidelines for research ethics (NESH, 2021) and data protection regulation (Sikt, 2022).

The case context

The practicum conversations were conducted in different settings at the two practice schools. At practice school 1, daily practicum conversations were undertaken in the music classroom prior to or after teaching sessions with the whole group and a school-based mentor. The duration of practicum conversations could vary from 10 minutes to one hour, resulting in 26 video recordings over three weeks. In addition, a university-based mentor visited once in the spring semester who observed the PMT's music teaching and joined

a practicum conversation afterward. The music classroom was equipped with several instruments, and the PMTs conducted music lessons with pupils from 2nd to 7th grade, in addition to English teaching. The daily practicum conversations at practice school 1 provided extensive material, which resulted in the material being given a greater place in the analysis.

At practice school 2, the PMTs had music lessons with pupils from 8th to 10th grade, an elective subject called “the subject of stage production” including music activities, and other subjects such as French and Norwegian. The music classroom was divided into two parallel classrooms with several instruments in each room. The practicum conversations were conducted individually in a school-based mentor’s office or digitally via Zoom, with two conversations per PMT that lasted approximately 30 minutes each, resulting in altogether eight audio recordings over two weeks.

Data analysis

In a preliminary analytical process, I read transcripts from observations and focus group interviews to identify utterances connected to music teaching practices. Additionally, field notes from teaching settings were read to understand the content and context of the practicum conversations. The next phase in the analysis was to gather and read the selected material and start systematizing the data through a process of coding. First, I pre-coded (Saldaña, 2021) the material by coloring significant participant quotes and statements regarding the music subject. Next, repetitive patterns in the coded data were identified, searching for similarities and differences between participants’ utterances. Finally, preliminary codes were recoded and further categorized abductively (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2018) by applying the theory of practice architectures (Kemmis et al., 2014) as an analytical lens combined with previous relevant literature. Even though sayings, doings, and relatings are overlapping dimensions (Kemmis et al., 2014), they were separated as distinct theoretical terms in the analytical process.

Analyzing practicum conversations through practice architecture theory

Informed by the theory of practice architectures, I categorized interesting aspects of practicum conversations into three intersubjective spaces where PMTs and mentors discussed and justified activity selection through characteristic utterances (sayings), actions (doings), and relationships (relatings), namely: 1) *characteristics in the semantic space: negotiations in the selection of music activities*; 2) *characteristics in the physical space-time: doing activities through music*, and 3) *characteristics in the social space: (dis)connected relatings in practicum conversations*. In the following section, I provide examples of how PMTs and mentors

discussed and justified activity selection in practicum conversations, aiming to address the first research question in this article.

Characteristics in the semantic space: Negotiations in the selection of music activities

Characteristic discourses and words (sayings) emerged during practicum conversations among the PMTs and mentors, revealing differing expectations and values regarding music activities (Kemmis et al., 2014; Mahon et al., 2017). For example, at practice school 1 Dylan explained the plans for a 6th grade music lesson, arguing that “it would be great to mention to the pupils that Chick Corea just died and use it as an introduction for teaching about blues”. The school-based mentor responded he “never dared to have blues,” suggesting “it would be cool to get a new song going” like *Let it be and Viva la Vida*, and further arguing that it was “more motivating than Blues”. Still acknowledging the plan, he expressed that the session could progress “fast” to start playing instruments with the pupils. These excerpts identify how Dylan and the school-based mentor had different expectations for the lesson. Dylan justified linking a current event (Chick Corea) as an introduction to the blues, while the school-based mentor gave advice for selecting “more motivating” activities (pop songs). Seen from the practice architecture theory, this discussion may illustrate negotiated expectations (Mahon et al., 2017) between the school-based mentors’ preferences and Dylan’s attempts to bring alternatives for activities. Although suggestions about implementing blues were not rejected, the school-based mentor’s advice about choosing other activities challenged Dylan’s justifications for the upcoming music lesson’s content.

The school-based mentor’s expertise and experiences with band playing, in terms of playing pop songs, became apparent in several practicum conversations. One example was when Ashton presented the idea to conduct a Saami¹ song for the school-based mentor (SBM1), as described in the following excerpt:

- Ashton: [...] we were thinking of trying “Gula gula” to play it with band. Try to get on some instruments and stuff.
- SBM1: These pupils would have loved “Give me a clap”.
- Ashton: Oh, well, yes.
- SBM1: But can “Gula gula” be as catchy as “Give me a clap”?
- Dylan: “Give me a clap” is probably more fun.
- Ashton: Yes, it probably is.

1 The Saami people are indigenous people living in the northern part of Scandinavia, including Norway. Saami music culture is highlighted in the music curriculum with a description of how to implement the genre through singing or dancing in primary school.

This practicum conversation illustrates various discourses that influenced the participants' suggestions for activities. For example, in the focus group interview (spring, Year 4), the PMTs referred to the music curriculum (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019) as justification for selecting activities such as the Saami song, creative composing, and music history (blues). Ashton reported that "Saami music is a competence goal. He's [the school-based mentor] never used that, he said." Although the PMTs seemed to believe that the school-based mentor did not use the music curriculum in music lessons, it may be that the mentor's years of teaching experiences, personal values, and music skills are reasons for the emphasis on band playing and practical activities. Not least, the Norwegian music curriculum's description of facilitating spaces for pupils' mastery, participation, and joy of music as central values of the subject may have influenced the school-based mentor's discourses (e.g., *fun, cool, easy, catchy*) (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). Being performatively oriented also confirms previously identified tendencies among Scandinavian music teachers (c.f. Ellefsen et al., 2023; Sætre et al., 2016). Still, negotiations in practicum conversations often resulted in selecting the school-based mentor's preferred activities. Negotiations often seemed to concern the choice of genres, for example, blues versus pop songs (*Let it be and Viva la Vida*) in which the school-based mentor's "genring" (Ellefsen, 2021) of content seemed to "stir" the PMTs into (Kemmis et al., 2014) a taken-for-granted-ness and reproducing what he perceived as "more popular" or "catchy".

At practice school 2, the school-based mentor referred to the recent music curriculum as central for planning various activities, saying that conducting more practical activities was highlighted. Additionally, the music subject facilitated opportunities for creating relations with pupils, the school-based mentor stated. Activities such as body percussion, music analysis assignment, and rehearsing for a concert were already planned when the PMTs entered practicum. The PMTs reported how useful it was to teach these activities to "expand their repertoire" (Payton) for future lessons "rather than planning everything themselves" (Ashton). On the one hand, these examples illustrate how the PMTs allowed themselves to be shaped by the school-based mentor's cultural-discursive flow (Mahon et al., 2017) in terms of deciding to conduct activities which was justified for at this practice school. On the other hand, a relevant question is why the school-based mentor did not encourage or challenge them to take on more responsibility regarding the selection of activities. At the same time, school-based mentors (at both practice schools) are responsible for carrying out various activities for pupils based on, for example, annual plans or curricular requirements. This may explain why the school-based mentors seemed to "stir" the PMTs into discourses (like practical activities) that reflected their everyday music teaching practices in these specific school contexts (Kemmis et al., 2014). Although the school-based mentors appeared to have good intentions by fostering various music teaching experiences for the PMTs, the differing expectations often resulted in limited opportunities for the PMTs to

make suggestions for alternative activities – either due to the school-based mentors' justifications and discourses taking up most of the space in the conversations or because the PMTs allowed themselves to be guided by the proposed activities.

Characteristics in the physical space-time: Doing activities through music

I observed how practicum conversations were conducted in various ways, not only through verbal language (sayings) but also through musical expressions and engagement (doings). For example, when the university-based mentor visited (practice school 1) and observed music lessons Ashton and Payton had conducted, they elaborated on focusing more on the body during a polyphonic song. Then, the university-based mentor (UBM) stood up to demonstrate:

UBM: The alternative is to (start to demonstrate a four-beat ground step). [...] Rather than saying, “we will start singing in two, 1 2 3 4”, you can be in the situation and address yourself to those who are going to sing. “Bam-bam-bam-bam” (sings the first part of the song). Then you are in the groove while working with the music [...] Using the music itself. Do it rather than describe and tell.

Singing or playing instruments as a part of the practicum conversations occasionally occurred between the PMTs and the school-based mentor at practice school 1. For example, when talking about conducting a Norwegian folk song with the 4th grade, Taylor started singing the beginning of the song. The school-based mentor asked her to continue singing and joined in trying to learn the song. This session resulted in the whole group singing for several minutes with their school-based mentor. During such practicum conversations, their actions (in material-economic terms) enabled communication and participation through music. Musical communication (Miell et al., 2005) and participatory music-making through music as active doing (musicking) (Small, 1998) created a space with “shared” knowledge (Mahon et al., 2017) conducted through interaction and musical engagement as an activity of meaning-making (Kemmis et al., 2014).

The musical expressions and engagements among the participants also enabled interaction and participatory music-making through the music classroom's setup and available resources (understood as material-economic resources). For example, an open space in the music classroom invited practical and musical engagement between the participants at practice school 1. Additionally, the physical setups at both practice schools enabled practical teaching with pupils in the music classrooms, with equipment comprising band instruments (like bass, guitar, drum set, piano), and open space on the floor. The practicum conversations (in the physical space-time dimension) made various ways of activity selection possible through the participant's musical expressions and engagement.

Characteristics in the social space: (Dis)connected relatings in practicum conversations

The extent to which PMTs or school-based mentors participated as equal interlocutors in practicum conversations influenced their relationship balance or (dis)connections, occasionally resulting in a traditional expert-apprentice pattern. At practice school 1, the school-based mentor often invited the PMTs to reflect upon previous teaching sessions but then ended up doing most of the talking, as illustrated in the following:

- SBM1: Okay, then we can discuss Ashton's lesson. It was very nice that you started here (by the podium), and it was very nicely prepared. So, this was really fun, actually, this rhythm thing.
- Ashton: It went a lot better than we expected.
- SBM1: Yes, it was surprisingly fun, and you had great participation there. And Payton, your part was about to take off completely. They [the pupils] thought it was so fun to create these figures. [...] This has great potential to be used in larger contexts.

I observed how the PMTs often had less space to make further reflections regarding their experiences of implementing music activities in practicum conversation. In the focus group interview (Year 5), I asked to what degree they had been given opportunities to reflect upon experiences during mentoring sessions at both practice schools. Dylan expressed that it had been "minimal" at practice school 1 because they mainly "received a monologue" from the school-based mentor. Although I observed that the school-based mentor had a great commitment to the music subject that presumably resulted in the dominant expert role, the lack of reciprocal dialogue resulted in unbalanced power relations and a disconnected relationship in practicum conversations (understood as constraining social-political arrangements). However, based on the extract described above, the school-based mentor's position as an expert may imply a master-apprentice relationship (c.f. Aglen, 2021; Juntunen, 2014) with intentions to explore music activities (e.g., composing) potential in future lessons.

The master-apprentice relationship also resulted in positive outcomes. For example, the PMTs expressed how the emphasis on conducting band playing had contributed to having "more control in band leading" (Dylan) and opportunities "to see how pupils in 4th and 5th grade can become great band players" (Taylor). As a result, "stirring" the PMTs into the school-based mentor's teaching practices enabled them to develop useful skills relevant for their future music teaching profession (Kemmis et al., 2014). Interestingly, the PMTs also seemed to extend the school-based mentor's music teaching practices by bringing composing as an alternative and new activity. For example, I observed how the school-based mentor expressed that he had learned composing was fun for the pupils to work with in a practicum conversation. This can serve as an example of how the traditional

expert-apprentice pattern was equalized in which PMTs extended the school-based mentor's repertoire.

Practicum conversations at practice school 2 were from the PMT's perspectives more dialogue-based (understood as enabling social-political arrangements), giving them a sense of being taken "seriously" (Taylor), and "asked what they were interested in discussing" (Ashton). Although the PMTs and the school-based mentor participated as equal interlocutors and connected with one another through solidarity (Kemmis et al., 2014), Payton stated a desire to receive more concrete feedback and tips rather than talking about "what we felt about what we had done". Still, reflecting on practical issues and knowledge seemed to be in focus at both practice schools rather than asking about the who, what, and why (Benedict & Schmidt, 2014) to foster PMTs' reflection on the rationale behind the selection of music activities.

Discussion

Through an analytical lens based on practice architecture theory, practicum conversations have illuminated characteristic discourses around practical activities, participation, and joy of music among the PMTs and school-based mentors as justifications for choosing certain activities. However, selecting alternative activities such as Saami songs, composing, or current events (Chick Corea) often posed challenges for the PMTs, resulting in continuous negotiations about which repertoire and content to choose. In this study, musical interaction and engagement in spaces of "shared" knowledge between PMTs and mentors served as alternative ways to select activities in practicum conversations. Additionally, the extent to which PMTs and school-based mentors acted as equal interlocutors or expert-apprentices, influenced the selection process in practicum conversations. In the following discussion, I explore how (and if) these various approaches to practicum conversations make spaces for renewal and change available among PMTs and mentors regarding the music subjects' content (as per RQ2).

We live in a time of constant efforts to change (Sjølief & Østern, 2021). As such, the double purpose of education – "to form people so they can live well in a world worth living in" (Kemmis & Edwards-Groves, 2018, p. 7) – requires that educational practices are re-made for every emerging historical epoch and distinctive settings (Kemmis, 2022). The PMTs in this study are situated in a distinctive GTE setting with re-made or changed conditions to which they must adapt. In order to renew or change the music subjects' content, requirements for PMTs to develop change competencies, as outlined in the national guidelines for GTE programs (UHR, 2018a, 2018b), is a relevant example of changed conditions they and other stakeholders must adapt to. In this article, we have seen challenges the PMTs faced in expanding and renewing the music subjects' content during practicum

conversations, for example by suggesting Saami music. Not only has Saami music a significant place in the new music curriculum (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019), but Saami culture has also gained more attention in Scandinavian society in recent years. Saami music and current societal events (such as the death of Chick Corea) can represent emerging historical epochs and curriculum foci that should be considered in connection with the music subject's content. There were, however, clear indications that the PMTs and school-based mentors often emphasized differing aspects of the music subject in practicum conversations.

The apparent influence of different expectations and discourses in practicum conversations can partly be explained by the fact that school-based mentors and PMTs have different roles; the former being experienced teachers and the latter being novices. On the one hand, the school-based mentor's discourses and leading expert position (practice school 1) seemed to function as implicit practice architectures (Sjølief & Østern, 2021) that reproduced and preserved music activities, content and genres based on personal preferences (Dobrowen, 2020; Ellefsen, 2021; Georgii-Hemming & Westvall, 2010). On the other hand, the PMTs' discourses may also be seen as implicit architectures deriving from music education programs that influenced their language and actions in practicum conversations. Consequently, PMTs and mentors' music teaching practices are products of other and different practices, shaped and conditioned by circumstances and prior histories (Kemmis & Smith, 2008). Additionally, the teaching practices of experienced school-based mentors are products of often long, implicit processes that become the status quo of everyday "ways of doing things" (Kemmis, 2022). Thus, there may not exist a cultural-discursive "free" space for either PMTs or school-based mentors due to the always-surrounding practice architectures that implicitly influence their actions and expressions (Kemmis et al., 2014).

Stirring PMTs into the status quo of music classrooms should, however, not be underestimated. On the contrary, the PMTs experienced being stirred into the school-based mentors' music teaching traditions contributed to filling up their "toolboxes" (Rinholm, 2019; Sætre, 2014) with relevant craft(s) and skills for the future profession (Kemmis et al., 2014). Master-apprentice traditions therefore still facilitate PMTs learning central craft(s) from their educators and mentors (Juntunen, 2014). Additionally, as demonstrated in this study, the PMTs extended the school-based mentor's teaching practices with new activities, thereby detaching themselves from the apprentice role. While it may not be surprising that PMTs, as novices, appreciated that the school-based mentor decided the content of music lessons (practice school 2); a relevant question to ask is to what degree it may nurture understandings and dispositions needed for meeting the ever-changing world of music education (Heuser, 2014). It is also worth noting that the PMTs involved in this study were in the final two years of their studies, which means they were experienced novices and soon-to-be teachers. Reproducing practices

instead of encouraging “renewal” through innovative teaching can, according to Rinholm (2019), result in future challenges for PMTs to expand their repertoire of activities and content. Thus, if familiar music teaching practices are to be challenged and renewed (Dobrowen, 2020), PMTs need support to re-examine traditions and make beliefs and practices on their own (Jorgensen, 2008). Furthermore, developing change competencies can imply capacities for PMTs to decide which practices to preserve and which to change (Jorgensen, 2008) through a dynamic interplay between traditional and innovative music teaching (Espeland, 2021).

In line with previous research, the mentors and PMTs tend to be performatively oriented in music classrooms (e.g., Ellefsen et al., 2023; Nysæther et al., 2021; Sætre et al., 2016). Interestingly, the participants’ performative orientation in this study also became apparent in practicum conversations and represented alternative ways for activity selection. The musical interaction in practicum conversations revealed overlapping practice architectures that enabled shared language for describing the music subject (cultural-discursive arrangements), engagement through music as active doing (musicking) (Small, 1998) (enabling material-economic arrangements), resulting in a more reciprocal relationship (social-political arrangements) between the participants. These examples of alternative approaches to practicum conversations invited embodied reflections in the act of doing music (Georgii-Hemming et al., 2020) and musical communication (Miell et al., 2005) that resulted in a shared meaning-making process among the participants. Still, these surrounding arrangements seemed to reproduce a tradition for practical knowledge (Sætre, 2014), which all the stakeholders were a part of, thereby omitting reflection to extend such practices.

According to Knudsen and Onsrud (2023), music teacher educators and PMTs need to critically examine and become aware of the content in curriculum texts, such as music curriculum or national guidelines for GTE, to secure its relevance for future music teachers. In line with the latter statement, I argue for a need to secure the curriculum content relevance for pupils in music lessons by increasing equity and access through various activities and content. Seen from practice architecture theory, PMTs are located between traditional and innovative practices during practicum placements, in which different practice schools have distinctive cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political arrangements that prefigure, enable, and constrain certain music teaching practices (Kemmis et al., 2014). For stakeholders to strive for renewal or change in the music subject, a willingness to renew established discourses and find various ways of justifying activity selection is needed (Kemmis, 2022). With the music curriculum as a point of departure, one could for instance raise questions about why certain activities are relevant for today’s pupils. Furthermore, exploring established material arrangements, such as physical setups in music classrooms, and seeking alternative ways to push for new learning contexts (Conway & Hibbard, 2019) can contribute to expanding music teaching practices. Finally, interrupting established

patterns of relationships between mentors and PMTs and invite for joint reflections and dialogues may increase the awareness in justifying the why, where, and for whom in activity selection processes (Benedict & Schmidt, 2014). As such, stakeholders may become more aware of how to explicitly talk about the choice of content in the music subject. Yet, as advocated by Conway and Hibbard (2019), change in music education contexts implies a dilemma for teacher educators (who also function as mentors) to prepare future teachers for “what was, what is, and what could be” (p. 17). Based on findings in this study, perhaps acknowledging and encouraging alternative music and activities PMTs bring with them into educational contexts – and also deciding which traditions to keep and which to pass on – can contribute to renewing the music subject’s content.

Implications and concluding remarks

This article was guided by two research questions, aiming to investigate how PMTs and mentors discussed and justified music activity selections (RQ1); and how spaces for renewal and change were made available in practicum conversations (RQ2). Practice architecture theory as an analytical tool provided useful for illuminating some of the many conditions that influenced PMTs and mentors’ music activity selections; and looking for alternative reasons for the participant’s expressions and actions in practicum conversations. This study contributes to the field in which little research currently exists on the practicum part of music teacher education. Employing other theoretical lenses in future research could enhance our understanding of how PMTs develop as future teachers within the practicum part of teacher education. Particularly, stakeholders and researchers could benefit from exploring alternative ways to select activities that involve language, musical engagements, and reciprocal relationships as a part of practicum conversations.

Based on this study, I conclude that making more spaces available for PMTs voices and resources can contribute to renewing and changing the music subject’s repertoire and content. Moreover, rather than elaborating on their teaching experiences in practicum conversations, mentors can ask questions beyond practical issues and invite PMTs for joint reflections about the justifications “behind” music activity selections. This can be helpful for PMTs and mentors to become aware of the reasoning of why certain music activities are relevant for today, tomorrow and the future.

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Author biography

Silje Meling Bjørnevoll is a PhD candidate in music education at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. Bjørnevoll's research interests include music teacher education, the practicum component of general and music teacher education, music education in schools, and educational change.

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