



Book Review:

Teoretiske og praktiske kunnskaper i lærerkvalifisering - sammenhenger og spenninger [Theoretical and Practical Knowledge in Teacher Qualification – interconnections and tensions]. Thorsen, K. E., & Michelet, S. (Eds.) (2019). Universitetsforlaget

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Development of teachers' professional competence starts in initial teacher education. A powerful teacher education programme should feature a common vision, cohesion and a strong curriculum grounded in practice (Hammerness, 2013). The absence of any of these three features can lead to fragmentation and a weakened development of student teachers' professional development. Grounding the curriculum in practice rests on a tight connection between what knowledge is learnt at university and what knowledge is learnt in practicum and practice-related activities. The two learning arenas – campus and practicum – do not only have a location difference, but can also differ in values and visions, adding to fragmentation and lessening the potential for professional development. This book offers an insight into what types of measures taken by ITE institutions could improve cohesion between the different learning arenas with the aim of improving student teachers' professional development. Focusing mainly on studies of the integration of subject-specific curricula and practice, the book contributes to the discourse and addresses the affordances of increased cohesion between theoretical and practical knowledge in ITE on student teachers' professional competence. The book should be highly relevant for teacher educators, ITE researchers and programmers worldwide but is currently only available in Norwegian.

Kirsten E. Thorsen and Simon Michelet have edited and co-authored this anthology. 26 contributing authors present studies of different measures taken to improve student

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teachers' professional development and discuss the relevance to student teachers' learning. The book is divided into 14 chapters, an initial overview and one chapter dedicated to each of the thirteen studies. The respective studies vary greatly in both content, purpose and extent, with most of them focusing on development of student teachers' professional competence through subject-specific further integration of practice. Two additional chapters focus on developing professional diversity competence through global consciousness and perceiving multiculturalism as a resource. The contributions are based on research of student teachers enrolled at OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University and Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences and shed light on the challenges and affordances of a profession-orientated teacher education.

Following is a short review of the chapters and corresponding studies. I have grouped them according to the professional competences they address and level of subject-specificity. Most of the studies in the anthology present perspectives on ways to interweave practice placement experiences with on-campus coursework. Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9 address student teachers' professional competence through subject-specific studies. Nevertheless, weaving practice with coursework is transferrable to all school-based subjects. Even though the chapters have been grouped as subject-specific studies, studies of professional diversity competence and cross-disciplinary studies, elements of all the studies have the potential to cross disciplines.

Student teachers' professional competence development – subject-specific integrated practice studies

Thorsen's (2019) study on student teachers' perceptions of the importance subject-specific competences have in relation to professional practice, presented in chapter 2, finds subject-specific, campus-taught curricula to be weakly connected to student teachers' perceptions of professional practice, despite the new master program's aim of coherence. Thorsen's discussion of the tensions between subject-specific curricula taught on campus and their 'usefulness' in practice and the development of teachers' professional competencies is a solid contribution to initial teacher education discourse.

The study presented in chapter 3, connects theory and practice through an assignment in mathematics (Bjerke, Eriksen, Rodal, & Solem, 2019). The study finds that by focusing on a specific teaching situation experienced in practicum, together with reflective tasks both pre and post lesson, the student teachers developed a deeper understanding of what it means to be a math teacher.

In chapter 4, Elvebakk, Lundberg and Vederhus (2019) investigate the extent to which school-based mentor teachers in L1 Norwegian consider themselves teacher educators. The authors' findings indicate that mentor teachers' professional identity is grounded in the school and their pupils, *not* the university, *nor* the didactical challenges that student teachers face. This interesting study points at mentor teachers' professional identity as teachers of L1 Norwegian as a major challenge for increased coordination between placement schools and ITE institutions.

Tørnby's (2019) participatory study in chapter 5 uses student teachers' drawings to express experiences in practicum. Her study shows the potential of connecting visual portrayals of experiences in practicum to theoretical terminology in hindsight. Although the students in her study are all prospective English teachers, the method could well be used in any other subject or many mentoring situations as it offers a chance to make explicit otherwise unexpressed student teachers' experiences in practicum.

The relevance of professionalism in tensions between practitioner and theoretical knowledge in music is addressed by Rinholm (2019) in Chapter 6. This study examines student music teachers' perceptions of the importance of practitioner and theoretical knowledge. The findings point to a shift from practitioner knowledge seen as most professionally relevant in the students' 2nd year to theoretical knowledge and reflection in their 3rd year. It would be interesting to see if similar studies of student teachers in professional master programs in other ITE institutions also recognized this shift in perspectives and translation of the chapter to English could perhaps reveal similarities in other studies.

The authors of chapter 7 (Lind, Nergård, & Svenkerud, 2019) investigated student teachers' development during various learning activities in connection with adaptations of classic literary works, observing them both on campus and in mentor-guided practicum. The students' engagement and interest in classic literature seemed to grow after completing the mandatory assignment.

Vingdal (2019) presents an action research-based project in chapter 9 aimed at improving student physical education teachers' levels of reflection. Her study of the project found that the students' attitude towards learning in campus and practicum varied, which led to less emphasis on reflection about pupils' learning and more on traditional teaching methods than they had planned. This study could be useful in research on the connection between student teachers' professional development and focus on pupils' learning.

The authors of chapter 10 (Hovik, Reinholdtsen, & Smestad, 2019) study the benefits of an examination task in mathematics where student teachers reflect over a planned lesson from practicum in light of theory. The chapter illustrates the potential for student teacher learning this type of assignment can have. The idea of using an examination task based on reflection over practicum experiences and lesson planning could be relevant for all subjects, especially pedagogy, and this study indicates that the potential outweighs the organisational challenges.

Focus on student teachers' professional diversity competence – global consciousness and multicultural classrooms

In chapter 8, Olsen, Wikan, Klein and Hage (2019) examine whether student teachers become better teachers if they have completed a practice placement overseas. The authors of this study look at how to develop global consciousness in student teachers and how that development can make for teachers better equipped to tackle the challenges of multi-

ethnic classrooms back home. The authors find that overseas practice placements combined with theoretical tasks, fieldwork and systematic reflection can strengthen values and contribute to student teachers' perceptions of improved communication with minority language learners.

In chapter 11, authors Nergård and Lundberg (2019) look at the extent that teachers consider and practice multilingualism as a resource in Norwegian classrooms after completing a further education course on the theme. The study finds that knowledge of theory and research about multilingualism is a prerequisite for teachers to see the potential in multilingual classrooms and that the multicultural perspective is rarely systematically grounded in school-based professional learning communities.

These two studies contribute to the discourse on student teachers' professional diversity competence, adding substance to the abstract meaning of diversity and how future teachers' competence in diversity could be improved by studies abroad and understanding the potential of multilingualism in the classroom.

Focus on student teachers' professional competence development – cross-disciplinary studies

Practicum as a professional learning arena is the theme for Chapter 12. Lindboe and Eid Kaarby (2019) present an innovative pre-school education project where student (pre-school) teachers work closely with mentor teachers to develop situation-based tasks carried out during practicum. Part of a larger-scale, NFR-supported project '*Utdanningsbarnehager*²', the authors' study of the larger project points to the benefits of including students in professional learning communities. It will be interesting to follow the results of this pre-school project considering its transferability to school-based, rather than kindergarten-based practicum.

Ulleberg's (2019) study of student teachers' learning activities over a three-year period cumulates in a model illustrating connections between knowledge perspectives student teachers meet during ITE. Dividing the knowledge perspectives into four areas: interaction with pupils; observation; conversation with colleagues and reading/writing, she provides a thoroughly useful framework for discussion and reflection over the connections and interactions between practical experiences and theoretical perspectives. This model of student teachers' learning activities would be useful to ITE researchers and programmers alike and its translation to English is recommended, such that it might reach a larger audience.

Eri and Michelet (2019) present a study in chapter 14 of case-based dialogue seminars as a strategy to lift school classrooms into teaching of theory. Part of a larger research project, this study of case-based dialogue seminars in ITE shows the potential in using authentic classroom cases dialogically to bring forth theoretical perspectives. Although the main project is of yet unfinished, this chapter transparently describes the project's

² Educational kindergartens (author's translation)

methodology, method and initial findings, providing a learning activity that connects theory and practice pragmatically and does not involve major organizational upheavals.

Limitations and recommendations

Apart from the studies participating in a larger research project, most studies presented in the anthology are small-scale, qualitative case studies. In addition, the data is based on student teachers from only two ITE institutions, OsloMet - Oslo Metropolitan University, and/or Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences (INN). This limits the transferability of the findings. Nevertheless, the extensive variation of the studies in the anthology reflects the diversity of teacher training programmes at these profession-based universities and, although the studies are small, they might offer inspiration for other ITE institutions seeking to ensure greater cohesion between theoretical and practical knowledge.

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