

Springer Polar Sciences

Diane B. Hirshberg · Mhairi C. Beaton ·
Gregor Maxwell · Tuija Turunen ·
Janette Peltokorpi *Editors*

Education, Equity and Inclusion

Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable
North

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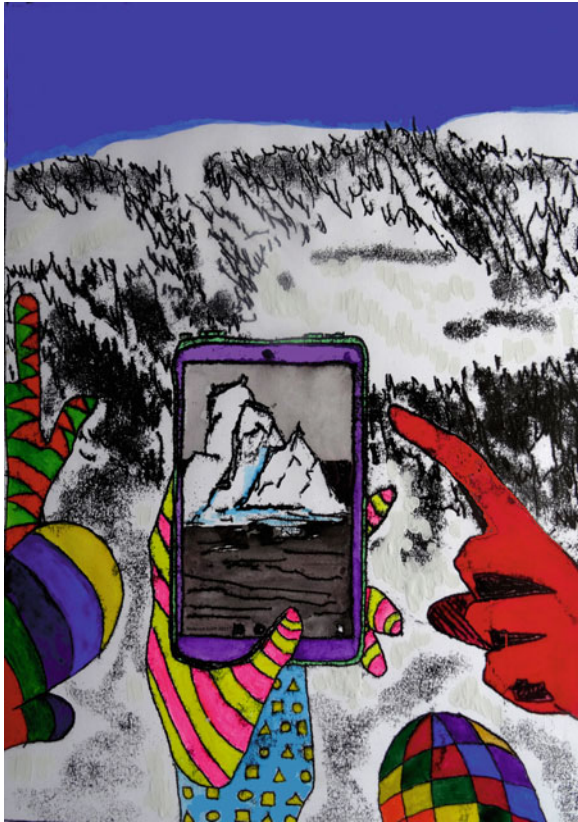


Illustration by Roderick Scott

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Education, Equity and Inclusion for a Sustainable North



Diane B. Hirshberg, Gregor Maxwell, Janette Peltokorpi, Mhairi C. Beaton, and Tuija Turunen



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Abstract While many texts address issues of equity, inclusion, and diversity, they are almost all focused on the global South, and miss the lessons that can be learned from Northern regions. This book begins to fill the gap in understanding how to create an education system that allows students to grow up grounded in their own cultures and languages, regardless of whether they are newcomers or Indigenous, and also to be able to navigate the broader world. It is structured around two main themes: (1) supporting teachers in addressing diversity and inclusion in the classroom, including consideration of language and identity issues; and, (2) engendering solutions to structural and geographical challenges in education in the circumpolar north. Each of the book's chapters touches on at least one of these themes, and many of them both, from a geographically and culturally diverse set of perspectives. While each can be read as a standalone piece, the collection as a whole gives a robust and unique set of insights into equity and inclusion issues in education across the circumpolar north. In this introduction, we provide a brief overview of the chapters.

Keywords Equity · Inclusion · Diversity · Circumpolar · Education

The goal of this book is to provide a current view on education, equity, and inclusion within the lens of education for a sustainable North. It is a follow-up to the first book published by the University of the Arctic (UArctic) Thematic Network on Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity, *Including the North: A comparative study of the policies on inclusion and equity in the circumpolar North, 2019*, which highlighted policies of inclusion and equity in education in national and regional contexts. We now explore in more depth the provision of education across the north, focusing on challenges and innovations in meeting the needs of diverse learners in remote and rapidly changing contexts.

This book is the result of the joint activity of 34 researchers from 17 universities or other organizations, a collaboration fostered by the aforementioned UArctic thematic network. The Thematic Network on Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity was established in 2015 and has since grown in both size and activity. The Network started with six universities from five countries, and today has 27 member organizations across the Arctic and beyond. As a collaborative network of teacher educators and researchers, we are interested in teacher education for all levels of education. Our activities focus on varying aspects of social justice and diversity in education, such as the inclusion of pupils with diverse needs and cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds, Indigenous education and

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traditional knowledge, and education in rural areas and with long distances. These themes are also reflected in this book.

While many texts address issues of equity, inclusion, and diversity, they are almost all focused on the global South, and miss the lessons that can be learned from Northern regions. Indeed, other than the aforementioned book by our thematic network, in the past decade, there have been few comprehensive looks at education across the circumpolar north. The education chapter of the *Arctic Human Development Report II* (Hirshberg & Petrov, 2015) provided an overview of some of the common challenges facing K-12 and post-secondary education in the North, such as instability in the teacher workforce and the difficulties of providing a comprehensive education in small and remote communities, but the breadth and depth were limited by constraints on the length of the chapter and the need to focus only on a few key themes. The education chapter in the first *Arctic Human Development Report* (Johansson et al., 2004) only addressed four Arctic states directly, in an even briefer description of common issues facing schools in the north. The last book to focus on primary and secondary circumpolar education, *Taken to Extremes: Education in the Far North*, was published in 1996 (Darnell & Hoem, 1996). Much has changed in education, including the change brought about by growing access to technology and increasing globalization in the education enterprise, and simultaneously recognition that education needs to be grounded in place, and the local cultures, languages, and histories of the children and young people served in our schools.

This book begins to fill the gap in understanding how to create an education system that allows students to grow up grounded in their own cultures and languages, regardless of whether they are newcomers or Indigenous, and also to be able to navigate the broader world. The tension between local and global runs throughout education structures and policies across the North, and issues of identity, diversity, and inclusion are front and center in these. We ourselves have tried to be inclusive in how we define the north, not being constrained by traditional definitions of the Arctic or circumpolar North, but instead including places that have strong northern identities as they themselves define them. We also did not pre-define equity and inclusion for our authors, but rather welcome a broad array of approaches to these topics. We believe the sum of the whole will give us a more complete picture of what it means to achieve education for a sustainable North without having narrowly defined these concepts upfront.

This work is structured around two main themes: (1) supporting teachers in addressing diversity and inclusion in the classroom, including consideration of language and identity issues; and, (2) engendering solutions to structural and geographical challenges in education in the circumpolar north. Each of the chapters touches on at least one of these themes, and many of them both, from a geographically and culturally diverse set of perspectives. While each can be read as a standalone piece, the collection as a whole gives a robust and unique set of insights into equity and inclusion issues in education across the circumpolar north. A brief overview of the chapters follows:

In their chapter '*Adaptation isn't just for the tundra: Rethinking teaching and schooling in Alaska's Arctic*,' **Diane B. Hirshberg, Douglas Cost, and Edward**

Alexander challenge the narrative around the teacher crisis in Alaska and critique what is missing in the current discussion on how to improve school outcomes in rural Alaska. After exploring how the history of colonization and assimilation efforts in Alaska has created and propagated the current situation, they look at recent proposals to transfer more authority over rural schools to tribes and local communities and ask whether tribes should fully enact tribal control and self-determination in education.

Mitdlarak Lennert, in her chapter *'The role of evaluative thinking in generating, evaluating and scaling innovations in learning: A case study of the Greenland education system'* explores the policy instruments used for monitoring and evaluation in the Greenland education system. She looks at the types of objectives, what is monitored, and for what purpose. Lennert discusses how context shapes evaluation culture and conditions for development, and how reforms inspired by those from foreign countries do not make sense if the specific contexts of school systems, needs, stakeholder involvement, and capacity building are not considered.

Ylva Jannok Nutti, in her chapter, asks if there should be *'Sámi Teacher Education or Teacher Education for Sámi students?'* She explores the cornerstones of Sámi Teacher Education, especially in the context of the Sámi University of Applied Sciences located in Norway, which provides teacher education for Sámi students in the north Sámi language. She applied both text analysis and self-narration methods to understand syllabi in practice, and develops a metaphor of the *lávvu* (*tipi*) and the *caggi*, three basic poles supporting the structure of *lávvu* to identify heritage languages, indigenous knowledges and traditional pedagogies such as land-based approach as the cornerstones. Ylva Jannok Nutti underlines that to decolonise teacher education, these three basic poles have to lay the foundations for teaching and learning in Sámi Teacher Education.

In their chapter *'Education Provision for Indigenous and Minority Heritage Languages Revitalisation: A Study focusing on Sámi and Scottish Gaelic'*, **Mhairi C. Beaton, Pigga Keskitalo and Hanna Helander** provide a comparative study of education provision for the Indigenous language of Sámi and the minority heritage of Scottish Gaelic. Both languages are endangered according to UNESCO listings and the authors examine similarities and differences in how in recent years educational provision in Finland and Scotland have contributed to efforts to maintain and revitalise both languages concluding with some emerging recommendations for future practice.

In her chapter *'Policy equity contexts in inclusive education for immigrant children in The Faroe Islands'*, **Kalpna Vijayarathan** highlights the need for educational policymakers to take account of the importance of the ethnic cultural identities of immigrant children, their use of home languages and inclusion through education to ensure their integration in The Faroe Islands.

In their chapter *'Does it Matter Where You Live? Young people's experiences of educational transitions from basic education to further education in Finnish Lapland'*, **Suvi Lakkala, Tuija Turunen, Merja Laitinen, Katja Norvapalo and Kaisa Thessler** highlight the challenges and opportunities, due to geography, for a smooth transition from basic to further education for young people living in far north of Finland, North-Lapland. While upper secondary education is provided in the

north, those who choose vocational education and training need to move hundreds of kilometres south to a bigger locality. The authors explore the differences between these two groups.

In their chapter, *'Personal and ethnic identity in representatives of the indigenous small-numbered peoples of the Russian Far North – the Sámi and the Nenets'* **Natalia Flotskaya, Svetlana Bulanova** and **Maria Ponomareva** present findings from research undertaken with Saami and Nenets communities in Russia examining the identities adopted by young people in these Indigenous communities in comparison with their Russian counterparts noting the need for an educational environment that allows Indigenous youth to develop positive identities that maintain their cultural heritage.

In *"A lesson is most exciting [when] the teacher typically explains complex topics"* – *A student perspective on public schooling in Greenland,* **Lars Demant-Poort** and **Louise Pindstrup Andersen** set out to fill a gap in research on education in Greenland, specifically around students' perspectives on what happens inside classrooms. Using survey methodologies, they explore students' perceptions of schooling and lessons on the Greenlandic language and mathematics and use these to broaden understandings about schooling in Greenland.

Sally Windsor and **Karin Kers** talk about education for sustainable development in their chapter "Teaching Social Sustainability and About Sweden's Sami Peoples in Senior Secondary School". Through an action-research project they identified a lack of awareness about Sami culture and implemented a unit of lesson that increased students' knowledge of Sami life both historically and presently. Enhanced awareness of how prejudice and stereotyping are used to 'other' certain groups to justify exploitation and oppression will help create a more inclusive and sustainable society in South Sápmi, Sweden.

In their chapter, *'Collaborative Pedagogies: Seeking and Finding Truth within Indigenous Children's Literature through Multiliteracies'*, **Anne Burke, Benjamin Boison** and **Deborah Toope** provide an account of how two teachers responded to a lack of curricular content on Indigenous Peoples and histories in their Canadian context through the design of a curriculum that incorporated Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing through a multiliteracies pedagogical approach.

In their work: *Analysis of policies supporting teachers to tackle linguistic and cultural diversity and facilitate inclusion from the perspectives of Iceland and The Faroe Islands.*, **Kalpna Vijayarathan** and **Edda Óskarsdóttir** combine perspectives from two Nordic islands to explore the policy framework needed for preparing preservice teachers to work with learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. They find that language is central in providing agency and a pathway to learning and knowledge, and conclude that teacher education must both prepare pre-service teachers to work inclusively and ensure they can deliver quality teaching in the official language to help ensure immigrant inclusion.

Benedikte Brincker and **Lene Holm Pedersen**, in *'A walk on the wild side – on the motivation of immigrant workers to provide public service in Greenland,'* study the recruitment and turnover of school teachers in Greenland, comparing differences between the West and East coast of Greenland. Their work explores whether there

are motivations that could be fostered in the system to mitigate some of the recruitment problems facing schools in Greenland.

In the chapter '*Multi-grade Teaching in a Small Rural School in Northern Norway*', **Anne-Mette Bjøru** investigates characteristics of teaching practices that enable inclusion and adapted education in a multi-grade school in a small rural community in Northern Norway. Findings highlight three didactical tools that are useful when conducting multi-grade teaching in a small school with a small number of pupils. Discussion also focuses on the importance of how the curriculum delivers social learning when working towards practice that is both inclusive and adapted to the individual pupil.

Edda Óskarsdóttir and Anna Katarzyna Wozniczka in '*Fostering professional development for inclusive education in rural Iceland: A collaborative action research project*' explore the ways of supporting teachers, who are located in rural areas without easy access to professional development courses, through a collaborative action research study of a course they taught on inclusive education. They found the course created a community of practice for nurturing inclusive practices in the school. The school's leaders played a key role during the course, by supporting the staff and providing insights to the teachers. In addition, participation by all employees was crucial, as they all contribute to inclusive practices, despite working with students in various areas and to different extents.

In the concluding chapter '*Southern Reflections on Education toward a Sustainable North*', **Sue Dockett and Bob Perry** set the stage from their 'not from north' perspective. They draw attention to things like language and culture, local communities, demographic changes, and educational policies affecting the provision of education in the north. However, they note that these are also global phenomena. Their interesting conclusion is the meaning of being 'in this place', a place that is created and re-created through social interaction and relationships. They bring us to a notion of culturally responsive pedagogies to acknowledge the role of place, regarding it as a dynamic resource for learning and teaching, and underline that place matters and should be taken into consideration in both initial and in-service teacher education as well as in the provision of education.

Diane B. Hirshberg, PhD, is Director and Professor of Education Policy at the Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska Anchorage. She also serves as Vice-President Academic for the University of the Arctic and sits on the Board of the Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S. Her research focuses on indigenous and circumpolar education issues, and the role of education in sustainable development in the Arctic.

Gregor Maxwell, PhD, is an Associate Professor in inclusive education at UiT Norway's Arctic University in Tromsø where he teaches on the educational science (pedagogics) and inclusive education programmes. His research focuses on the participation and inclusion of children with additional support needs and the inclusion competences of newly qualified teachers.

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Mhairi C. Beaton, PhD, is a Professor in the Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University located in the United Kingdom. She is originally from the north-west Highlands of Scotland where she taught for over 20 years prior to embarking on a career in Higher Education. Mhairi's research focuses on the interface between inclusion, teacher education and student voice.

Tuija Turunen, PhD, is a Professor of teacher education and leader of the teacher education programme at the Faculty of Education, University of Lapland, Finland. In addition, she holds a position of Dean at the faculty. Turunen holds a UArctic Chair and leads the UArctic and the UNESCO/UNITWIN networks on Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity.

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Chapter 2

Adaptation Isn't Just for the Tundra: Rethinking Teaching and Schooling in Alaska's Arctic



Diane B. Hirshberg, Douglas Cost, and Edward Alexander



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Abstract In Alaska, schools as structured do not work for far too many of Alaska's students, especially Indigenous students. This chapter raises issues that are not being addressed in most discussions on the schooling and teacher crisis in Alaska. We call out the failure of the existing system of teacher preparation. We then move into a critical discussion around what is missing from the current deliberations around improving schooling outcomes in rural Alaska: how the history of colonization and assimilation efforts in Alaska has created and propagated the current situation. We explore recent proposals to transfer more authority over rural schools to tribes and local communities and ask whether tribes should rethink the entire enterprise of education in rural Alaska, by fully enacting tribal control and self-determination in education.

Keywords Retention · Turnover · Colonization · Indigenous · Rural

2.1 Introduction

While Alaska is part of the United States, in many ways – geographically, culturally, economically, and socially – it is distinct and separate from the contiguous lower 48 states of the U.S. Indeed, some might contend that Alaska shares more, in terms of culture, climate, and geography, with its nearest neighbor Canada, than with the rest of the nation. Certainly, this is true in terms of some of the challenges facing schooling in remote and rural communities in Alaska and northern Canada, from difficulties attracting and retaining teachers to significant barriers to making schools responsive to and reflective of local peoples' culture, languages and practices (Berger et al., 2016; Hirshberg et al., 2019).

Alaska is home to a large and diverse Indigenous population, many of whom live in numerous small and scattered villages across the state. There are 231 federally recognized Indian tribes in the state, and at least 20 distinct Indigenous languages, many of which have multiple dialects (Holton, n.d.). While some of the Indigenous languages are strong, others are threatened, as they are spoken by very few people. Only one Indigenous language (Central Yup'ik in southwestern Alaska) is spoken by children as the first language of the home (ANLC, 2021), though language learning and revitalization efforts are underway across the state.

Alaska's context means that many public policies developed in lower 48 contexts do not work well in the state. This is particularly true for education policies and practices in the rural and remote parts of the state. Over 80% or more than 300 of Alaska's communities are not connected to a contiguous road system; these are accessible only by plane or boat, and most of the most remote communities are predominantly Indigenous. And yet, Alaska's school system mirrors the education systems across the rest of the nation, and with a few exceptions the schools operate like those "outside," (in the lower 48 states) despite the unique peoples, cultures, and geography of the state. In the 2019–2020 school year there were just under 129,000

public school students grades K-12, in just over 500 public schools.¹ Indigenous students comprised over 21% of the population statewide,² but in the most remote school districts made up between 70% and 99% of the students. Statewide, Indigenous students perform more poorly than the overall population on (admittedly flawed) standardized measures of proficiency, although across the board Alaska students do not do well. In AY 2019, 39% of all students across all grades that take statewide English Language Arts proficiency tests (grades 3–10) scored as advanced or proficient, while only 16% of Indigenous students scored as advanced or proficient. In Mathematics students across Alaska performed more poorly, with only 36% scoring as advanced or proficient, and Indigenous students again were at 16% advanced or proficient. Graduation rates also indicate that schools are not serving Indigenous students well; statewide their four-year graduation rate was 68% while the graduation rate for all students was 80% (AK DEED Data Center, [n.d.](#)).

While standardized tests and graduation rates can be a poor measure of student learning – there is no way to unpack whether students simply will not take exams seriously or attend school as an act of resistance or whether they are not prepared for the test materials or high school courses – it is clear that schools as structured do not work for far too many of Alaska's students, especially our Indigenous students.

This chapter raises issues that are not being addressed in most discussions on the teacher crisis in Alaska. We call out the failure of the existing system of teacher preparation. We then move into a critical discussion around what is missing from the current deliberations around improving schooling outcomes in rural Alaska: how the history of colonization and assimilation efforts in Alaska has created and propagated the current situation. We explore recent proposals to transfer more authority over rural schools to tribes and local communities and ask whether tribes should rethink the entire enterprise of education in rural Alaska, by fully enacting tribal control and self-determination in education.

It is important to position ourselves in this work. We are an Indigenous educator and leader and two non-Native settlers working in the public university system, who take to heart Tuck and Yang's (2012) cautions about how we define and use decolonization. In our conclusion, we are not arguing for metaphorical decolonization but instead are advocating for a genuine transfer of both oversight and allocation of resources for education to the first peoples of the land. As we discuss below, we believe this will improve not only the outcomes for students, but also for the educators working in rural schools, both Indigenous and non-Native, and change the story from too few teachers on the tundra to developing culturally and context-appropriate system changes that facilitate stronger and more explicit connectivity amongst communities, schools, and faculty.

¹ We are using 2019–2020 enrollment numbers and 2019 standardized test data because numbers in the 2020–2021 school year are unreliable due to COVID-19 impacts.

² This number does not include the 12% of students who identify as two or more races, many of whom are also Indigenous.

2.2 The Teacher Workforce

In 2018–2019, there were 7899 certificated teachers in Alaska. The state does not report the ethnicity of teachers, but old work indicated that the vast majority of teachers are white; fewer than 5% of teachers were Alaska Native. Teacher turnover in rural schools in Alaska averages more than twice as high as in urban or “urban-fringe” schools and about 1/3 higher than in hub communities (larger communities that provide services to smaller villages in a region) From 2012–2013 to 2017–2018 annual turnover, as defined by a teacher leaving their school district for another district or the state averaged 30% in rural or remote schools, and of those over 2/3 left teaching or Alaska (Vazquez Cano et al., 2019). Despite significant investments in teacher induction and mentoring, experiments with financial retention incentives, and other efforts, turnover rates have remained high and steady. And the situation is rapidly getting worse – this past year we saw teachers backing out of contracts due to COVID-19 concerns and Alaska’s economic crisis.

Teachers who are prepared within Alaska have a lower turnover rate (Hill & Hirshberg, 2013; Vazquez Cano et al., 2019). However, for the past two decades up until 2019, the number of educators prepared in-state annually has numbered between 200 and 300, while districts typically need to fill about 1000 spots each year. And, in 2019, the state’s largest teacher education program closed; the number of teachers graduating within the state dropped to under 200. While some vacancies are filled by teachers returning to the profession after taking a leave, only about 150 locally prepared educators are hired each year, with the rest coming from out of state. And, not all locally prepared teachers enter the workforce immediately. Some are not willing to relocate for available positions, especially if they require teachers living in urban areas to move to rural Alaska. They instead work in other jobs and wait until teaching positions open in their community (Shaw et al., 2013).

2.3 Conventional Policy Efforts to Fix the Teacher Pipeline Issues

2.3.1 *Efforts to Prepare More Local and Indigenous Educators*

One of the common solutions proposed for solving teacher turnover is growing locally prepared educators. However, these efforts have not resulted in sufficient numbers of teachers to meet Alaska’s needs. There are several initiatives aimed at growing more teachers for Alaska schools. Eight districts participate in the *Educators Rising Alaska* initiative, intended to attract high school students into the teaching profession, and support them through college and into their careers. Formerly known as the Future Teachers of Alaska, it is part of the national Educators Rising initiative, which is a free national membership organization for aspiring

teachers and their mentors. Preparing Indigenous Teachers and Administrators for Alaska's Schools (PITAAS), began in 2000 at the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) as an effort to grow the Alaska Native teacher workforce, and was later expanded to include school administrators. This federally-funded initiative has provided funding and support to Indigenous students pursuing degrees from the associate to the Master's degree level. The UAS Alaska College of Education also has an Indigenous Scholars Program that works with the U.S. Department of Education to offer loan forgiveness, cultural education support, and 2 years of professional development including mentorship and job placement assistance for eligible students. This program supports Indigenous students seeking both a Master of Arts in Teaching and a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and principal certification. However, the numbers graduating through these efforts remain low. A \$3 million, three-year renewal of the Sustaining Indigenous Local Knowledge, Arts, and Teaching (SILKAT) grant at the University of Alaska Fairbanks School of Education (UAFSOE) has facilitated the introduction of a series of Alaska Indigenous Teacher Initiatives, i.e., The Alaska Indigenous Teacher Corps (AITC), as well as plans to develop an Alaskan Indigenous Teacher Network working to support Indigenous educational leaders and facilitate post-graduation community building and professional development. The plan is to develop regional Alaska Indigenous Teacher Alliances (AITA) composed of tribal organizations, businesses, school districts, the UAF School of Education, and UAF Rural Campuses. These are all University of Alaska system efforts to bring local cultural knowledge to the forefront of the curriculum and to recruit, equip and retain new teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach in and through the arts and culture in Alaska's schools.

However, the numbers produced by programs like PITAAS and SILKAT are not yet sufficient to address these problems, and we need to have a unified, concerted, and ongoing effort that is not tied solely to intermittently sustainable support sources like federal grants. District efforts to support pathways for local residents to become educators are a start. Three districts in Alaska have explicit pathways for paraprofessionals to move toward certification and nine more districts provide financial support to paraprofessionals in teacher education programs. The long-running program in the Lower Kuskokwim School District with UAFSOE's SILKAT program, in particular, has made an impact on who is in the classroom, as is discussed elsewhere, but there are only a handful of these efforts, and there needs to be a broader community conversation about how to make the pipeline attractive and permanent (see Tetpon et al., 2015; Defeo & Tran, 2019).

2.3.2 Efforts to Retain New Teachers

Another way education leaders have tried to stem turnover is through initiatives that support new educators as well as financial incentives to incentivize teachers to stay. One longstanding effort is the Alaska Statewide Mentor Program (ASMP). Built upon a model developed at the New Teacher Center (NTC) in California, this

initiative is in its 18th year of working with new educators. While this effort has been effective with some teachers, the overall trend statewide continues to defy efforts to significantly reduce the rate of turnover. Financial incentive experiments such as longevity bonuses have likewise not produced a significant change in turnover rates.

Alaska's rural schools are failing to serve too many children, and this systemic failure is often identified as rooted in Alaska's teacher workforce crisis. The state's rural school districts have struggled to attract and retain educators. In-state teacher preparation programs have never met the demand for educators statewide, and rural districts have primarily had to hire teachers prepared outside the state (Hill & Hirshberg, 2013). The recent loss of the largest teacher preparation program in the state has further diminished the local supply of educators (Hanlon, 2019). And yet, the issue of achieving better learning outcomes for all of Alaska's students runs much deeper than a supply and demand conundrum.

Annual teacher turnover rates of 20–40% in rural Alaska schools likely impact students' academic and emotional well-being; high teacher turnover is strongly correlated with lower student achievement in Alaska and across the U.S. (Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Hirshberg et al., 2014). Turnover forces students and communities to repeatedly rebuild rapport, connectivity, and trust with newly recruited educators. In Alaska's rural and Indigenous communities, new educators face additional challenges in serving students from unfamiliar cultures and navigating the challenges of working in places with often very different living and working conditions from those where they were educated to teach.

But while it is easy to point to issues of teacher recruitment and retention as the primary cause of rural school failure, we contend that the full story is far more complex, and therefore the solution less straightforward than current efforts to prepare, recruit and retain teachers, which continue to be largely unsuccessful.

2.4 Policy Efforts to Create More Culturally Grounded Practice

Another approach to retaining teachers is to help them be more successful and satisfied in their teaching. A key effort to achieving this is equipping teachers with the skills to create inclusive learning environments through utilizing Alaska Native cultures, languages, and pedagogies in the classroom. The *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools* attempt to do this (Alaska Native Knowledge Network (ANKN), 1998), calling for schools and communities to critically examine the extent to which they recognize and respond to the cultural and linguistic diversity of their students and families. These standards represent a shift from teaching and learning about culture and heritage to learning and teaching *through* culture as a foundation for education. In Spring 2012, the Alaska Board of Education officially adopted the "Alaska Cultural Standards for Educators," along with new guidelines for implementing the cultural standards (AK DEED, 2012). However, these guidelines have never resulted in a widespread change in educational practices around the

state. The standards are not being employed in a systematic or systemic way in schools or districts. Including them in school accountability measures with school climate surveys and similar types of data measures beyond graduation rates and standardized tests could yield more useful data in understanding the challenges students and teachers face beyond teacher supply and retention, but this does not seem likely to happen.

The state has tried to support culturally responsive practice by offering a “Type M Limited certificate” for educators with expertise in three specific areas: Alaska Native language or culture, Military Science, or vocational/technical areas. This has had limited success; as of 2019, there were 32 Type M certificate holders for Alaska History, Alaska Native Language or Culture, Alaskan Studies, or Alaska Native Arts, in 13 districts. Some districts have implemented policies and practices to create systems that better reflect the cultures, places, and environments within which they operate. These include Yup’ik and Tlingit language immersion programs and the Iñupiaq Learning Framework in the North Slope Borough School District. However, none of these efforts are widespread nor do they challenge the fundamental structure of the Western school system.

2.5 What Can Or Should Be Done? A More Critical Examination

Clearly, the status quo isn’t working, and something else must be done. At a minimum, state policymakers, district and school leaders, and community members must find ways to nurture effective teachers who will stay and become rooted in the diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic fabric of Alaska’s classrooms and communities. Schools and communities can take more intentional actions to support current and prospective educators and help them succeed, from simple actions like finding community members to mentor/guide teachers and encouraging parents to get to know teachers, and help teachers get to know community leaders, to revamping salary and benefits structures, and investing savings from retaining teachers in teacher compensation and professional development. But these approaches fail to address the fundamental issue for rural and Indigenous students, that the entire system is based on an imposed structure that has never reflected local cultures, epistemologies, or ways of teaching and learning.

2.6 The Impact of Colonization

The current public school system in Alaska is built on the legacy of a colonial system, imposed by settlers from outside of Alaska. The history of colonization in Alaska, including compulsory and imported schooling, mirrors that of many other places in the north. While Russian missionaries provided the first formal schooling in

parts of the state, it was when Alaska became a U.S. territory that schooling became an explicit tool of the colonization process.

It's important to note that education was not something that white colonists brought to Alaska – the Indigenous peoples of this land have been educating their children for thousands of years, and we will circle back to that shortly. But schooling was imposed by non-Natives with the goals initially to Christianize and “civilize” Natives in order to accommodate the economic and cultural needs of the dominant Western society. Early schools in Alaska were run by missionaries, and then when public schools were created Alaska Native students were often kept in segregated schools (Hirshberg, 2001). From the 1950s to the mid-1970s Indigenous students in rural communities were forced to attend boarding or residential schools to receive a secondary education (and for some also for primary school); some of these institutions were profoundly abusive, and all were grounded in languages, cultures and teaching methods other than those of Alaska Natives (Hirshberg, 2008). When public schools for secondary students were established across the state in the mid to late 1970s, as a result of a legal settlement and new wealth from the Alaska oil pipeline, Alaska Native students continued to be educated in schools structured like those from the Midwest of the United States.

The lasting legacy of colonization extends beyond the loss of language and culture that many recognize. It continues in the fundamental structure of the schooling system, in Alaska and elsewhere in the U.S. The ways that knowledge was transferred before Western schooling was imposed on Indigenous Alaskans was quite different from what is practiced today in schools, with learning happening on the land and by observation and hands-on practice. In revolving around sharing the knowledge needed for survival, learning also followed seasons and subsistence practices. We are not implying that all formal schooling is bad, or romanticizing learning from before contact, but rather highlighting that the system now follows a schedule that often does not make sense and that interferes with critical place-based learning opportunities. Current school calendars keep students in school when subsistence cycles would dictate their participation in critical activities, for example during moose hunting in September in the interior of Alaska or hunting for migrating birds in April instead of taking standardized tests.

But it's not just pedagogy or the calendar. It's also whom the state designates as being an approved educator capable of sharing knowledge within the institutional setting of public schools. With just a few exceptions (as was described earlier), it does not allow local communities to determine who should be considered an appropriate educator for their context. Moreover, the system fails to recognize the value of knowledge held by elders or others considered knowledge bearers by their community.

There also hasn't been healing from the abuses of the former boarding school system or the missionary schools. There hasn't been a truth and reconciliation process, nor has the federal government made reparations. It took until 2018 for there to be a formal acknowledgment of the abuse by the Alaska government, when former Governor Walker apologized to Alaska Natives “for the wrongs that you have endured for generations, for being forced into boarding schools. . . for (being)

forced to abandon your Native language and adopt a foreign one. . . for erasing your history. . . for the generational and historical trauma you have suffered” (Hughes, 2018). However, functionally this was an apology without any action; the governor lost the election and there hasn't been a real reckoning about what else needs to happen to address the lasting impacts.

Instead, Alaska has a track record of multiple generations of students for whom school as structured simply did not and still does not produce learning outcomes that benefit all students in realizing their potential. One reason is that negative attitudes towards education are passed on to multiple generations without either the youth or educators fully understanding the root cause of these feelings within communities. The history of that abuse has been lost for many families, and yet the feelings remain.

Rollo (Forthcoming) describes this phenomenon in Canada, noting that Indigenous communities and students participate in schooling for strategic reasons such as acquiring the credentials that offer a pathway to economic security, learning about the political and legal landscape affecting Canadian Aboriginal policy, and becoming educators themselves. However, “none of these strategic practices should be interpreted as an endorsement of schooling.” He adds “Non-consensual, compulsory schooling has been central to the colonial displacement of certain Indigenous parenting cultures. . .” Rollo then argues:

Decolonization of education, therefore, requires much more than Indigenization of the curriculum and instructors, since inclusivity has been a strategy of promoting Indigenous attendance and success in non-consensual assimilative contexts of state schooling for almost a century. Rather, decolonization appears to require rejection of the colonial premise of non-consensual education entirely: of compulsory attendance, classroom management, and imposed assessment as the chief mechanisms of assimilation.

The only way to achieve the goals of an education system that repudiates colonial pedagogies and practices, he notes is “. . .with an education system that is developed and managed by particular Indigenous communities according to their particular traditions and needs.”

2.7 Creating a Decolonized System

We contend that to rectify the failures of rural schools in Alaska, the narrative must change. Rather than trying to increase the number of teachers recruited to or prepared in Alaska, we need to create culturally and context-appropriate system changes that facilitate stronger and more explicit connectivity and accountability amongst communities, schools, and faculty. This is not intended to say that students should not be prepared for working in the western world, but rather that the best way to equip them with the skills and knowledge to succeed in their future endeavors is to ground them first in their own culture, language, and knowledge systems, and then build onto these the skills, language, and epistemologies that will enable them to succeed in the western system. This also allows those students the choice between pursuing further

education and job opportunities outside their home community, staying in their home village and living a traditional subsistence lifestyle, or doing both, and moving between urban and rural homes and workplaces as they choose, something that growing numbers of Indigenous Alaskans have decided to do. This approach to schooling has been shown to work in individual schools and communities in Alaska, such as at the Ayaprun Elitnaurvik Yup'ik Immersion School in Bethel where students consistently outperform other students in the district on standardized test measures.

However, it is difficult to recapitulate/reform an educational system that has deep and ongoing roots in colonization and assimilation. There is no simple reset button to start over as a decolonized system. Our Canadian colleagues have come to similar conclusions, with Berger et al. (2016) noting that "...basing high school on Inuvialuit rather than EuroCanadian culture would require a complete redesign of formal schooling and very many Inuvialuit teachers and administrators. . ." (p. 70). We contend that this is what is necessary if we are going to address the failures we describe above. But, how do we completely rethink, reform, and rebuild from the ground up a decolonized system when colonization and assimilation roots have proliferated so far on the tundra and in policy arenas, thinking, and communities with incredible effect on the past and present social fabric? How do we disrupt the current and ongoing narrative of the lack of teachers to how to develop Indigenous-developed systems that produce community, connectivity, and cooperation/collaboration amongst communities, schools, and faculty? How can we balance the system so that students can find success for themselves after schooling to continue pursuing the development of Indigenous knowledge, skills, and culture within their community and/or pursuing continuing education elsewhere in Alaska or more broadly? How can we produce a system collaboratively that produces successful learning outcomes and values development in two knowledge systems, Indigenous and Western?

2.7.1 Shifting Control of Schooling

Shifting control of rural schools offers one possibility. In Alaska, a proposal has been circulating for some years to allow tribal compacting of education. In other words, tribes create a contract with the state government to run their own schools rather than having state or REAA run schools. This effort enjoys support from the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development as well as from participants in the state's "Alaska's Education Challenge process," a collective planning effort to improve public education in Alaska (<https://education.alaska.gov/akedchallenge>). The details are yet to be determined, but one question is whether community and tribal control over schools might lead to alternative approaches to certifying, hiring, and supporting teachers. And with tribal control, there could be drastic improvements to the relevancy, timeliness, and applicability of curricula and content in these classrooms. It is unknown as to what tribal determination of public schooling will

look like. The details, in fact much of it, are yet to be determined, but leadership in Alaska has allocated COVID relief funds to begin this process. Also, alongside this effort, a ballot initiative to codify state recognition of tribes will be voted on in 2022. This could provide needed momentum for expanded state-tribal partnerships toward achieving State Tribal Education Compact Schools (STECs).

2.7.2 Grounding Schooling in Local Community Ways

In the current system, teachers educated in the western system are taught to keep kids in classrooms in the chairs via classroom management systems and mandates, oriented towards compliance. They are not taught the real-life and functional aspects of living in a rural Alaska village. Why not? There is much learning content for students to grapple with in understanding the logistics of projects or how to organize outings for the community to learn, experience, and grow together. Students should be leading or co-leading here. In this way, students understand how to “do” management in the village, instead of emerging as a graduate from the school system and unable to do what they need to do to live successfully in their home community. Societal values and norms are all as important to this as is the logistics and organization. Students, as well as their teachers, need to be well-versed in how to communicate with and take care of others in locally appropriate ways and need to understand community processes and protocols and the intricacies of resource allocation in villages. All of these concepts could easily be refashioned within the state’s current vague education standards, but this necessitates an intimate understanding of the local community.

A useful unit could explore village logistics and management as part of the curriculum, and would provide ample fodder for lessons and curriculum that is directly relevant to students and provides a basis for project- and service-based assessments of what students have learned. In what ways can communities involve students early in their educational careers to be contributors to the social and governance fabric of where they live? How can the public school system serve to heal the wound it created?

This knowledge is understandably but severely lacking in the imported teacher workforce with limited to no experience in the village community. And it likely will take longer than a one-week culture camp for incoming teachers to learn enough to become comfortable teaching this content to their students.

Elders are a rich and underutilized resource in many communities. They are a natural fit in advising and supporting this shift in culture. Schools should reinforce and reiterate the importance of the key aspects of growing up as identified by Elders, adults, and teachers. Students need to understand the importance of staying in school, and if this is not the message they are receiving, then school staff need to investigate and provide counterarguments. Elders take on an important role in reinforcing the importance of schooling especially when they are actively engaged in the process. This leads to the community feeling more welcomed in the school and

taking on many more of the paid and volunteer roles that every school needs to run most effectively. Elders should be seen as effective liaisons and mediators bridging the gap between school and community.

2.7.3 Schooling to Reclaim and Create Systemic Change

One way to improve learning outcomes for students in rural schools is to leverage schools to support community efforts to reclaim their heritage, identity, and culture, and to make educational reparations. Schools and teachers could include cultural activities as an integral part of the curriculum, i.e., teaching the skills of dancing, drumming, and storytelling through song alongside other core content. Where communities lack experts to teach these skills, they could rely upon one another for the reclamation of these traditions, especially in those places where colonization resulted in significant gaps or even the total eradication of these practices. If schools actively taught students subjects like anthropology and archeology, students could be actors in uncovering artifacts on the land and taken elsewhere. Schools designing these types of skills along with research into the curriculum can empower students to reclaim and repatriate materials and artifacts across the globe. Students could be the recorders through which the stories and life experiences of Elders are recorded and amplified into literacy texts to teach their fellow students. There are a multitude of powerful ways that schools could be repositioned to be a support system for students to reclaim what the school systems unjustly eradicated throughout their ancestors' schooling. For example, we could create options for students to fulfill their Western education mandates alongside learning their place-based cultural and linguistic skillsets. This would allow a young person to learn to craft sleds or participate in hunting and still complete high school. In turn, non-Indigenous students in these regions can have similar options.

In flipping this script on the role of education in rural communities, we also highlight the importance of education on the land as an emphasis before education in the classroom. When students have strong connections to the land and place, it provides a strong foundation from which to build the other more global and academic learnings. In this way, schools go about teaching the visible and present to students so that these understandings empower and equip students to understand what is not visible, the critical lens.

Unfortunately, as a result of colonization, gaps exist in local knowledge of the land and traditional practices, and it varies from community to community. School systems can be the catalysts to build infrastructure and connectivity amongst communities so that a community is never doing this alone. Students can provide the integral technology and vitality aspects of creating this fabric across communities. With this kind of network building, the knowledge doesn't have to come just from within each individual community; it can come from neighboring communities in a constructivist approach to rebuilding culture, language, and traditions. Education has been a place of healing for some. What can be done to reconfigure school to become a healing force from the damage it rendered in the past? To instead have schools heal, empower, and

resource students and communities to become their best? Schools that are exciting places to work bring in teachers, and transform rural teaching positions so that it is a privilege being hired into these communities. Teachers regularly identify as an important aspect of retention the opportunity to work in a community where everyone is excited. Teachers, school staff, and students want to be part of an environment where they can partner with the community in transforming, especially transforming a system that was once a system for assimilation, colonization, and abuse.

2.8 Models and Finances

There are models in other sectors for tribal control of services and grounding large public institutions in Indigenous knowledge systems and practices. An especially powerful one is the Tribal healthcare system in the state of Alaska. The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and the local and regional tribal health providers clearly demonstrated the capacity for profound transformation in Alaska. The Tribal health system integrates Western medicine and practitioners into an Indigenous system, not the other way around. The education system could do the same; instead of injecting Indigenous cultures into a broken system, we could bring the best of the Western education system into the Indigenous culture.

It takes funding and efforts to explicitly design what has shown success in the education system at the student, teacher, school, and school district scales – to make the educational system as a whole sustainable. Through these efforts it demonstrates the respect of the agency of the people who are teaching and learning; people are learning what they want and need to learn as well as have the resources and ability to go about learning these things. We even have examples of this from the past, but these stories are not widely known. The writings of Hudson Stuck (1916), demonstrate that what we are proposing for non-Indigenous educators is feasible. Stuck was educated in the United Kingdom but developed the skills necessary to survive in the North after coming to Alaska as a missionary. He was multilingual, speaking the Gwich'in, Koyukon, and Inupiaq languages as well as English, and French and he was skilled at snowshoeing and running dog teams. And he demonstrated exactly what we are arguing for Indigenous children in Alaska – if you are well-educated in your heritage language, culture, and knowledge systems, you can then learn to be successful in other, very different physical, cultural, and linguistic environments. Why does this seem so out of reach today?

2.9 Summary

We should be doing a better job of engaging students in their schooling process. We have seen time and time again that youth have a vested interest in their school and often enough experience to adequately assess much of what they are getting, and

conversely not getting, out of the schooling process. A teacher is successful when students are interested in the learning; it doesn't matter the content. Students spend a lot of time in school learning and they gravitate towards those educators who possess a passion for the material and who model investing themselves in the learning. These types of experiences build lifelong learning traits in our students that can be carried to other areas of their studies and life. The emphasis needs to shift from covering the content to equipping students with the skills that will enable them to ultimately learn on their own, skills about how to learn, the epistemology. And it becomes even more important over the long term that the core is rooted in Indigenous culture and language practices. People observe that learning and sitting with an elder is equivalent to getting an advanced lesson and at the same time, different people often are getting different lessons. Traditionally stories have been told in a way that is recursive and builds upon the learner's prior knowledge, Indigenous differentiation of instruction. Rootedness and becoming a student are learning and understanding that something is valued, having the knowledge, pursuing the value of knowledge whether culinary, welding, snowshoeing, or algebra.

We must address the cultural and linguistic gaps that Indigenous students experience between their community and the public school and increase the relevance of schooling to place while challenging all students to do better. Schools must better engage students in a process of identity and cultural development and definition that better fits the fabric of their home and community lives. Schooling needs to be built on relationships. Relationships are key in our rural communities – these are collective and not individualistic cultures. Educators need to be part of the communities or even better, from the communities. Students need to see the utility of education in enabling them to contribute to their communities as well as to enable them to pursue their dreams. Humans learn everywhere.

We support people working towards a more holistic and community-minded approach to schooling. But to truly achieve this, schools need to *belong* to their communities and reflect their communities, and not look like schools from thousands of miles to the south that operate within entirely different contexts and cultures. And yet, we are not arguing for the elimination of Western schooling; schools must prepare young people to have a choice when they reach adulthood of being successful wherever they choose to be, whether in their home village, at a university, or working at a job 50, 100, or 3000 miles away from home.

Some will argue against the state relinquishing control of rural schools. But given that little progress has been made toward fixing these schools, and the multigenerational impacts on rural communities and students from decades of a system that created deep and costly failure, shifting the locus of control is likely the only way to achieve the needed changes and outcomes. If tribal schools are to succeed, however, we must provide scaffolding and resources so that communities can enact genuine self-determination in education. As noted previously, this may be less difficult than it seems initially, if the funding in support of COVID recovery is directed toward this rare opportunity to try something different. Hopefully, this chance will not be squandered.

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Chapter 3

The Role of Evaluative Thinking in Generating, Evaluating and Scaling Innovations in Learning: A Case Study of the Greenland Education System



Mitdlarak Lennert



Photographer: Lars Demant-Poort

Abstract The Greenland education system has had an impressive growth over the past 50 years. But how are things with the quality and content of the primary school? The role of national government versus local government in countering the quality of learning is examined. What types of objectives are being set, what is being monitored and for what purpose? The chapter discusses the overall objectives for the education system, how context shapes evaluation culture and conditions for

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development, and how reforms inspired by foreign countries do not make sense if country and regional specific contexts, needs, stakeholder involvement and capacity building are not considered.

Keywords Education policy · Decentralized education governance · Accountability · Policy tools · Evaluative thinking

Much hope is pinned on education in general to yield enhanced productivity, economic growth, social development and poverty reduction. However, for education to deliver on these expectations, it must be of sufficient quantity and quality to lead to meaningful learning among young people, a task known to pose considerable challenges globally. Are education systems generating, evaluating, and scaling innovations in learning, and if not, why not? In twenty-first century complex systems there is a need for continuous innovation, assessed through co-learning (within and across classrooms, schools and regional administrations; and to ministries). Among the key responsibilities of leaders at all levels of the education system are to clarify system goals and to articulate and monitor the progress being made toward achieving them. To aid this process and responsibility, evaluative thinking is a process that enables ongoing adaptations to address the ever-changing learning needs within the classroom, school, regional, and government environments (Kuji-Shikatani et al., 2016).

In order to understand educational outcomes across the Arctic, education must be placed in a historical and cultural context. Many students are the first generation in their families to get an education, exemplifying the education traditions among the different post-colonial societies and populations across the Arctic. Yet, this way of explaining the trajectory of the primary education system and level of education in the Arctic is incomplete, as it assumes that the development of an education system follows an apolitical template for how one should go about developing a system of education based on the needs of the people. Education in Greenland has been highly prioritized both in terms of resources and political will since the 1980s, where the education sector has been in the forefront in the post-colonial development policies, and yet the country has not seen the desired educational outcomes. The objective of this chapter is to give a critical view of the architecture of the Greenland education system: how the governance and institutions are structured, and how formal education systems and cultures fit with the principles, language, and culture of the indigenous populations in Greenland.

This chapter identifies the conditions for evaluative thinking and sense making across the multi-level education governance system in Greenland, where at least 80% of the schools are rural, in the quest of developing the education system in terms of better outcomes and cultural compatibility. This chapter argues that, in order to understand how educational change unfolds in the Arctic, it is necessary to analyze and describe (1) the governance and institutional structure, in order to map the conditions for change; (2) the motivations and behavior of governments and policymakers; and, ultimately, (3) how these all impact the conditions for education reform.

3.1 Literature Review

This section discusses the underlying foundations and the rationales for evaluative thinking in order to create conditions to use the information collected in the monitoring processes for development of the status quo. Getting all parts of an education system to work together is difficult, and the agencies responsible for designing, implementing, and evaluating education policies often lack the capacity to take on this role (World Bank, 2018). However, failure to tackle these technical and political constraints can trap countries in a low-learning, low-accountability, high-inequality equilibrium.

A key function of evaluation in governance is the promotion of democratic accountability and transparency. In general, accountability systems refer to the mechanisms and instruments used to ensure that individuals, groups, organisations, and institutions meet their obligations (Hatch, 2013). Accountability generally consists of three phases: (1) an information phase, (2) a debating phase, and (3) a phase of consequences and sanctions (Schillemans, 2008). In education, phase 1 consists of the schools providing reasons for their actions, explaining themselves and passing information about their performance to the accountees (central or regional government); the accountees in turn pass judgment on the performance. In phase 2, the information at hand is discussed, which then in phase 3 formulates positive or negative consequences (praise and promotion, more freedom, naming and shaming, formal disapproval, tightened regulation, discharge of management, or ultimately, termination of school).

In education systems, a conceptual distinction can be made between two different accountability forms: external accountability (also referred to as bureaucratic, hierarchical, or vertical accountability) and internal accountability (also referred to as horizontal and professional accountability) (Adams & Kirst, 1999; Elmore, 2004; Firestone, 2002; Levitt et al., 2008). The external accountability model is a top-down and hierarchical model, where schools are understood as an instrument for education policy on the national, regional and local level. External accountability is when system leaders assure the public through transparency, monitoring and selective intervention that the education system performs the tasks that are set in accordance with societal expectations and requirements in relation to legislation. It enforces compliance with laws and regulation and holds schools accountable for the quality of education they provide. Schools and teachers are held accountable for the quality of the education they provide – measured as student test results and / or other quality indicators. Formal authority alone may be used to enforce compliance in the external accountability model, but that authority can be reinforced with performance incentives such as financial rewards or sanctions.

Internal accountability arises when individuals and groups assume personal, professional and collective responsibility for continuous improvement and success for all students (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009), and therefore presupposes non-hierarchical relationships. It is directed at how schools and teachers conduct their profession, and / or at how schools and teachers provide multiple stakeholders

Table 3.1 Four forms of school accountability

Vertical and external	<p>Regulatory school accountability: Compliance with laws and regulations, focuses on inputs and processes within the school. Mechanism: Reporting to higher levels of school authority.</p> <p>School performance accountability: periodic school evaluations. Mechanisms include: (1) standardised student testing, (2) public reporting of school performance, and (3) rewards or sanctions. (Rosendkvist, 2010; Levin, 1974).</p>
Horizontal and internal	<p>Professional school accountability: professional standards for teachers and other educational staff. Mechanisms: credible, useful standards and the creation of professional learning communities (Levitt et al., 2008).</p> <p>Multiple school accountability: involving students, parents, communities and other stakeholders in formulating strategies, decision-making, and evaluation (Levin, 1974).</p>

Source: Adapted from (Elmore, 2004; Hooge et al., 2012)

with insight into their educational processes, decision making, implementation and results. Each of the two types of accountability can be further divided into two subsections (see Table 3.1 above).

In view of consequences placed on the outcome, in education a distinction between high-stake and low-stake is common (Morris, 2011; Rosenkvist, 2010; Verger et al., 2019). High stake implies that significant rewarding or punishing is coupled to the third phase described above, while with low-stake accountability such a coupling is absent. Stronger forms of sanctions are not necessarily more effective or influential than weaker forms (Schillemans, 2008), as the context surrounding a school is decisive for what is possible to do with the available resources and opportunities at hand. According to Fullan et al. (2015), it is more important to invest in the issues that develop internal accountability than to increase external accountability, as the importance of internal accountability precedes external accountability across the entire system. Put another way, the internal accountability of the institutions must be present, if the intention of external accountability is to be achieved.

3.2 Methods

The chapter examines the role of evaluative thinking in the political drivers of the Greenland primary and lower secondary school system and its impact upon learning outcomes for students. It does so within the context of addressing the overarching research questions, including:

1. what quality inscriptions and infrastructure are used in education policy monitoring and making?
2. are evaluation policy instruments used as they were designed to?

Table 3.2 Summary of research techniques and data

Research technique	Data
Text analysis of relevant primary documents	Parliamentary and governmental documents and debates
	Municipal documents and debates
	Consultation and reports
	Project plans, budgets and evaluations
Secondary analysis	Internal and external evaluations of policy
Semi-structured elite interviews with key stakeholders	Policy makers
	Municipal leaders
	Representatives of school boards
	Heads of schools
Participation in field-level conferences and events	Teachers
	Observation notes

The research questions explore to what extent evaluative thinking is embedded into the legislative framework, working procedures of the governing bodies, schools and classrooms with the purpose to improve learning outcomes for students. The design of this study was done with the purpose of exploring the above listed research questions through an analysis of the key institutions, individuals and interests of Greenland's education sector. This chapter draws from existing literature and policy reports, semi-structured interviews, and participant observations of conferences and meetings. A summary of the research techniques and the generated data can be read in full in Table 3.2.

The data is analyzed through a political sociology approach to education reform and policy instruments with analytical premises deriving from a historical institutionalism lens. In this respect, it is expected that the politico-administrative regimes to which countries adhere strategically mediate the variegated adoption and evolution of policy instruments in education. A political sociology approach is contextually grounded, in the sense that it is compatible with historical institutional premises on the role of institutions in the mediation of global forces and agendas, but also in the sense that it provides actors operating at different scales with voice and agency in understanding policy adoption. The political sociology approach to policy instruments emphasises that meaning-making processes importantly interact with political, institutional, and economic factors in the production of policies.

3.3 The Promise of Education – And the Challenges

The empirical setting for the study is Greenland's public primary and lower secondary schools (grades 1–10, ages 6–16). Greenlands public schools are divided into three stages, all of which must be completed with tests (standardised testing). The

school system, which is one unit, has just about 7.500 students in 73 schools (2018) along the 4.700 kilometer habitable coastline.

Greenland is a young nation that introduced Self-Government in 2009 and has had Home Rule since 1979. Before that, Greenland was a Danish colony from 1721 until 1953, where with the amendment of the Danish constitution, Greenland was recognised as an 'equal society with the Danish', and a county in the Danish kingdom from 1953 to 1979. Since the Home Rule Act assumed the responsibility of education, the education system has undergone many changes. Education has been given high priority and features prominently into the government's social and economic development plans.

One of the fundamental objectives after the introduction of Home Rule was to adapt the educational systems to Greenlandic conditions and culture. The cultural and economic transformation during the 1950s throughout the introduction of Home Rule created significant challenges in the attempt of adapting frameworks, content and context to the educational system. There are two main structural challenges to the adaptation of the Greenlandic education system (Brincker & Lennert, 2019; Lennert, 2018). First, given that the education system was based on the Danish education system, the reality was, and still is today, that for Greenlandic students to continue studying after primary and lower secondary school it is a prerequisite that Danish is their second language and they have a working knowledge of the English language. Second, with only 56,000 people, the small and geographically dispersed population poses many political, economic and governance challenges. Despite the political attention and priority, education quality remains low, as 62% of the workforce still have no education beyond primary and lower secondary school (Statistics Greenland, 2018).

With the basic political consensus being a need for higher levels of education among the population, planning in the education policy front has been the subject of demands for quick results; partly to minimise imported foreign labour, and later, to achieve more autonomy and independence. In 2015, 71% of graduating students (Grade 10) did not achieve qualifying grades in all their subjects (Greenland Ministry of Education, 2015). The quality of education in the Greenland primary and lower secondary school is a recurring theme in both media and political debates. The latest external evaluation of the current framework legislation (adopted in 2002) was published in March 2015 (Brochmann, 2015). The main conclusion was that the weak academic achievements of the primary and lower secondary school in recent years were not due to the content of the legislation, but on the lack of implementation and capacity in the municipalities.¹

Annual standardized testing measures students' professional skills in Mathematics, Greenlandic and Danish in Grade 3. In Grade 7 students' skills in English are also tested. Annual school leaving exams for the graduating class (Grade 10) are also monitored. But it is one thing to measure, and another thing to do something about

¹The methods of the evaluation have since its publication been critiques, including the Teacher's Union IMAK (2015) and Boolsen (2017)

it. According to the World Bank (2018), for learning metrics to be effective, they must overcome two important challenges: ensuring that information leads to action, and minimizing the potential perverse impacts of measurement. To date, there is no nationwide target for the level of the standardized tests and graduating class exams in the primary and lower secondary school nor are there sanctions or rewards behind the performance measurement and management system.

3.4 Learning and Evaluative Thinking Based on the Legislation/Education Act – Intentions on Policy Level

This section looks at how learning and evaluative thinking are articulated at the policy level and what assessment and evaluative tools are used, from the classroom to the Ministry of Education.

The educational system in Greenland is, like in many other countries, characterized by a multi-level governance system (e.g. Burns & Köster, 2016; Wilkoszewski & Sundby, 2014), making the relationship and power structures complex. The primary and lower secondary school grades (Grades 1–10, ages 6–16, hereinafter the ‘school’) compose a municipal school, divided into three stages, all of which must be completed with tests (standardized testing). At the center, *Inatsisartut* (the Parliament of Greenland) set the framework for the activities of the school, e.g. the overall purpose of the school, the minimum teaching hours and the length of the school year, while the detailed provisions and the supreme supervisory responsibility of the quality of education are laid down by *Naalakkersuisut* (the national government). General rules are established for the planning and organization of teaching, compulsory education and the rights and duties of parents, teachers, school administration, municipal government, and rules of appeal and financing, while the daily operation of the schools is run by the five municipalities in cooperation with school leaders and parent school boards. A detailed description and analysis of responsibilities, roles and how these are distributed between primary stakeholders can be found in Lennert (2018).

The 2002 reform² (hereinafter the Education Act) fundamentally changed the way teachers evaluate students. The new policy required that students not only be involved in goal setting and planning work for their own learning and schooling, but also that they be key players in assessing and evaluating their own learning, development, and performance (Inerisaavik, 2009). Testing and evaluation based on learning outcomes are therefore very new in the Greenland school culture. Key elements of the school reform introduced new principles for the students’ learning

²A full background and history on the 2002 reform, the cultural compatibleness, how support was sought and the initial implementation efforts can be read in Wyatt (Wyatt, 2012).

and teaching, tools for planning and assessing the teaching; such as learning objectives, action plans, and assessment of educational achievements.

3.5 School and Classroom Level

At each school, there are school boards, consisting of parent representatives who, within the goals and limits set by the municipal council, lay down principles for the activities of the school. The learning perspective, based on the fact that each student is an entirely unique person, implies that the teaching is to be targeted to the individual student, in recognition that all children learn in different ways; the Education Act states in §18: *“The teaching must be varied to match the needs and prerequisites of each student”*, and *“is the responsibility of the school leader to ensure that the teaching is planned and organized in such a way it presents challenges for all students.”* In order to do this, the teacher has to know the prerequisites and progression of the individual student, and therefore, §19 of the Act specifies that the student *“in consultation with his/her teachers are to develop an action plan that forms part of the on-going evaluation (...) And form the basis for the student’s further education and training.”*

In practice, these requirements are to be built into the tailored teaching plan’s mandatory learning objectives, and in the indicative teaching and assessment plans. National learning objectives, objectives of the subjects and teaching objectives are stated in an executive order, putting in black and white that the purpose of the school is learning. Each student in collaboration with the teachers are to, at least twice a year, prepare an action plan on how they are planning to meet these learning outcomes. Here, the student, in collaboration with his teachers, must write new individual goals derived from the learning goals. In a separate executive order on evaluation and documentation, the assessment requirements laid out in the Education Act are further specified.

3.6 Regional Government and Municipal Council Level

In the municipalities, the municipal council determines the goals and frameworks for the school’s activities with by-laws. The administrative and pedagogical management of the municipal school system is regulated locally by the individual municipality. Supervision practice for whether the schools are living up to the expectations set by the legislation varies from municipality to municipality, but follows the same form (vertical accountability). Data and information are collected by the submission of annual quality reports and school board reports on every school. However, a single model for the form the quality report is to take has not been introduced, and therefore differs among municipalities. The quality report is a requirement in the Education Act (cf. §49). It is the head of the individual school that is responsible for

preparing the annual quality report (cf. §48 paragraphs 2, 3). The purpose of the quality report is to focus on the development at the individual school. The quality report is a tool that must ensure systematic documentation and collaboration between the municipal council, the municipal administration and the schools on the evaluation and development of the quality of the individual school. It is then further stated that the quality report gives the municipal council the opportunity to supervise how the Education Act and local political goals are fulfilled at the individual school and in the school system as a whole, as “*the quality report is an essential tool for Qeqqata Kommunia’s municipal council to take political responsibility for the development of the municipal schools.*” (Qeqqata Municipality, 2013), by-laws, author’s translation). The report must finally contribute to openness about the quality of the school system, which is a prerequisite for quality improvements, according to the Qeqqata Municipality. How the quality report is used in practice, and the disconnect between what is stated in policy is discussed in the following sections.

3.7 Ministry and National Government Level

Naalakkersuisut are, according to the Education Act, obligated to supervise the municipalities’ administration of the school, carry out evaluations, and collect and disseminate knowledge in order to strengthen the efforts of the municipal council in the field of primary and lower secondary school and to maximize resource utilization. In practice, this obligation is fulfilled by the submission of reports by the schools and municipalities and annual standardized testing.

The Ministry of Education publishes an annual Education Plan, which is an action plan based off the National Education Strategy (The Ministry of Education, Culture, 2015), that contains the initiatives that are to be commenced over the next few years. The Education Plan follows the structure of the Education Strategy and lists the objectives of each education area followed by initiatives to help meet the goals. The purpose of the Education Strategy and the associated Education Plans is to present *Naalakkersuisut’s* visions, goals and initiatives that will contribute to meeting the objectives of the education area. There are two monitored goals for the primary and lower secondary school: the transition rate from the graduating class to further education and the share of trained teachers (teachers with a degree). The Education Strategy also forms the basis for *Naalakkersuisut’s* cooperation with the EU via the Partnership Agreement (European Commission, 2014). The indicative amount for the implementation of the Greenland Decision the period of 2014 to 2020 is EUR 217.8 million. The annual disbursement contains a fixed tranche of 80 pct. and a variable tranche of up to 20 pct., conditional on the performance of the program.

At the same time, the Partnership Agreement gives us a responsibility to ensure that we raise our level of education, that this is done efficiently, that the effort is continuously evaluated, and that the results are carefully analyzed. (Greenland Ministry of Education, 2018)

As a part of the Partnership Agreement, the Government submit an Annual Work Plan and an Annual Implementation Report to the European Commission. The Annual Implementation Report is *a tool for those responsible for the program to diagnose gaps, challenges, and progress as well as identify measures needed to improve progress*. The Partnership Agreement has a reporting obligation on a set of indicators defined in the Performance Assessment Framework.³

3.8 Is Learning a Priority on a System Level?

In Greenland, it is often politically stated that education is a high priority. Economically, this priority is also obvious when tabulating that the total public expenditure for the education sector in 2017 was EUR 330.9 million, which accounts for 25.35% of the total expenditure of the public sector. However, prioritizing education is not the same as prioritizing learning. The fact is, greater national spending on educational services does not seem to have improved desired educational outcomes much (Pritchett, 2018).

It's already evident on a policy level that there is a shift away from 'the student at the center' and measuring learning the further you get away from the classroom, in terms of the nature of indicators and evaluation tools. On the national and system level, there is much focus on external accountability, where the Education Act, Strategy and EU partnership agreement indicators shape the accountability and monitoring forms. The regulation and supervision structure of the Greenland education system reflects the traditional forms of education regulation elsewhere, known as the bureaucratic-professional model,⁴ which is based on arrangements such as the control of conformity to rules, the socialization and autonomy of education professionals and joint regulation regarding questions of employment or curriculum. A vertical and external accountability form is practiced in Greenland, in the form of *regulatory school* and *school performance accountability*, where the primary aim and focus of the supervision is based on arrangements such as control of conformity to rules. Going deeper into the terminology, a *regulatory school accountability* and 'two thirds' of a *school performance accountability* are practiced, as there is standardized testing and public reporting of school performance, but there are no sanctions, rewards, or consequences, resulting in an expensive performance management system, where a lot of resources are spent on measuring.

³ A full description of the Partnership Agreement and monitored indicators can be read in the annual planning and implementation reports conducted by the Ministry of Education: <http://naalakkersuisut.gl/~media/Nanoq/Files/Attached%20Files/Uddannelse/Engelsk/Annual%20Work%20Plan%202017.pdf>

⁴ The model brings "state, bureaucratic, administrative" regulation and a "professional, corporative, pedagogical" regulation together (Maroy, 2008).

3.9 Learning and Evaluative Thinking in Practice – Evaluation and Monitoring with Different Purposes

This section looks at how the Education Act has been put to practice, in a context where “*testing and evaluation is not a part of the Greenlandic school culture*” (Greenland Agency of Education, in Petersen, 2010).

The basic purpose of the 2002 Education Act is that student evaluation, whether internal or external, must be carried out in order to support the individual student’s learning and development (Parliament of Greenland, 2002). Evaluation should also help teachers make appropriate choices regarding the planning and implementation of teaching and thereby target teaching so that it supports the different needs of individual students (Inerisaavik, 2009). The evaluation is furthermore to support each student’s learning competencies, so *that all students can experience an exciting, challenging and meaningful schooling* (Parliament of Greenland, 2002). The question then becomes how this (evaluation) purpose of the school is understood, and whether this understanding is powerfully normative, or whether the system is so fragmented that the intentions did not gain traction.

3.10 What Is Measured and Monitored?

Some things are easier to monitor; school building and programs for example, are highly visible and easily monitored investments, aimed at expanding access to education. By contrast, investments to raise teacher competence, or to improve the curriculum are less visible, and monitoring their impact on student learning is even more difficult. Such challenges can, according to the World Bank (2018:176), sometimes prompt education systems to emphasize improvements in access over improvements in quality. In Greenland, this is exemplified by the following quote:

We must ask ourselves whether the existing legislation provides sufficient protection that there is a necessary framework and conditions to ensure proper education for all children in the Greenlandic school. We must note that it does not. Unfortunately, the results testify to that. (Chairman of the Teachers’ Union IMAK, (Dorph, 2015), author’s translation)

There are several paradoxes in that, according to the Education Act, all teaching and other activities must be based on the individual student. The resource allocation models in the municipal budgets, for example, do not seem to take this into account, as most of the resources are distributed according to number of students or other input measures. By only monitoring statistics, the *learning crisis* can become invisible, as monitored data is focused on things other than learning. Therefore, there is a lack of systematic data on who is learning and who is not, and what can be done to improve the situation. An example of this and of the absence of evaluative thinking and coherence for schooling, is that, due to low results in a subject, a municipal council scheduled more teaching hours in the subject, without questioning the quality of the content or teaching.

Table 3.3 Evaluation instruments at classroom and student level

Internal	External (Standardized testing)
The student's goals and action plans,	Grade 3: Greenlandic, Danish, Mathematics
Ongoing evaluation,	Grade 7: Greenlandic, Danish, Mathematics, English
Presentations of own work in third grade and	Grade 10 (final evaluations): Written proficiency tests and written tests in Greenlandic, Danish, English and mathematics. Three oral or oral-practical tests.
Subject-oriented assignment in seventh grade	
Documentation for students and parents	
(<i>Angusakka</i>), including proficiency marks (grades 8–10)	

Source: Home Rule Executive Order no. 2 and 3 of 9 January 2009 (On evaluation and documentation in the primary and lower secondary school, and on the final evaluation)

The content of the national supervision report and municipal quality reports⁵ are quantitative key statistics and indicators, such as standardized testing outcomes, the number of students, planned, cancelled and completed teaching hours, and the size and qualifications of teaching staff. There is a great focus on the output in terms of standardized testing outcomes, while there is less focus on learning and quality in the planning and evaluation processes. A focus on outcomes, while at times “statistically significant,” explains very little of the observed variation in learning outcomes at any level (Glewwe & Muralidharan, 2015). In other words, success as determined by standardized testing outcomes is strongly prized, while classroom activities that cannot be easily measured receive low priority.

Evaluation instruments at the classroom level can be divided into internal and external instruments (Table 3.3).

The purpose of the supervision is *to see if schools comply with legislation* (Interview, Agency of Education 2019). With the type of data that is collected, the supervision is reduced to focus on input measures that have very little correlation with the quality of teaching or learning. Examining the way the system works and is structured, and access to and the expansion of schooling is a very high priority. The compulsory education commences from the beginning of the school year in the calendar year in which the child reaches the age of six, and ceases after the child has received regular education for 10 years. However, local contexts and conditions often result in being in school meaning being in a building that looks like a school with adults that look like teachers, as the smaller communities struggle to attract

⁵These differ among municipalities. In some, in addition to the quantitative part, there is a focus on the schools having to account for their efforts within the topics “the students’ subject knowledge”, “the students’ well-being”, “the students’ continuing education” and “the teacher’s well-being and professionalism”. In addition, schools have been asked to set goals for the coming school year, within the above topics.

trained teachers. These schools must follow the principles of the Education Act and the specified learning outcomes must be on a par with all other schools in the country. However, there is no systemic, scheduled or standardized follow-up, or consequences if the level of quality is not met, as it is not even defined. This practice means that the purpose of the supervision is reduced to reporting, rather than promoting learning or developing the system. The process compliance culture is exemplified by the quote below, where a municipal director reflects on the drivers behind how their municipality is working with schools and children:

We are working for the system ... not looking at how the child is doing. As long as we work like this we are not seeing the well-being and learning of the children as a priority. (Interview 2019, Municipal Director of Education, author's translation)

This supervision practice, a technical and political construction, can be explained by many factors; however, external pressures and demands, capacity and turnover challenges of employees and teachers result in a focus on things where data is available and things that are easy to measure, such as enrollments, results, and budget allocations. This unfortunate practice continues, in spite of a wish from virtually all representatives from all levels of administration for evaluation and assessment regimes with more tools that yield thick quantitative data that provide more useful and informative results when considering tuning up the system with improvements and innovation (Observation notes, 2017–19). It results in a *low-learning, low-accountability, high-inequality equilibrium* (World Bank, 2018).

3.11 Different Interpretations on Key Evaluation and Monitoring Tools

Key components of policy and evaluation tools, based on the interviews and document analysis, are interpreted differently across governance levels. There are different purposes for teachers, school leaders, administrators and policy makers in terms of goals, approaches, indicators and utilization related to evaluation instruments. According to the Teacher's Union, the focus is too narrow:

A prerequisite for developing the academic skills of all children in Greenland is, according to IMAK's opinion, that you have to stop only evaluating the conditions from an economic perspective in relation to the resources used and the results of the standardized testing or to focus on whether some specific teaching principles are applied, as was the case with the Danish Evaluation Institute's evaluation of the school reform. (Danielsen, 2017) (Karl Frederik Danielsen, Chairman of the Greenland Teachers' Union IMAK, 2017)

The purpose of the standardized testing is to see the status of the students in terms of learning outcomes so that the teacher can use the knowledge in the planning of the teaching. With that purpose in mind, one should be careful to use the standardized tests as a national benchmark parameter. (Interview, Agency of Education, 2019, author's translation)

The above quotes illustrate how the same evaluation instrument is being used with different purposes, mainly for benchmarking, and not as stated in policy.

3.12 Conclusions – a Perfect Storm of Dysfunction

Many countries are inspired by foreign education reforms and, to varying degrees, import ideas and tools in their own reform efforts. This case study of Greenland shows that, if supervision and monitoring processes do not consider the country-specific contexts, needs, and capacity building, the education system can *get trapped in a low-accountability and low-learning equilibrium* (World Bank, 2018).

In 2002 a new legislative framework introduced elements of coherence for learning, in terms of self-evaluation and tools for assessments of learning, but without evaluative thinking embedded in the system and accountability relationships. Thus, learning is de facto not prioritized. This has resulted in learning assessment tools that are not manifested in practice, in the development work, in the supervision and monitoring processes, or when new policies are developed. Supervision and accountability practice can instead be characterized as being focused on process compliance. And, as learning becomes strangely disarticulated from the internal legitimation of the system itself, as organizational legitimacy is obtained by only collecting statistics. Evaluation instruments at the classroom level, and even the standardized testing, are based on learning outcomes, where the purpose is to put the child's learning at the center. However, they are not used systematically or as intended. There is little collective accountability across the administrative levels of the responsibility of quality learning on school level. The result is a practice where schools and classrooms are like small islands where the monitoring is disconnected and not strategically integrated.

3.13 Context Shapes (Evaluation) Culture and Conditions for Development

In Greenland, school legislation is flexible and has delegated decision-making power to local governments and schools in order to best accommodate local needs and requirements. However, it requires a school with competent management and motivated and capable teachers to develop and achieve the policy intentions. Local opportunities in the specific municipalities, towns and settlements in terms of capacity, motivation, culture, prioritization, and knowledge are crucial for whether evaluation tools are used as intended. In Greenland as there is little assistance when a school cannot meet the expectations set in the legislation, and then there is a risk of evaluation instruments not being used for purposes for which they were designed. Resulting in a system where a process of compliance is dominating, and where you stray further and further away from the purpose of the evaluation – to improve learning for children.

Classroom practice is what matters, so in practice it becomes a matter of what is possible and realistic to do with the resources at hand locally. In rural Greenland, where a permanent qualified teacher shortage is a challenge in most places, local

resources are often different. There are good intentions of evaluative thinking and the placement of learning at the center – policies, documents and interviews document it. The challenge is in the capacity, both in terms of employees, implementation, but also in knowledge of what it means to embed evaluative thinking in all processes. Learning is measured with standardized testing, but the majority of the schools are unable to use results for what they were intended. Other challenges (some technically simple, but that take a lot of time) take up much of the work day and overshadow strategic thinking. This results in the evaluation tools not being used as intended, and, in practice, half a performance management system.

The Greenland case shows how an (uncritical) import of accountability form, absence of evaluative thinking, results in an organizational legitimacy based on thin information derived from measures of compliance. There is major political fragmentation among primary stakeholders in the Greenland primary and lower secondary school system, and a prescient need for dialogue and cooperation. The argument is that to achieve coherence (for learning) in any education system, it is imperative that evaluative thinking is embedded in the system, as in order to systematically improve learning outcomes for students, the system must be oriented towards learning and development. However, even if learning is measured, which is the case in Greenland, it does not necessarily lead to action, as the results and the data collected are ultimately not contributing to the improvement of education policies and curriculum for the enhanced learning of students. Evaluative thinking could be a major foundation for developing an education system coherent for learning, and necessarily needs to be embedded in the working processes within the system as a whole. The Greenland case study points to several research directions with global relevance, as to uncover the main facilitators and barriers for the efficient use of learning data in the ongoing monitoring and development processes of education systems.

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Chapter 4

Sámi Teacher Education or Teacher Education for Sámi Students? Central Cornerstones in Sámi Teacher Education



Ylva Jannok Nutti



Photographer: Mattias Sikku Valio, Sámi University of Applied Sciences

Abstract Sámi teacher education programs are core programs at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences, and have been since the establishment of the institution. Sámi teacher education programmes involve flexible teaching methods including online teaching, teaching at gatherings and through practicum periods at early childhood centres and primary schools. The aim of this chapter is to discuss Sámi teacher education as Indigenous higher education, in order to explore the

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cornerstones of Sámi teacher education. The method used in the present study combines content analyses and a narrative approach. Content analysis is a research tool used to analyse the official documents for teacher education programmes and programme syllabi at Sámi University of Applied Sciences. The narrative approach was selected in order to use personal experiences from Sámi teacher education. As an analytical tool the model of Madden's (2015) pedagogical pathways in Indigenous teacher education were used. The pathways are learning from traditional Indigenous modes of teaching, pedagogy for decolonizing, Indigenous and antiracist education, and Indigenous and placed-based education. Traditions, traditional knowledge and traditional models of teaching, together with language, are central in Sámi teacher education. Sámi teacher education could also be viewed in connection to placed-based education. Decolonizing is part of the educators' work to transform and implement traditional knowledge and culture-based teaching perspectives, and in educators' work to deconstruct culture, history and Indigenous identity. The term "colonial" is not used explicitly. However even if the term is not present, colonialism is indirectly visible. The antiracist education is less visible. All the pathways are visible in Sámi teacher education, but to visualise in Sámi teacher education the cornerstones, the metaphor of the *lávvu* and three *caggi*, or poles, is used and the *caggit* are, in the Sámi language, *árbediehtu*, and *girjás searvelatnja*.

Keywords Sámi teacher education · Indigenous education · Sámi traditional knowledge · Cultural based learning approaches · Indigenous worldview(s)

4.1 Introduction

Sámi teacher education programmes are primary programmes at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences, and have been since its establishment in 1989. Since then, Sámi teacher education has been provided to early childhood educators and both primary and lower-secondary school teachers. Today, Sámi teacher education programmes involve flexible teaching methods including online teaching, teaching at gatherings at the Guovdageaidnu campus and through practicum periods at early childhood centres and primary schools in Norway, Sweden and Finland.

In the article *Patient Progress in Facing Challenges to the Establishment of Higher Education in Duodji*, Guttorm (2020) discussed how traditional duodji, Sámi craft expertise and skills, served as the basis for higher education in the field of duodji, and described the steps taken at Sámi University of Applied Sciences to adjust the duodji programme to the formal requirements of higher education. In the article, Guttorm presented a model in three steps to visualize three development steps at Sámi University of Applied Sciences. The model was presented by Guttorm et al. (2014) at the World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education. The steps are (1) solid foundation, (2) *luohkkálanjas várrečohkkii* or from the classroom to the top of the mountain and (3) raising awareness and Indigenousization. Guttorm (2020) highlighted that the steps are part of an ongoing Sámitization and Indigenousization process. The Sámitization and Indigenousization process is needed because the Sámi people, like many other Indigenous peoples, have long been exposed to a policy of

assimilation (Dahl, 1976). Until the 1970s, the Sámi faced strong pressure from authorities and the church to assimilate into majority society (Hirvonen, 2000).

During the first step in the model, the focus is on building a solid knowledge foundation with the development of concepts in Sámi for the teaching subjects. We used a *lávvu*, or *tipi*, metaphor to explain the construction of a solid foundation at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences: To build a solid *lávvu*, you need *caggi*,¹ three basic poles. The poles are language and language development, Sámi knowledge content, and Sámi teaching and understanding perspectives. The second step, *luohkkálanjas várrečohkkii* or from the classroom to the top of the mountain, was started in the autumn of 2000 by the teachers, educators and researchers of the *Várrečohkka*² project (Guttorm, 2020; Hirvonen, 2000). The project was intended to implement new teaching methods in teacher education based on Sámi learning perspectives; to make traditional Sámi knowledge visible in contemporary teaching settings; and to create awareness of multiculturalism, Indigenous peoples and minorities (Hirvonen, 2000). The third step, raising awareness and Indigenization is a currently ongoing process (Guttorm, 2020), a process of reconstructing our identities as Sámi and Indigenous people.

In this chapter, I intend to discuss Sámi teacher education as Indigenous higher education with the aim to explore the cornerstones in Sámi teacher education.

4.2 Approaches to Indigenous Higher Education

Tuhiwai Smith (2012) highlighted that Indigenous peoples share the experiences of imperialism:

It is part of our story, our version of modernity. Writing about our experiences under imperialism and its more specific experiences of colonialism has become a significant project of the Indigenous world (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p. 20).

As Indigenous peoples and decolonizing educators, we have, according to Tuhiwai Smith (2012), responsibilities that direct us to be good ancestors to future generations of human and non-human entities. According to Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991), to support the educational needs of Indigenous students and communities, education should be grounded in respect, relevance, reciprocity and responsibility: *respect* for Indigenous knowledge and traditional approaches to teaching and learning; integration of content that is *relevant* to, and builds upon, Indigenous students' relational views of human, natural and spirit worlds; *reciprocal* teaching and learning relationships that disrupt a teacher–student hierarchy; and the teaching that knowledge entails a *responsibility* to one's relations, including future generations (Kirkness & Barnhardt, in Madden, 2015, p. 1).

¹The main poles in the construction for a *lávvu*.

²In English, top of the mountain.

Reciprocity and relationships that involve acknowledgement and understanding of cultural positionalities and relations of place were highlighted by Styles (2017) as central to working within Indigenous contexts. The book *Pathways for Remembering and Recognizing Indigenous Thought in Education* is a culmination of the Style's experiences in coming to understand Indigenous peoples' land-centred philosophies grounded in ancient knowledges that are continually (re)cognized and (re)generated within contemporary educational landscapes. Learning processes and teaching practices are, according to Styles, formed and informed by connections to land, language self-in-relationship and circularity.

Madden (2015) divides approaches to Indigenous education by teacher educators into four pedagogical pathways. The pathways are

1. learning from traditional Indigenous modes of teaching,
2. pedagogy for decolonizing,
3. Indigenous and antiracist education,
4. Indigenous and placed-based education.

The pathway "learning from Indigenous traditional modes of teaching" is grounded in what has been referred to as *traditional knowledge* or *Indigenous knowledge*. Traditional models of teaching occur in living places and involve the learner's family, clan and tribe in social, environmental and spiritual forms of learning (Cajete, 1994). Archibald's (2008) assessments of Indigenous storywork offer teachers the opportunity to learn to respectfully use traditional Indigenous stories and experiences in the classroom. She positions this storywork as capable of "educating the heart, mind, body and spirit" by providing a place for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to reflect (p. 144). Teacher education that is grounded in Indigenous knowledges and culture-based teaching views upholds some of the connections between knowledges and the modes through which they have traditionally been transmitted. This does not mean that traditional modes of teaching are practiced, rather that traditional modes of teaching are transformed in the teacher education context. This pathway does not lead directly to exploration of colonial power relations, and it may also run the risk of romanticizing and depoliticizing Indigenous knowledges.

Madden (2015) highlighted that "in general, the studies that comprise the pathway *Pedagogy for decolonizing* maintain that a significant component of Indigenous education is examining, learning from, and challenging historical and ongoing colonial structures and relationships" (p. 8). Based on the studies she reviewed, Madden argued that pedagogy for decolonizing does not directly draw on Indigenous modes of teaching. However, this pathway creates space for Indigenous knowledges and perspectives through the historical examination of colonization and the incorporation of Indigenous counternarratives.

The pathway "Indigenous and antiracist education" focuses on deconstructing problematic perceptions of racialized and Indigenous peoples. Madden used the phrase "racialized and Indigenous" to gesture towards the diversity within the grouping "Indigenous", as an Indigenous person is not necessarily racialized. Like the pedagogy of decolonizing, this pathway does not directly lead to integrating

Indigenous knowledges into education, but it can provide opportunities to learn from diverse voices.

The pathway “Indigenous and place-based education” advocates for the introduction of teachers to local places where wisdom sits. The approach aims to bring teachers into a relation with situated Indigenous knowledges, as well as with Indigenous and non-Indigenous histories and contemporary realities that emerge from the interconnected relationships formed in and through places. Teacher education often takes place outside of formal classroom contexts, and the places where knowledge sits are a form of renewing relationships between place, people and non-human beings. Elders often share teachings about place.

Learning from traditional Indigenous models of teaching promotes Indigenous knowledges. Pedagogy for decolonizing, Indigenous and antiracist education, and Indigenous and place-based education are all concerned with the central task of reshaping contemporary Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships through teacher education and, as such, are not only for Sámi or Indigenous teacher-students. Pedagogical pathways are understood as structures that guide the limitations and capabilities of pedagogy, and they often meet. Unlike Madden, I do not see a need for a division between the pathways, learning from traditional Indigenous models of teaching and Indigenous and place-based education, as traditional Sámi modes of teaching are closely connected to land (Sara, 2004), and also part of a general Indigenous people’s land-centred philosophies (Styles, 2017). Educators are involved in the double task of modelling what it might mean to engage with Indigenous education and prepare teachers to carry out similar work in schools (Madden, 2015).

4.3 Method and Material

The method used in the present study combines content analyses and a narrative approach inspired by Guttorm (2020). Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within a given context, in this case in the official documents for teacher education programmes in Norway and programme syllabi for Sámi primary teacher education, Years 1–7, at Sámi University of Applied Sciences; the programme syllabus for Sámi primary teacher education, Years 5–10, at Sámi University of Applied Sciences; and the subject syllabi in education and Sámi language. The official documents were regulations for Sámi teacher education, Years 1–7 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016a); guidelines for Sámi teacher education, Years 1–7 (UHR, 2017); the Norwegian national regulations for teacher education, Years 1–7 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016b); and the Norwegian national guidelines for teacher education, Years 1–7 (UHR, 2016).

Because Sámi teacher-education in Norway has been developed based on the Norwegian national regulations and guidelines, I first compared them with the regulations and guidelines, focusing on explicitly Sámi content. Both regulations

and guidelines named Sámi-specific themes, but specific Sámi content was added. Furthermore, the interdisciplinary themes in the guidelines are laid out differently in the Sámi and Norwegian national guidelines. The national guidelines include the interdisciplinary theme “Sámi conditions and Sámi pupils’ rights”. In the Sámi guidelines, there is no corresponding theme; instead, all subjects are required to be taught on the basis of Sámi teaching contents and perspectives. Distance and online teaching is included as specific interdisciplinary theme in the Sámi teacher education guidelines. In the teacher education guidelines the subjects in the Sámi version follows the national without any changes, with the exception that special guidelines were developed for the Sámi language and *duodji*, or craft, subjects. To delimit the data amount with three level of curricula; regulations, guidelines, and syllabi at the institutional level, I chose not to look any closer at the subject guidelines.

After that, I explored specifically how Sámi content was visible in the programme syllabi in order to discuss the core elements in Sámi teacher education regarding approaches to Indigenous higher education. As an analytical tool, I have applied the model of Madden’s (2015) four pedagogical pathways in Indigenous teacher education. Inspired by Guttorm (2020), I used a narrative approach in order to use my experiences from Sámi teacher education. Like Guttorm, I see value in using my own experiences in the investigation of cornerstones in Sámi teacher education, with the caveat that the way we experience and understand our stories can be different from how others would tell their stories.

4.4 Sámi Teacher Education

All teacher education programmes in Norway are, according to the regulations, required to qualify student teachers to teach Sámi subjects, including the status of Indigenous peoples internationally and Sámi pupils’ right to education in accordance with the Education Act and current curricula. In the guideline for Sámi teacher education, this includes pupils’ involvement, as well as school–home collaboration.

One of the mandated teaching outcomes highlights that all teacher education programmes must ensure that student teachers are able to strengthen international and multicultural perspectives in school and contribute to understanding the Sami people’s status as Indigenous peoples. All teacher education programmes are also required to include Sámi topics in the programme syllabi.

Sámi teacher education programmes’ regulations and guidelines highlight that the Sámi language must be used as a teaching language, with special dispensations given for Lule and South Sámi teacher education programmes. The purpose of Sámi teacher education, according to the regulations and guidelines, is for teaching to:

- be given on the basis of Sámi culture and society and culture-based educational perspectives;
- provide knowledge about Sámi conditions;

- emphasize extended learning arenas and nature as an important places for education;
- place the teaching profession in a Sámi and Indigenous context, or in a variety of Sámi and Indigenous contexts, where traditional knowledge is included.

Furthermore, teaching is required to:

- be built on research- and experience-based knowledge, as for example knowledge connected to Sámi livelihood experiences and the use of nature;
- meet the needs of Sámi schools, so that teaching institutions must offer a variety of subjects by themselves or in collaboration with other institutions, and if student teachers take subjects at other institutions, the Sámi teacher education institution must facilitate the student teachers' achievement of Sámi competence in those subjects.

The Sámi language, Sámi teaching contents and cultural-based teaching perspectives central parts of Sámi teacher education programmes' regulations and guidelines.

4.4.1 Language

According to the Sámi teacher education programme syllabus for Years 1–7 at Sámi University of Applied Sciences, the Sámi language is the main teaching language, although some teaching can take place in other Scandinavian languages, Finnish or English. Language is a common word. For example, North Sámi words for language in different combinations and forms, such as “-*giella*-”, “-*giela*-“or “-*gilli*-”, are named 59 times in the programme syllabus. The most frequent way words for language are used is in connection to the Sámi language. They are also used in connection to other languages, such as Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and English, and as Scandinavian languages and national languages. In this context language words are used to describe teaching languages, names of courses in the program, and learning outcomes. In the guidelines for Sámi teacher education, language terms are used in connection to Sámi and Norwegian, and in connection to national languages for students who speak Swedish and Finnish.

Furthermore, language is used in the regulations in connection to bilingual and multilingual language contexts. In the syllabus, it is multilingual, language arenas or language use, as in the following: “...multicultural and -lingual surroundings” [.. *máŋgakultuvrralaš ja -gielalaš birrasat*] Guttorm (2020, p. 4) and “...manage professional language use” [.. *hálddaša ámmátlaš giellageavaheami*] Guttorm (2020, p. 4). In the Sámi language syllabi, concepts such as “bi- and multilingual”, “minority and majority languages”, “first and second language” and “foreign language” are used.

4.4.2 *Teaching Content, Teaching Perspective and Teaching Context*

Sámi teacher education regulation includes Sámi learning outcome as

- Sámi traditions within each subject area,
- the use of nature and local environments as learning arenas,
- adapting teaching on the basis of Sámi culture-based learning methods.

According to the guidelines for Sámi teacher education program, teaching must contain knowledge connected to Sámi livelihood experiences and the use of nature. The teaching institutions must teach subjects that correspond to the needs of the Sámi schools. Furthermore, the institutions must provide student teachers with opportunities to take subjects at other institutions and ensure that student teachers achieve Sámi language competence in these subjects.

In the programme syllabus for Years 1–7 at Sámi University of Applied Sciences, “*duodji*,³ *yoik*,⁴ storytelling, and communication with the land shall be implemented in themes in teaching” [*duodji, juoigan ja muitaleapmi ja gulahallan eatnamiin čadnojuvvojit oahpu oktasaš fáddáohpahussii*] Guttorm (2020, p. 2). Student teachers must also know Sámi traditions and be able to implement them in school activities and teaching.

The second most common term in the syllabus for Years 1–7 at Sámi University of Applied Sciences, after “language”, is “Sámi”. It is used 57 times, the most common way being in connection to the name of the institution, the program, and courses in the programme. Otherwise, it is used in the following settings: education, culture-based learning and teaching approaches, traditional upbringing, traditions, and pedagogy. It is used in as for example “. . .sámi árbevieruid ja mo daid sáhttá fievrridit skuvlodoaimmaide ja oahppamii” [...Sámi traditions and how to adopt them to activities in school and to learning] Guttorm (2020, p. 4). The concept of “*searvelatnja*” is used in the program syllabi at Sámi University of Applied Sciences as a teaching goal for student teachers so that they are able to create a common collaboration arena in connection with their local work and cultural life. The concept is also used as a teaching method. In the Sámi teacher education programme syllabi for Years 5–10, it is expressed as follows:

Build *searvelanjaid*, collaboration between the subjects, interdisciplinary cooperation and experience-based learning on the basis of Sámi holistic perspectives. Central to *Sámi* philosophy are communication and nature management. [*Searvelanjaid huksen, fágaid ovttasbargu, fágaid rasttildeapmi ilbmanemiid vuodul ja vásáhusoahppan leat oahpu lágideami vuolggasadjin sámi holisttalaš oaidninvuogi vuodul. Sámi eallinvugiid guovddázis lea gulahallan ja birgen luondduin*] Guttorm (2020, p. 7).

³In English craft.

⁴The Sámi way of singing.

Teaching institutions must, according to the regulations, ensure that student teachers have the opportunity to take part in education on the basis of national, pan-Sámi and Indigenous perspectives. In the guideline, the national perspective refers to a Nordic perspective, as the student teachers come from Norway, Finland, and Sweden. The guideline also highlights that teacher education programs must frame the teaching profession in a Pan-Sámi and Indigenous context. In the programme syllabi at Sámi University of Applied Sciences, *Miehtasámi*, or Pan-Sámi, perspectives and a diverse society must be used as fundamentals of the teaching. Student teachers must also acquire knowledge in Indigenous issues and have the opportunity to critically discuss cultural relations.

The Sámi teacher education guideline highlight that the student teachers' practicums must be implemented in Sámi schools, defined as any school, class or group with teaching in and on the Sámi language. Furthermore, at least one practicum must be in a Sámi school in Sweden or Finland. Sámi teacher education at Sámi University of Applied Sciences has a long experience of sending student teachers to practicum in Sweden and Finland. Student teachers conduct practicums in Norway, Sweden or Finland. Students from Norway conduct practicums in Sweden or Finland, and Swedish and Finnish students in one of the other two countries. Furthermore, praxis holds that all students conduct practicum in school near where they live, and in schools in areas where the Sámi language is stronger and in schools in areas where the Sámi language is weaker.

4.4.3 *The Sámi School Arena*

Hirvonen (2004) evaluated how the first Sámi curriculum reform was implemented in Sámi schools in Norway. Teachers claimed that Sámi pupils learned best through practical work outside the school. Teaching perspectives that gave room for freedom, independence, closeness to the outdoor environment, storytelling and knowledge of local communities were identified as central. Hirvonen and Keskitalo (2004) compared the first Sámi curriculum reform to an incomplete symphony, as the schools lacked the cultural and linguistic skills to realize the Sámi curriculum. Hirvonen (2004) highlighted that Sámi schools needed measures to make Sámi culture and language the starting point of all activities. Sámi values and perspectives could then be part of everyday practices and school subjects. Sámi as a second language education could even support the revitalization of the language as long as Sámi was not just a subject but also a tool used in other subjects, with the aim of bilingualism (Todal, 2004).

Based on research by Hirvonen (2004), Jannok Nutti (2010) carried out research in Sámi schools in the Swedish part of Sápmi. The teachers there expressed views on learning approaches based on Sámi culture similar to those in Hirvonen (2004). The need for culture-based teaching was justified by the teachers with the idea that the home would become part of the school and would give Sámi pupils the opportunity to learn based on their own language and culture (Jannok Nutti, 2010). Furthermore,

culture-based teaching could also give pupils the opportunity to be immersed in knowledge based on Sámi culture. However, teachers felt that they had neither the knowledge nor the time to develop culture-based teaching. Some of the teachers even expressed doubts that culture-based teaching could help pupils become successful, and the tension between Sámi and national goals were visible.

4.5 Pedagogical Pathways in Sámi Teacher Education

Are Madden's (2015) pathways visible in Sámi teacher education? Traditions, traditional knowledge and traditional models of teaching that are central to the pedagogical pathway "learning from Indigenous traditional modes of teaching" are, together with language, the cornerstone in Sámi teacher education. These cornerstones are visible from regulations to guidelines. The programme syllabi at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences, and the step "luohkkálanjas várrečohkkii" in itself can be interpreted to belong in that pedagogical pathway. Madden warned about the risk of romanticizing and depoliticizing Indigenous knowledges, but one should not, as Hall (1997) stressed, underestimate the importance of groups' ability to highlight previously invisible experiences.

Sámi teacher education could also be viewed in connection to the pathway "Indigenous and place-based education". In this pathway, the relationship between land, people and non-human beings needs to be taking into account. In the programme syllabi, this visibility was stressed through *gulahallan eatnamiin* [communication with the land]. This relation is central in course literature. For example, in the education syllabi, Jannok Nutti and Joks (2018) examined an early childhood centre's participation in a reindeer herding activity in light of Ingold's work (Ingold, 2011), which argued that people take in the place and local phenomena simultaneously as the place is embodied through both our movements and commitments. During reindeer herding activity, the educators were devoted to making sure that each child had positive experiences at the calf-marking place (Jannok Nutti & Joks, 2018). Key components of a positive experience were being present and receptive, as well as making interactions between the children, educators, reindeer herder, reindeer and the place possible.

The pathways "learning from Indigenous traditional modes of teaching" and "Indigenous and place-based education" are essential parts of Sámi teacher education. As Madden (2015) stated, they do not directly imply the exploration of colonial power relations. The pathway "pedagogy for decolonizing" creates space for Indigenous perspectives through the historical examination of colonization and incorporation of Indigenous counternarratives (Madden, 2015). The term "colonial" is not used in the Norwegian regulations, nor in the guidelines for Sámi teacher education. Neither is it explicitly used in the programme syllabi, but even if the term is not present in the programme syllabi, colonialism is indirectly visible. For example, one of the learning outcomes in the first subject syllabi for education is that the student teachers must acquire an understanding of Sámi schools' history. Sámi education is

coloured by colonialization, as Keskitalo et al. (2013) showed, and student teachers are involved in the historical examination of the colonization of Sámi narratives in, for example, boarding schools. The history of boarding schools is part of the Sámi experience of colonialism. In boarding schools, children were taught Western values and ways of life, and in a sense, the Sámi were prevented from acquiring cultural knowledge (Kuokkanen, 2000). Furthermore, decolonisation is part of the educators' work to transform and implement traditional knowledge and culture-based teaching perspectives (see, for example, Jannok Nutti, 2018a) and in Sámi educators' work to deconstruct culture, history and Indigenous identity (see, for example, Jannok Nutti, 2018b). The pathway "Indigenous and antiracist education", with a focus on deconstructing problematic perceptions of racialized and Indigenous peoples and groups (Madden, 2015), is less visible in teacher education. When I reflect over my own academic work, I notice that I have written just one article (Jannok Nutti, 2020) where I explicitly wrote about racism and actions to prevent racism. The article is a result of my frustration with the deliberation of a report that stressed that Sámi still face discrimination from the majority society (Poggats, 2018). I see a need to explicitly include both colonial and decolonial racism and antiracism concepts in the programme syllabi to raise awareness of that fact that Sámi have faced, and still face, discrimination, and also explore power relations.

Madden's (2015) pathways are visible in Sámi teacher education, some more than other, and the approaches can help to continue to develop the education. However, to visualise the cornerstones in Sámi teacher education I will use the metaphor of the *lávvu* and three *caggi*, or poles, to emphasize the central parts of Sámi teacher education.

4.6 *Caggi* in Sámi Teacher Education *Lávvu*

In the *lávvu* metaphor, the *lávvu* of Sámi teacher education are set up on the land of the Sámitization and Indigenization process of Sámi University of Applied Sciences. It is an on-going process, as there is still a need to continue developing research-based knowledge for teaching in Sámi teacher education, expand the contemporary Sámi culture-based teaching and learning arenas, raise awareness and Indigenize education. Raising awareness can imply the historical examination of the colonization of Indigenous counternarratives and can provide opportunities to learn from diverse voices. On this land stand the Sámi teacher education's *lávvu* and its three *caggi*. Teaching at an institution is about goal-oriented processes where students, through systematic teaching and training, develop and acquire knowledge. The central questions to take into account are what we should teach (i.e., the content and goals of teaching), why we should choose this content and not something else, and how students can be motivated to learn this particular content. The central contents in the steering documents are the Sámi language and knowledge, teaching and learning perspectives based on Sámi culture. Why we should learn this content

and how the student should be motivated to learn it is connected to Sámi teachers' future work in contemporary society. Keskitalo et al. (2013) emphasized that.

Sámi education means education that focuses on Sámi-speaking teaching of the Sámi language and culture. It is worth distinguishing Sámi speaking teaching from the teaching of the Sámi language. The special features of Sámi pedagogy are intertwined with the paradigmatic changes of teaching that aim at squaring the learning environment and the learner's role with the Sámi culture (p. 96).

I choose to assemble the Sámi teacher education's caggit around the theme of Sámi language, *árbediehtu*,⁵ and *girjás searvelatnja*.⁶ Young Sámi consider Sámi language skills to be very important to being identified as Sámi (Nystad, 2016), and Sámi languages can connect Sámi together. On the other hand, low Sámi language skills can lead to perceived exclusion from the Sámi community. This perceived exclusion can lead to a lack of belonging and support, and can further lead to reactions such as diminished wellbeing among Sámi with low Sámi language skills (Nystad et al., 2017). Therefore, the Sámi language seems to have both an inclusive and exclusive property. Sámi youth in Sámi majority areas are socialized early into traditional Sámi values and into being actively involved in cultural practices, both of which strengthen youths' self-confidence and affiliation with their community (Nystad, 2016). On that basis, Sámi language knowledge and cultural knowledge are central to Sámi teacher education so that student teachers can learn how to support future pupils' learning. *Árbediehtu* involves both the traditional Sámi knowledge and passing that knowledge from one generation to another. However, we live in a contemporary society where Pan-Sámi perspectives should be taken into account.

4.6.1 Sámi Language

The teaching language in Sámi teacher education at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences is North Sámi. It is the main language of teaching, and all subjects in teacher education are given mainly in North Sámi. Student teachers who attend the Sámi teacher education programmes mainly speak North Sámi, but there have been students that were Lule or South Sámi speakers at Sámi University of Applied Sciences. If students speak another Sámi language, they write and take language-teaching courses in their Sámi language. Student teachers read, write, and discuss topics in Sámi. In this way, students learn both the subject knowledge and develop their Sámi language at the same time.

⁵In English literally means inherited knowledge (Porsanger & Guttorm, 2011).

⁶The term “*girjás*” means “multiple, and the concept “*searvelatnja*” is an arena of cooperation and collaboration (Sara, 2004). In a traditional context, knowledges were passed on during collaborative work.

Outakoski (2021) underlined the importance of participating in a Sámi academic landscape:

It was a joy for my heart to be able to discuss things in my mother tongue, *sámeigiella* (North Sámi spelling). From the more casual talk we went on to discuss our personal goals for the retreat. In my Swedish academic landscape, there are only one or two people who know my language, and most academic discussions are in Swedish or in English, both foreign languages to me. This time we could continue talking in Sámi, although we were now discussing research and academia (Outakoski, 2021, p. 86).

Outakoski (2015) noted the risk of Sámi youth losing their language due to exposure to teaching in the majority language and the lack of adequate teaching material, popular culture and media content in Sámi languages. Belancic and Lindgren (2017) discussed in what contexts pupils in Sámi schools, according to the syllabi, are expected to use Sámi and Swedish, and they found that there was a major discrepancy between the presentation of the two languages in the syllabi. The Sámi syllabi were less balanced in terms of oracy and literacy and focused less on metacognitive knowledge and genre than the Swedish syllabi. This situation does not give pupils the same opportunity to participate as democratic citizens in all aspects of the Sámi and Swedish society, nor develop their identities as multilingual, multicultural and Indigenous individuals. They also highlighted the role of language revitalisation and the need for expansion of the domains of Sámi language use.

4.6.2 *Sámi Árbodiehtu*

Sámi teacher education programmes are founded on traditional Sámi knowledge, livelihood experiences and culture-based educational views. These are visible in all steering documents. Traditional Sámi knowledge and skills, or *árbodiehtu*, are “the collective wisdom and skills of the Sámi people used to enhance their livelihood for centuries” (Porsanger & Guttorm, 2011, p. 18). These knowledge and skills have been passed down from generation to generation, orally and through work and practical experience. Livelihood activities, such as reindeer herding, fishing, hunting, berry picking or other chores, are linked to different seasons and different places where resources were available (Sara, 2004). *Árbodiehtu* ties the past, present, and future together (Porsanger & Guttorm, 2011).

A Sámi core value is to live in harmony with the land (Kuokkanen, 2008). Oskal (2000) used the concept reindeer luck to discuss the Sámi understanding of a worthy life. Oskal stressed that reindeer luck, versus fishing luck or dog luck, does not just come from how you treat the reindeer, although that is included. Reindeer luck is dependent on how you live your life. You should be honest, get along with others and get along with places, pastures, migration routes, calving places or anywhere that can be considered a home to the reindeer herd. Once, I went out together with student teachers and in class we had discussed the concept of reindeer luck, suitable ways to show humility and gratitude, and discussed possible practical implications for school (Jannok Nutti, 2017). Earlier, I had followed some teachers in a Sámi

school out in the forest. The teachers experienced that the pupils knew how to behave: Being out does not mean that you should be noisy, you do not shout or be destructive (Jannok Nutti, 2008).

Duodji, yoik, storytelling and communication with the land must be implemented as themes in teaching. The aesthetic learning perspectives are central as a theme in the education syllabi and in the Sámi language syllabi, otherwise they have been part of subjects such as *duodji* or science. Still, we saw a need to strengthen the aesthetic perspectives and the extended learning arena through Sámi livelihood experiences and the use of nature. On that basis, we developed a syllabus for subject education with a focus on traditional knowledge. We became more convinced of the need to further develop and strengthen these parts when we participated in an interview with a committee. The committee was investigating aesthetic learning processes in primary and lower-secondary teacher education. The committee highlighted the need to further develop the work with aesthetic learning processes to ensure that the learning processes is holistic and integrated into teacher education, has progression and coherence, and is based on research (By et al., 2020).

4.6.3 *Girjás Searvelatnja*

In the programme syllabus for Years 1–7, “*searvelatnja*” is used to refer to ways of teaching and learning in connection to the collaborative working arena. “*Searvelatnja*” can be interpreted as the students’ and teacher educators’ collaborative working arena. This setting is perhaps not so different from other education programmes; however, in the programme syllabus for Years 5–10, “*searvelatnja*” is used in a broader setting, directly connected to Sámi perspectives. A “*searvelatnja*” there is a collaboration that takes place between the subjects and is also an interdisciplinary cooperation and experience-based learning arena on the basis of holistic Sámi perspectives. Furthermore, “*searvelatnja*” is used as an expected learning goal, where student teachers develop the competence to set up a collaboration arena with society outside teacher education. This arena could be worldwide as Sámi teacher education is placed in a global Indigenous teaching context.

A multicultural society is highlighted in official documents, and student teachers critically examine cultural relations. Keskitalo et al. (2013) stressed that the Sámi school is not a coherent concept. They showed that, at Sámi schools, there are pupils who are not only ethnic Sámi but others as well. The various ethnic backgrounds in some schools may have caused uncertainty about how a multicultural school could be achieved. Furthermore, the fast changes in society resulted in schools needing to renew their practices constantly. In connection to Aikio (2003), Keskitalo et al. concluded that making Sámi schools multicultural requires the realization of cultural and linguistic equality and changing the power relations so that Sámi have more power to determine their own educational curriculum.

Teaching should take place from a national and Nordic perspective. Student teachers get to conduct practica in Norway, Sweden and Finland and compare the

different national curricula. The practica include not just national differences. The main goal is perhaps not even just exploring national differences. It is rather to view *Miehtasámi*, or Pan-Sámi, perspectives. Students get to examine how the national teaching curricula, teaching aids and teaching influence teaching in Sámi schools. But a Pan-Sámi perspective is to consider Sámi languages and cultural differences, a demanding task. For example, the amount of available teaching aids differs between the languages, and there is a knowledge imbalance between the languages. There is a need to multiply Sámi voices and knowledge and also strengthen the language revitalization perspectives.

4.7 Conclusion

Is there a Sámi teacher education or teacher education for Sámi students? I would say, there is a Sámi teacher education, as the Sámi language is used as a teaching language, and is not just thought of as a language subject. Further, as Sámi teaching content, Sámi cultural-based teaching perspectives and Pan-Sámi teaching contexts are central parts of Sámi teacher education. Still, the frame is set by Norwegian national regulations and guidelines, with Sámi content and Nordic perspectives added along with Sámi education acts within limited self-determination. By using Madden's (2015) Indigenous approaches, it becomes apparent that some concepts are not included, and the question is, would it have been possible or wanted, to include examination of the consequences of racism or colonialism in national steering documents?

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Chapter 5

Education Provision for Indigenous and Minority Heritage Languages Revitalisation: A Study Focusing on Saami and Scottish Gaelic



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Abstract This chapter provides a comparative study of education provision for the Indigenous language of Saami and the minority heritage of Scottish Gaelic. Due to historical factors, both languages are considered endangered according to UNESCO listings. Whilst North Saami and Scottish Gaelic receive government support, which would appear to be providing a reasonably stable position at least within their geographically core areas, assimilation continues resulting in the overall numbers of speakers remaining small. As education is viewed as key to the promotion of both languages, following an introduction to the background historical and societal context of both language contexts, the chapter presents educational practices and challenges in education for comparison over the past forty years. The comparative study highlights that similarities between these two languages exist in language revitalisation efforts to reverse language shift but the forms vary. The chapter concludes with some emerging recommendations for the successful maintenance and revitalisation of minority heritage and Indigenous languages in the twenty-first century despite the continued dominance of surrounding majority languages.

Keywords Indigenous languages · Minority heritage languages · Maintenance · Revitalisation · Education

5.1 Introduction

Following many years of colonisation across geographical areas of the world, a purposive revitalisation of Indigenous, regional and minority languages is desirable both as a human right for those communities and as means of retaining important cultural understanding distinctive in its nature. Language revitalisation aims to reverse language shift with an attempt to halt or reverse the decline of a language or to revive an extinct one (Kandler et al., 2010). The pressing need for purposive measures has been noted to maintain and revitalise language of both the Saami language (Outakoski, 2018) and Scottish Gaelic (McEwan-Fujita, 2011). Given the historical factors that have endangered both languages (Moseley, 2010), educational provision has been viewed as a key element in this endeavour (Aikio-Puoskari, 2016; Bord na Gaidhlig, 2007, 2012).

Whilst the Saami and Scottish Gaelic communities are situated in geographically different locations, a comparative study provides insight into how maintenance and revitalisation of Indigenous, regional and minority languages might be enhanced in a range of settings against the dominance of majority languages. The study will focus on an introductory history of each language within the legal policy context of each nation and resultant education provision and practices. The Saami review focuses on the Finnish situation, but also considers other countries where the Saami traditionally live. Emphasis will be placed on efforts to maintain and revitalise each language since the 1980s with emphasis on the current challenges remaining.

5.2 Background to Saami and Scottish Gaelic

The Saami language belongs to a Finno-Ugric language group. There are nine different Saami languages of which five have a separate writing system and grammar (Aikio, 2012). There are approximately 100,000 Indigenous Saami people in Scandinavia, from mid Norway and Sweden spreading through the northern regions to Finland and on the Russian Kola Peninsula. About 30% of them speak some Saami languages. Increasingly, Saami people have migrated to towns outside the core Saami regions (Heikkilä et al., 2019; Keskitalo, 2019). The history of Saami education was one of assimilation until the 1970s. Fillmore (1996) defines assimilation as a process through which individuals acquire the habits, attitudes, and mode of life of a culture. As a result, increasingly, many Saami people are unable to speak their own language and language revitalisation is necessary.

The Constitution of Finland recognises the Saami as an Indigenous people (Niemivuo, 2010), meaning they have the right to develop their language and culture including Saami Indigenous knowledge and traditional livelihoods (Hyvärinen, 2010). The Saami Language Act safeguards the right of the Saami to use their own language in public authorities and imposes an obligation on public authorities to implement and promote the linguistic rights of the Saami.

Nevertheless, despite advances in recognition of the Saami language and resultant educational provision, the language remains at risk of further loss. This potential loss can be attributed to a range of factors contributing to linguistic vitality (Ehala, 2009) consisting of the ethnolinguistic group's relation to demographic, economic, political and cultural capital. For example, currently Saami education is connected to the Saami Homeland Area (SHA) but approximately 75% of Saami pupils reside outside that core region. Only 10% of those outside the SHA study the Saami language. The future of the Saami language is under threat as few language learners gain an education in their mother tongue (Keskitalo et al., 2021).

In 2020, 2282 people registered the Saami language as their mother tongue. Not all Saami speakers have registered the language as their first language (Tammenmaa, 2020) due to the low status of the language, lack of awareness of the possibility or because most people are bilingual, they may not identify themselves primarily as Saami speakers. In total, there are around 3000 Northern Saami speakers, around 500 Inari Saami speakers and around 350 Skolt Saami speakers.

Northern Saami, as lingua franca of Saami languages is spoken in three countries, Norway, Sweden and Finland with a total of 30,000 speakers, whilst Inari Saami is spoken only in Finland (Räsänen, 2017; Salminen, 2007). Emigration from traditional areas has been recognised as a threat to the number of language speakers (Romaine, 2007). Whilst most of the people living in Saami core areas are elderly, most Saami children live outside these core areas (Ruotsala-Kangasniemi & Lehtola, 2016). About 65% of Saami live outside their homeland. Based on statistics, the Saami population has more than doubled since 1970, but the number of people who have declared Saami as their mother tongue has decreased for all three Saami languages.

Scottish Gaelic is an ancient language traditionally spoken in the Highlands and Islands in Scotland. Since the tenth century, it has been in decline (Robertson, 2001). In 1700, it is estimated that about 25–30% of the population of 900,000 were Gaelic speakers, most of them monoglot (McEwan-Fujita, 2011). By 2001, the census figures identify 58,652 Gaelic speakers aged three and over representing only 1.2% of the country's population predominantly in the North and North-West of Scotland (Bord na Gaidhlig, 2007). This decline has been attributed to factors such as repressive government policies (Robertson, 2001) but also mass emigration from areas traditionally considered Gaelic speaking (Robertson, 2001). Gaelic is still spoken in communities in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island in Canada. However, this chapter will focus only on the education provision within Scotland.

In recent years, as part of the general Celtic renaissance, Gaelic has received new cultural importance within Scotland. Following the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 (Scottish Parliament, 2005) was passed unopposed marking an important milestone in the status of Gaelic as it conferred parity of esteem for Gaelic with English, promotion of Gaelic in Scottish public life and a stated aim of increasing the use of Gaelic in homes, communities, places of learning and workplaces.

Legislative changes in both countries have led to an increased commitment to the revitalisation of both languages following decades of language activism. A key element of this revitalisation process is through improved and culturally responsive educational provision with Saami and Scottish Gaelic education provision now being available from preschool through to tertiary education.

5.3 Methodology

The study focuses on changes to education provision for Saami and Scottish Gaelic over the past forty years. The 1980s saw a sea change in perceptions of both Indigenous and minority heritage languages across Europe (Jansson, 2001). In both the Saami and Scottish Gaelic communities, the 1980s saw pressure mounting for recognition of and changes in educational provision within communities. Current provision and many educational practices aimed at maintenance and revitalisation of both languages can be traced back to the early 1980s. The study therefore accessed and engaged with a range of policy documentation outlining the development of education provision in both contexts with the authors engaging in extended dialogue about the commonalities and differences between the two policy contexts. Hence the study described in this chapter is based on the principles of case-orientated, cross-national comparative research (Stake, 2013).

Distinctive to the approach adopted by the authors, Gómez and Kuronen (2011) note the advantages in enabling the analysis of societies and their specific features from inside as this permits the researcher to recognise cultural and social contexts. This approach can result in researcher bias when those researchers are deeply embedded within the context of the study, but it is suggested that the dangers are

mitigated when the study is cross-national as comparison of the two distinctive contexts promotes deeply reflective dialogue. The study utilized a range of policy documents and academic texts to provide a desk-top study comparing the two identified cases (Saami and Scottish Gaelic) but these texts were exemplified by the authors' own knowledge and understanding of the current situation as through their own participation in the educational provision, they have experienced both successes and failures, providing a unique insight into the outstanding issues that require to be addressed.

5.4 Saami

Following long years of assimilation policy, today, the Saami are recognized as an indigenous people of Norway, Sweden and Finland in addition to Russia. In 1977, the Swedish Parliament recognized the Saami as an indigenous people (Riksdagen I Sverige prop 1976/77) with provision for general ethnic, linguistic and rights for minorities to preserve and develop their own cultural and social life. The status of the Saami indigenous people was secured in Norway in 1988 (Grunnlovens paragraf 110a) and in the Finnish Constitution (1995) and in the subsequently revised Constitution (1999). Within the Russian Federation, laws and regulations in accordance with international agreements ratified by Russia guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples including the Saami Kola. In 2000 the list of indigenous peoples within the Russian Federation was expanded from 32 officially recognized as indigenous to 45 (Seurujärvi-Kari, 2011).

5.4.1 Education

The development of Saami education provision is based on Saami cultural understanding of the connection between man and nature focusing on sustainable ways of living based on traditional knowledge. The Saami traditional way of living has been formed over thousands of years with its own trust system and gods. Negative views of the content and validity of Saami culture were sown during the period of Enlightenment. The first Saami writing system was created by Church clergymen with the intention of educating Saami through Saami language (Capdeville, 2014).

More recently, the Saami language finds mention for the first time in the legislation of the Finnish Education Act in 1983 and 1984. Before that, the Saami language did not have official status in primary school. In 1979, the first primary school pupils were able to attend the first six years of school through the medium of Saami. From the 1970s onwards, the Ministry of Education granted derogations to Saami area municipalities making it possible to hire additional Saami-language classroom teachers. Saami language teaching has since expanded to more schools. However, even in the twenty-first century, most Saami students go to school in

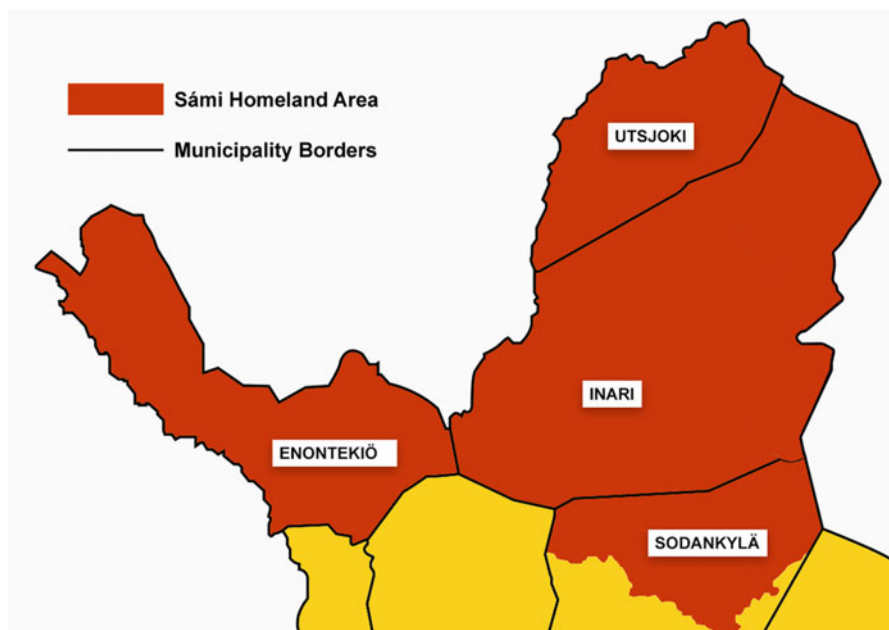


Fig. 5.1 Sámi home region in Finland

Finnish and receive Saami teaching as a subject. The homeland of the Saami was defined in 1973 as being composed of the municipalities of Utsjoki, Inari and Enontekiö and the northern part of the Sodankylä municipality (Fig. 5.1). Many rights related to the Saami language have since become mandatory in the home region (Aikio-Puoskari, 2007).

As a result of the education legislation reform in 1983–84, it was possible to use Saami as the language of instruction for Saami-speaking pupils in the Saami homeland. For a resident of the SHA, the pupils could be taught Saami and Finnish as their mother tongue. In addition, the reform enabled the teaching of the Saami language as a foreign language subject (L2). In the 1992–1995 education reforms, the Saami language gained the status of an independent mother tongue (L1) subject in upper secondary school, subsequently extended to primary schools with specific teaching resources added. In 1998, educational legislation reformed both operational and financial laws and harmonised provision for primary, secondary and vocational education. This reform also safeguarded the Saami language and associated funding for teaching in the home region and provided the first clear Saami obligation for education providers to comply with (Aikio-Puoskari, 2007).

In Norway, Saami language teaching started gradually in the 1970's in the primary school system. Unique to Norway was the launch in 1997 of its own Saami curriculum and Saami school system, which have a parallel status in Norway with the national school system and curriculum (Keskitalo, 2010.) The Saami University College was established in 1989 in Kautokeino, Norway, which included

Saami teacher education programmes. Saami is the academic language, teaching language and administration language. Kautokeino has over 90% Saami speaking inhabitants (about 3000 inhabitants). In 2010, Norway launched separate Saami teacher education reform with its own legislation, and in 2017, initiated master's level qualifications.

There is no separate Saami curriculum in Finland like in Norway, where it has been in use since 1997 (Keskitalo, 2010) or Sweden, which has had one since 2011 (Skolverket., 2011). However, Finland's national curriculum gives local schools and communities autonomy in constructing their curricula based on national curriculum guidelines.

One answer to the educational challenges faced by Saami education in Finland is the *Pilot project on distance education in the Saami languages* started in 2018 (Keskitalo et al., 2021) managed by the municipality of Utsjoki, and coordinated by the Saami Parliament. It offers two supplementary hours of Saami language teaching online to those outside of the Saami homeland with its own local curriculum (Utsjoki., 2019). The long-term goal is to establish a permanent distance education system for the Saami language outside the SHA.

Saami people live in 230 municipalities around Finland, and the resources for education in Saami are scattered all over the country. There is a clear need to develop new methods that are based on distance and online connections. In this way, high-quality education can be more effectively offered to the whole Saami population of Finland, who are increasingly moving to all corners of the country. During the school year 2020–2021, 90 pupils in 62 schools studied in the project. The effect of the pilot project has significant for the smaller Saami languages, Inari and Skolt Saami, as previously their teaching was only organised occasionally outside the native region but now seen in the doubling of the number of students studying Saami languages outside the native region. For most of these children, distance education is the only possibility to learn Saami since there are not enough pupils nearby to form a study group or available teachers.

5.4.2 Challenges

The Saami experienced colonialism, a central manifestation of which is assimilation (Kortekangas et al., 2019). Assimilation refers to the active merging of minorities into the mainstream population (Battiste, 2000). Saami languages are endangered due to centuries of assimilationist policies and policy measures. Furthermore, rapid social change has to an extent negatively impacted Saami health and mental well-being. For example, the suicide rate among young reindeer herders is high (Heikkilä et al., 2019). Nonetheless, contemporary Saami people are part of the globalised and, to an extent, urbanised world because of migration to suburban areas. This creates new demands for education.

Currently, diaspora and urbanisation are ongoing phenomena among Saami people. Diaspora has affected the demographic structure of Saami people living in

the SHA (Keskitalo, 2019). Sixty percent of contemporary Saami live outside the SHA, along with 75% of Saami-speaking children (Heikkilä et al., 2019). For example, around 1000 Saami live in Helsinki, the capital of Finland (Lindgren, 2000). Saami-speaking teachers and actors at different levels have been actively developing Saami education. However, there is a lack of both human and economic resources in the field of Saami education development (Keskitalo et al., 2021; Rahko-Ravantti, 2016).

The Finnish educational system is generally successful, for example in international comparison PISA results (Sahlberg, 2014), although the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre retains concerns about basic education equity. Throughout Finland, girls generally perform better than boys (Pöysä & Kupiainen, 2018). Saami boys statistically receive lower grades. In a recent report, the Ministry of Education and Culture highlighted the situation of Saami language teachers, Saami language textbooks and knowledge of Saami people in majority language textbooks as being deficit (Arola, 2020).

According to Ministry of Education and Culture (2021), several measures have been taken in recent years to revive the Saami language, but the measures taken have not yet guaranteed the preservation of the Saami languages. The status of all Saami languages spoken in Finland is still endangered. Of these, Skolt Saami and Inari Saami are seriously endangered languages (Salminen, 2007). The Finnish government considers the main challenges in reviving the Saami languages to be the provision of adequate Saami language and Saami-language teaching and day care, the emigration of the Saami from the Saami homeland, which has meant narrowing the natural language environments of the Saami languages users and lack of availability of qualified, proficient Saami speaking professionals in the various fields (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012).

The Finnish government considers the recovery of the Saami language requires the following: (1) language nests, which as an immersion-based approach to language revitalisation in early-childhood education have proven to be an effective language revitalization measure, to be established and expanded and day care to be provided as required by law; (2) Saami language teaching to be developed throughout the country and a system supporting remote Saami language teaching utilising remote connections to be introduced; (3) the education system to produce more diverse Saami-speaking professionals in various fields, especially in teaching and customer service positions; (4) in order to revive the Skolt Saami language, special measures to be taken to increase the use and study of the language; (5) the Saami Language Act to be fully implemented in the Saami homeland and the authorities actively promote the use of the Saami language; (6) Saami-language radio, television and internet content to be significantly increased; (7) maintenance, storage and research of the Saami language research results and materials to be easily exploited; (8) support for Saami art and culture to be increased (9) Saami cross-border co-operation in support of language and culture to be well established and new strong Saami-language environments to be created. A working group presented selected concrete measures for the selected priorities (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012).

5.5 Scottish Gaelic

5.5.1 Policy Context

In recent years, Gaelic has received new cultural importance within Scotland. In 2001, the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was passed through the Scottish parliament unopposed marking an important milestone conferring parity of esteem for Gaelic with English, promotion of Gaelic in Scottish public life and the aim of increasing use of Gaelic in homes, communities, places of learning and workplaces. This included the development of a national Gaelic radio station and television channel and the Gaelic College, Sabhal Mor Ostaig, achieving University status.

Scottish Gaelic is now promoted as a vital part of Scotland's cultural heritage with allocated public funding. Bord na Gaidhlig stated that although the language is 'extremely fragile' (Bord na Gaidhlig, 2007: 9), there was cause for optimism. The 2001 and 2011 census indicated that although the overall number of Gaelic speakers was in decline, this rate had 'slowed considerably' (Bord na Gaidhlig, 2007: 11). In 2011, although there was still a 4.6% decline in Gaelic speakers over the age of 25, there was a growth of Gaelic speakers under the age of 25. Whilst this increase in younger speakers is encouraging, Dunmore (2017) highlights issues remain as younger speakers report little regular use of the language in home and community settings.

5.5.2 Education

The increase in younger people speaking the language is attributed to the education system. The 1872 Education Act made no provision for monoglot speakers of Gaelic despite education provision run by societies and churches having done so. However, educational needs of Gaelic speakers were legally acknowledged for the first time in the 1918 Education Act, placing an obligation on local authorities to make provision for the teaching of Gaelic in Gaelic-speaking areas. This resulted in provision of Gaelic as a curricular area at both primary and secondary level, and the opportunity of gaining qualifications in the senior phase of secondary school in Gaelic.

Gaelic education was first recognised as a medium of curricular instruction in its own rights in 1975 when a bilingual pilot project was set up in the Western Isles (Roberts, 1991). The government funded pilot project was well received but by the 1980s, doubts were being expressed as to the effectiveness of bilingual education to tackle the problem of erosion of young people speaking Gaelic within a dominant wrap-around English culture (Robertson, 2001).

A decision was made to implement Gaelic Medium Education (GME) as the primary means to tackle this erosion (Robertson, 2003 in Bryce and Humes (Eds.), 2003). The success of the first two Gaelic medium provisions in 1985 fueled demand in other geographical areas, and by 2010–11, fourteen education authorities were

providing GME for approximately 2312 children in 60 primary schools (HMIE, 2011) rising to 4300 students in both primary and secondary provision in 2018.

Nevertheless, issues remain. Most GME provision is based on sites with English Medium Education classes. Hosting both GME and the more dominant English medium education on the same site has the potential to undermine students' language development and socialisation in the minority language outside the formal classroom. This potential is exacerbated by the many non-native Gaelic families choosing to attend GME. Some stand-alone GME Schools have now been established and some schools have been designated Gaelic schools with English Medium classes attached. In 2019, the Western Isles Education Authority increased Gaelic language provision in all schools and made the language the default language for all children starting primary education.

Underpinning growth in primary provision is the provision of pre-school Gaelic education referred to as the 'seedbed for much of the regeneration and growth in Gaelic in, and beyond, education' (Robertson, 2003: 250 in Bryce and Humes (Eds.), 2003). The first Gaelic playgroups were formed in the 1970s, and in 1982, Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich (CNSA) was set up to promote the development of Gaelic-medium playgroups where children could associate the Gaelic language with enjoyable, socially based experiences. By 2011, approximately 2000 children were learning Gaelic in birth to five provision (HMIE, 2011) provided at different age levels by Parant is Paiste (birth to 2/3 years), Croileagan (2–3 years) and Sgoil Araich (3–5 years).

At the other end of the spectrum, HMIE have noted that GME in secondary schools is at an early stage of development (HMIE, 2011). Although 46 Secondary schools offer Gaelic in some form, only 14 of these provide curricular subjects through the medium of Gaelic other than Gaelic as a subject.

Bord na Gaidhlig (2007, 2012) has set out ambitious plans in its response to the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. Targets include for example 4000 children enrolled in GME at Primary 1 by 2021 compared to just over 300 in 2006. This is to be raised to 10,000 children enrolled at this stage by 2031 and 15,000 by 2041. These are considered lofty targets. Nevertheless, Robertson indicates GME as a means of revitalising the Gaelic language still has challenges to face (Robertson, 2003:259 in Bryce and Humes (Eds.), 2003).

5.5.3 Educational Challenges

Challenges in the provision of education through the Scottish Gaelic language remain if Bord na Gaidhlig's targets are to be realised (2007, 2012). There remain significant recruitment issues both to provide teachers in certain geographical areas as well as in the secondary sector to provide the full range of curricular areas (HMIE, 2011). Stephen et al. (2010) highlight the specific challenge of provision of qualified staff for pre-school provision which is often run by parents in the 0–3 years and at the Sgoiltean Araich stage (4–5 years).

Another challenge is the continued provision of resources to meet the needs of all curricular areas in Gaelic (Bord na Ghaidhlig, 2007, 2012). This includes curricular materials for subjects such as science but also readily accessible, online resources (<https://www.storlann.co.uk/>).

A major concern is that GME remains located within a predominantly wrap-around culture of English. English as the dominant language tends to dominate the culture surrounding the learner in media and cultural exchanges. As stated previously, this is particularly true of GME which takes place on the same site as that of English Medium Education, where the common language between both staff and pupils is English resulting in it dominating out of class discourse. Concerns have been raised as to the lack of out-of-school care in Gaelic (Stephen et al., 2010) in certain areas, but also lack of opportunities for pupils to engage in social activities in the medium of Gaelic. Organisations to provide opportunities for young people to engage in sports and the arts through the medium of Gaelic outside formal education have been set up, although provision outside the Highlands and Islands and the major population centres remains patchy. Other measures to provide Gaelic language cultural provision for young people include the provision of Gaelic programmes on the Gaelic television.

5.5.4 Pedagogical Challenges

GME is based on the principle of language immersion which involves teaching only through the medium of the target language. Bilingual education, although welcomed by both parents and young people, was viewed as insufficient to contribute to the revitalisation of Gaelic considering the rate of decline in the late twentieth century. Complete immersion in the language in nursery provision and at the early stages of primary education was perceived as essential. This was particularly as the numbers of children learning the language in the home continued to decline (Stephen et al., 2010).

The early stages of learning in GME are referred to as ‘total immersion’. The length of total immersion varies between local authorities but certainly Gaelic is the only medium used in teaching and learning in the first two years with the emphasis on development of listening and speaking skills designed to allow children from non-speaking Gaelic backgrounds to develop basic oral competence in Gaelic and to reinforce existing skills of Gaelic speaking children whose language competence might otherwise diminish. The emphasis on oral skills extends well beyond the initial two years. The second phase known as ‘immersion’ is often introduced after the two years of total immersion.

Most children in GME are not native speakers, nor do they come from Gaelic speaking backgrounds, where one or more parent is a fluent speaker and can model the language for the learner. For many parents, the choice is based on a historical or family connection to the language or heritage sometimes several generations back. Approximately only 2% of children in GME enter education as a native Gaelic

learner (O’Hanlon et al., 2013). The inclusion of both native speakers and learners in the pre-school and early years’ GME provision must therefore present a unique situation for practitioners – somewhat dissimilar to that of English Medium settings. The challenge of enabling both groups of children to participate meaningfully in learning within the same setting cannot be underestimated.

5.6 Discussion

Educational provision for both Saami and Scottish Gaelic has changed significantly since the 1980s with dedicated provision from early years to tertiary education. Provision is now protected at policy level recognising both Saami and Scottish Gaelic as national languages with the same rights as majority languages. The national legislation and resultant educational provision are to be celebrated, but despite these advances, both languages remain at risk. This can be attributed to a range of factors. For example, currently Saami education is connected to the SHA but approximately 75% of Saami pupils reside outside that core region. Only 5% study the Saami language. This poses an obvious threat to the Saami language future (Keskitalo, 2020). In Scotland, recent census figures indicate that the decline in Gaelic speakers has slowed but not to the extent expected when considered considering the expansion of GME provision (<https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/census-results> - accessed 24.4.20).

5.6.1 Educational Challenges

An area of concern for both language contexts are pedagogical challenges within provision for Indigenous and minority languages when they sit within a dominant majority linguistic context resulting in the pupils living in a wraparound language and culture different from their first language. For those delivering Saami language provision, many learners reside outside the traditional Saami area, and therefore, do not have access to schools with Saami language provision. For GME, recruitment of qualified teachers remains an issue.

One potential solution to this challenge lies in the affordances of digital language provision. Both Saami and Scottish Gaelic language providers have expanded their digital provision during the 2020 global pandemic when many school buildings were closed (Keskitalo et al., 2021). This has expanded opportunities to learn the language for those not residing in geographical areas where face to face provision is normally provided.

Enthusiasm for digital opportunities to learn minority heritage languages is demonstrated by the phenomenal success of the Duolingo Scottish Gaelic website with around 300,000 learners engaging with the website in the first six months of its launch. Equally successful has been the pilot project on distance education in the

Saami languages currently with around 90 students (Keskitalo et al., 2021). Both examples demonstrate the affordances of digital provision to meet challenges faced where provision is not available in a geographical area.

Additionally, enhanced digital provision of language learning may support teachers where many learners are non-native speakers. Currently, in GME, many teachers must provide effective learning opportunities for both native and non-native learners in the same classrooms. In contrast, digital education can support teachers through provision of innovative pedagogy which allows for enhanced differentiation of provision. The comparative study therefore highlights the ongoing requirement for an additive bilingualism that reflects a model in which both languages of a pupil develop equally in educational provision where both languages are equally valued and can develop (Baker, 2001). Digital provision may provide one mechanism to achieve this aspiration.

5.6.2 Opportunities for Home and Community Use of Languages

The study highlighted the need for increased opportunities for Indigenous language native and learner speakers to use their language skills in social settings. In Scotland, Ó Giollagan et al. (2020) note the ongoing mismatch between existing Gaelic policies and the level of crisis among the speaker group and assert that if the Gaelic language is to be revitalised, a successful vernacular community regeneration is required. The Scottish Government highlighted this as a priority in their most recent Language Plan (Scottish Government, 2017). Simply put, the language must be used in everyday communication in the community for it to survive. The reasons for this not occurring are complex and relate to ongoing issues between native and non-native speakers of minority languages (Dunmore, 2017) and complex issues related to identity formation of speakers, which there is not opportunity within this chapter to address meaningfully.

The study has identified a need to focus, not only on formal education but also on language socialisation opportunities in the home and community. Central to this aim is the supportive provision of media such as television, social media and informal conversation opportunities within youth and community groups. Excellent examples are available such as the partnership between the Saami community and Disney with the launch of the film *Frozen* in Northern Saami and arts organisations such as Feis Rois (<https://www.feisrois.org/>). However, investment in similar ventures is necessary if Indigenous and minority language users are to develop robust cultural identities that contribute to the maintenance and revitalisation of their languages.

Perhaps most importantly, educational provision must recognise that Indigenous and minority languages are inextricably linked to the culture of the community, and this culture must be acknowledged within educational provision for those pupils. Within educational provision, there is an urgent need to recognise that the language

is situated within a distinctive culture. Indigenous language is inextricably linked to culture and way of living; this must be recognised and acknowledged more purposefully within the education system; including the assessment policy of the wider nation.

5.7 Conclusion

Of necessity, the chapter focuses on only two Indigenous languages but is situated in line with the proposal that comparative case studies from different contexts can be illuminating (Stake, 2013). For the authors of this chapter the opportunity to engage in deeply reflective dialogue focusing on their native languages and educational initiatives to promote their revitalisation was enlightening. It is hoped that consideration of Saami and Scottish Gaelic will provide those in similar situations the opportunity to reflect on the challenges faced by other at-risk Indigenous languages but also provide insight into successful education interventions that might contribute to their maintenance and revitalisation.

In particular, the chapter offers insight into how educational provision can support the revitalisation of Indigenous, regional and minority languages where the wrap around majority language is dominant. The chapter offers a comparative study of an Indigenous and minority heritage language, both at risk of disappearing but which have in recent years aimed at revitalization through a range of education initiatives. Whilst some education provision has proved successful for Saami and Scottish Gaelic, the chapter has also identified both structural and pedagogical considerations requiring further attention for this revitalisation to be maintained and indeed advanced.

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Chapter 6

Policy Equity Contexts in Inclusive Education for Immigrant Children in the Faroe Islands



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Abstract The aim of this chapter is to examine whether policies on integration and education in The Faroe Islands are fit-for-purpose when viewed from dual lenses: the acknowledgement of the importance of ethnic cultural identity and heritage language (first language/mother tongue) of immigrant children and their inclusion through education towards integration in The Faroe Islands. The focus is on whether existing policies consider the pivotal relationship between language and identity in education for second generation immigrant children and immigrant children in compulsory schools, i.e., grades 1 to 9 to ensure that they have agency in Faroese society.

Keywords Language · Inclusive education · Immigrant children · Cultural identity

6.1 Introduction

A country that claims to be a fair democracy must offer quality and inclusive education to all its citizens. This is particularly challenging when it comes to second generation immigrants (children born in the host country to first generation immigrants) or first generation child immigrants (children who immigrate with their parents into the country) as the balance between the obligations and rights of the state vis-à-vis the obligations and rights of this group of immigrant children is complex and multifaceted.

This inherent complexity can be addressed by the availability of clear formal educational policy and guideline documents to establish a foundation for equitable and fair representation of rights and responsibilities to contribute to the creation of a culture of mutual trust, respect and expectations between the host nation and the immigrant populace (UNESCO, 2017).

When it comes to immigrant children, the role of culture and language are important determinants of identity (Costigan et al., 2010; Daha, 2011; Phinney, 2002). These are often juxtaposed with the ethos of the dominant culture, language and socio-political attitudes and their accepted status in the host society, impacting the ethnic identity of these children (Phinney, 2002).

The aim of this chapter is to examine whether policies on integration and education in The Faroe Islands are fit-for-purpose when viewed from dual lenses: the acknowledgement of the importance of ethnic cultural identity and heritage language (first language/mother tongue)¹ of immigrant children and their inclusion through education towards integration in The Faroe Islands. The focus is on whether existing policies consider the pivotal relationship between language and identity in education for second generation immigrant children and immigrant children in compulsory schools, i.e., grades 1 to 9 to ensure that they have agency in Faroese society.

¹ ‘heritage’, ‘first’ and ‘mother tongue’ used interchangeably and indicate affiliation to languages of immigrant children’s parents and the order of acquisition.

6.2 Contextual Background

As per the National Bureau of Statistics, The Faroe Islands with 52,703 population has 1763 immigrants from 100 countries, (excluding other Nordic countries), constituting 3.6% of the population.² In the age group 0-18 years, there are 295 immigrant children from 50 different countries as per February 2020 (J. Lydersen, personal communication, Nov 18, 2020). Figures provided by the Head of Education for Compulsory Schools at the Ministry of Education and Culture indicate that in 2020-21, a total of 313 immigrant students asked for extra teaching in Faroese (J. Lydersen, personal communication, Nov 20, 2020). While this gives an indication of how many immigrant children have had access to this provision, the bureau does not have the total number of second generation immigrant children (J. Bærentsen, personal communication, Oct 15, 2020).

The Home Rule Act of 1948³ established the Faroe Islands as a self-governing territory within the kingdom of Denmark (Hayfield, 2017). It acknowledged Faroese as the “principal language, but it also states that Danish and Faroese shall enjoy equal status” (Holm, 2019, p. 96). Volckmar (2019) highlights that Faroese is the language of compulsory schools, and in 2005, the Takeover Act⁴ that replaced the Home Rule Act, gave Faroese authorities responsibility for education, hitherto under Danish authority.

Setting a context for the Takeover Act within the concept of policy diffusion, Volckmar says (Volckmar, 2019), “Policy diffusion is defined as one government’s policy choices being influenced by the choices made by other governments” (p. 124). Despite the differences between the countries, the proximity of the Faroe Islands to Norway and Denmark offered a ready source of reference for education once this portfolio became Faroese. According to Volckmar (2019), the Faroese national curriculum legislated in 2011 was inspired by the Norwegian Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training of 2006. Volckmar (*ibid*) describes the process as “silent borrowing”, i.e., “non-explicit borrowing processes in Faroese educational policy-making” (p. 124). As the Takeover Act has not been ratified for the portfolio on foreign policy and immigration, Denmark retains decision-making, but work is ongoing to make it Faroese. Therefore, the integration policy is dictated by Danish law, allowing limited autonomous changes to the Faroese integration policy.

²<https://integration.fo/lyklatol> (accessed 21.12.2020)

³The Government of the Faroe Islands, “Home Rule Act of the Faroe Islands 1948.”

⁴The Government of the Faroe Islands, “Takeover Act of the Faroe Islands 2005.”

6.2.1 *Role of Faroese Language*

A pertinent factor is the role of Faroese, which is yet to be awarded national language status. Nevertheless, Faroese is not seen as a ‘minority’ language, because it is the major language in The Faroe Islands, and secondly, it is the language of the state and education here (Holm, 2003). It can be described as a ‘minoritized’ language from a socio-political perspective given the historical, political and ideological struggle to throw off the linguistic imperialism of Danish and successfully establish the language within a geographical territory of Denmark (Holm, 2003).

Faroese is considered the national language by its people and increased efforts to standardise it have resulted in its maintenance and entrenchment as the language of the islands after a history of struggle (Holm, 2003). As the status of Faroese has a significant and understandable impact on the linguistic and socio-cultural perspectives of the nation, it is but natural that immigrant minorities’ languages, (languages much larger than Faroese) are perceived as a possible threat to it. The official status still enjoyed by Danish, and the influence of English as *lingua franca* too are seen as cause for concern (Holm, 2003). A study conducted in 2020 established that there is no decline in the using of Faroese or ethnic Faroese people’s positive attitude and commitment to it (Andreassen, 2020).

6.3 Theoretical Underpinnings

The connection between language and identity of second generation immigrant and child immigrants, and its relevance to inclusion through education are the key foci within the existing policies. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2017), national level policy communicates a particular standpoint based on a belief system and engenders action coloured by political or ideological stance. Policy provides procedures for praxis to be implemented and emphasises the importance of appropriate implementation (Bell & Stevenson, 2006).

6.3.1 *Inclusion and Social Justice in Education*

The OECD (2016) equity framework has two objectives for education:

inclusion – to ensure that all students, particularly those from disadvantaged or traditionally marginalised groups, immigrants included, acquire fundamental skills, and fairness – to remove obstacles over which students have no control to student achievement, including an immigrant background.

Education is key to integration, development of democracy, and community building through including multiple human narratives (Ball, 2016). Schools must be centrally

“concerned with literacies for active local and global citizenship. . .” (*ibid*, p. 26), suggesting that education must engender social justice through being inclusive. If the negative impact of students’ immigrant background on their educational outcomes is minimised, equity, social cohesion, sense of belonging and positive economic outcomes can be achieved (OECD, 2016).

A fair policy involves a decidedly participative stance encompassing all stakeholders. It is one that is based on social justice, language rights and the development of the individual, without compromising the rights of all whom the policy might impact (Bianco, 2010). The main thrust of his arguments is that “social cohesion and common citizenship” (p. 39) cannot be served by monolingualism; multilingualism is not a hindrance to a society’s ability to communicate across various groups. He puts forward a convincing perspective of language as the one facet of cultural diversity which promotes the continuing development of individuals.

Bianco (2010) argues that policies for cultural diversity require two foci: engendering shared, accessible fairer communication and strengthening and maintaining diverse languages with the inherent cultural diversity and variance unique to them. In his opinion, the vital role that languages play in shaping meaning and identity makes it incumbent on a society, which wishes for cultural pluralism and diversity, to fix its goal on multilingualism as its focused policy objective. This begs the question as to what the integration and educational policies indicate of the intentions and attitudes of the Faroese government to education and integration.

6.3.2 Language and Identity Link

As documented in literature, the relationship between language and sociocultural identity is clear. A balance must be struck between the immigrant children’s maintenance of ethnic identity and their heritage language and integration and learning the host/dominant language of the country. Language facilitates a sense of allegiance to a target language group. It paves the way to understanding and accepting the culture of the group and enables interaction with the group towards a sense of belonging (Phinney et al., 2001). The significance of heritage language influence is complex as it can both underpin affiliation to the ethnic culture and simultaneously enable psychological adjustment by the migrant (Virta et al., 2004).

6.3.2.1 Language and Acculturation

The role of language in acculturation can be viewed through sociolinguistic and psychological viewpoints to explore the positive or negative impact on immigrant language learning. ‘Acculturation’ involves psychological change in the migrant from interaction with the host nation. It requires renouncing of aspects of one’s home culture (‘culture shedding’) and accepting and internalising elements of culture of the host country (‘culture learning’) Berry (2010).

Individual acculturation colours how language and cultural identity are negotiated – they are influenced by one’s age, when entering the host society, and the duration of stay (Liebkind et al., 2004; Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000). For an individual, acculturation means that cultural, ethnic and national identities are negotiated internally within the host society while establishing balance between the language of the dominant community and one’s own mother tongue (Horenczyk, 2000).

Learning a language carries implication of identity, and Edwards (2003, p. 41) states, “beyond utilitarian and unemotional instrumentality, the heart of bilingualism is belonging”. While interaction and friendship with peers may build a platform for social intercourse and greater association in Faroese society, a caveat is that exposure to the national culture outside ethnic groups in formative years, may well accelerate and strengthen acculturation. This can be both positive and negative, with assimilation being at the negative end of the continuum resulting in loss of ethnic identity that may contribute to subtractive bilingualism, i.e., the loss of the first language (Nehr, 2001).

Often, immigrant children who integrate (defined as being engaged in both their heritage culture and host society) are better adapted than those who assimilate, i.e., adopt thoughts and attitudes comparable to those of the host nation (Berry, 2010) and have merged into its culture. Given that literate ability matures around ten years of age, for child immigrants, the first language may not have become entrenched before second language interference occurs (Oerter & Montada, 2002; Seville-Troike, 2000). This carries potential for conflict within an individual’s sense of identity and place in a community and the resultant sense of ‘otherness’. According to Yağmur and van de Vijver (2012), host language proficiency is necessary for sociocultural adjustment, and the heritage language for ethnic identity.

Nehr (2001) makes a salient point about accepting simultaneous bilingualism, i.e., both the first language and dominant language for development of the immigrant children to avoid problems in language learning and issues of identity. She advocates the maintenance and development of the immigrant mother tongue as a vehicle for understanding native written culture, competent language skills in the dominant language to levels acceptable by the host nation and availability of teachers with bilingual competencies.

For immigrant children, their heritage language and culture of parents’ original country creates an extra social and psychological layer/barrier between them and full access to Faroese society. The younger they are when they enter the Faroes, the greater the chances of learning the target language and finding a path towards acculturation, though with a risk of subtractive bilingualism. Therefore, schooling has a major role in facilitating inclusion.

According to aforementioned literature, integration and education policies must strive to ensure social justice and inclusiveness to serve this demographic group equitably. In the Faroese context, it comprises acknowledging that Faroese is not the first language for immigrant students, using foreign language acquisition approach in Faroese instruction, and providing equitable concessions to ensure proficiency levels in Faroese do not hinder education opportunities for immigrant children. Ideally, an educational policy with clear guidelines for teaching and learning for this

demographic is necessary to ensure commitment from leadership and staff in schools to implement the policy effectively.

6.4 Methodology

The methodology involves document analysis from the qualitative paradigm as the sole research instrument. As public policy documents are crucial in setting a framework and signalling top down commitment, it is deemed appropriate to use this instrument. The reliance on documents is justified by the fact that integration of and education for immigrants are in their infancy in the islands. Some policies are very new, and others have yet to enter the implementation phase.

Document analysis is considered advantageous as the researcher works nearly invisibly, studying as he/she does the documents in detail and not engaging with people (Bowen, 2009). It makes collecting and analysing data a cost-effective way and suitable for a small-scale study which involves only a few relevant available documents. While acquiring documents maybe pose difficulties, government policy documents included in this study are readily available in the public arena. This means ethical approval for the researcher's access to these primary sources is not relevant in this context; the ethical issue comes into play in the role the author plays in this research context.

The interview technique, where the researcher treats the document like an interviewee that gives the researcher the relevant information (O'Leary, 2014) has been used. The researcher uses the study aims as the point of departure to seek relevant data comprised of a few sentences and parts of sentences within various documents.

The documents were studied deductively and inductively based on three main themes: reference to first language preservation of immigrant through mother tongue teaching (mother tongue teaching), acknowledging the importance of their heritage culture, and a policy for teaching Faroese as a second/foreign language. The inductive analysis revealed attitudinal assumptions in the integration report (2011), which are also explored. While other instruments of research may have given richer perspectives, the lack of coherent policy development, 'newness' of some policy and no implementation made document analysis a more viable and relevant approach.

6.5 Analysis

The conceptual framework of Bell and Stevenson (2006) is used as the basis for analysis as it affords multiple perspectives from which to view policy documents. Adopting the adage that "There is no such thing as a value-free policy: all policy has value-based intent" (Cardno, 2018, p. 624), the policy stance is examined from three aspects: context, text and consequences.

The formal policy documents of relevance to be scrutinised are the Integration Committee Report (2011), The Faroese Education Act of 1997 (Revised in 1999 & 2000) and the Executive order no.144 on Teaching Faroese as a Second Language and Mother Tongue Teaching (Oct 6, 2020). All the documents have been translated into English by the author, for whom comprehending Faroese documents poses no challenges.

6.5.1 Policy Context: *The Integration Committee Report (2011)*

The Faroese government felt that an integration policy was warranted for the country to facilitate the transition of the portfolio from Denmark. To this end, a working group was established in 2010 by the Minister of the Interior, with representative stakeholders, including two ‘foreign representatives’ (one of whom was the author) as consultants.

The working group report acknowledged the contribution immigrants make to the society and accepted that integration is a new concept in The Faroes. It defined integration as, “an individual and society adjusting to each other” (translated by author, 2020). A successful integration was described as one where immigrants had influence and participated in the host society on an equal footing with ethnic Faroese. Integration was to consider both the Faroese and immigrant traditions and cultures, so the immigrant maintains his/her identity.

6.5.1.1 Policy Text

Relevant recommendations include an integration law to ensure commitment to structure a policy on integration with the necessary monies to demarcate the rights, obligations and responsibilities of the country and of the immigrants; a beginner’s course in Faroese for adult immigrants, including learning about Faroese culture and society, so they can apply for residence permit, followed by citizenship; the Education Act for Compulsory Schools, § 5. para 6 recommends extra classes for immigrant school children, which currently is 20 × 45-minute sessions, which in larger schools sees the 20 sessions divided among the children; funding for 100 hours of Faroese and 50 hours of socio-cultural input (3 h/week for each individual) and materials design should be an important focus area.

6.5.1.2 Policy Consequences

The challenges for implementing beginners’ course in Faroese have already been identified in the working group document. It highlights the importance of first having

a law for integration to both protect the country and its immigrants, so the rights, obligations and commitment to ensure a two-way participative stance towards integration can be established. It recommends that language courses be mandatory and be tied to acquiring residency and subsequently citizenship, and social financial help with the proviso for exemption.

A limited review of this document is possible in the light of The Faroe Islands as an independent territory of Denmark. It is worth noting that Denmark's immigration and integration policies have often attracted criticism from the EU, Amnesty International and other organisations for being stringent, and this impacts the Faroese version. The punitive approach to learning Faroese is already clear in this working group report given the necessity to adhere to Danish policy conditions. While acculturation with equal respect for host and immigrant cultures is mentioned in the report, the stance seems to favour assimilation. Emphasis is on Faroese cultural values being imbibed, but little acknowledgement is made of the crucial relationship between language and identity or the culture and first language of immigrant children.

This is not unexpected as the 'parent' Danish policy is restrictive having introduced the 'Integration Contract' in 2006, and the 'Integration Exam' in 2007 as the basis of permanent residence permit and citizenship with punitive measures for immigrants who do not pass the language and culture exams (Jensen et al., 2009). These authors offer a useful overview of attitudinal significance of Danish policy, which is applicable to the Faroese one. The policies emphasise contradictory ideas - cultural oneness but tout equal rights, equal opportunities and self-reliance. Equality is seen as having "a certain degree of sameness. . . To be equal in Danish society, thus tends to imply to be similar" (p. 5). Integration is viewed as assimilation, and its goal is 'individual inclusion' and 'cultural transformation'. Immigrants are expected to adopt Danish values (*ibid*) and tailor their values to Danish values, thereby placing the onus of integration on the immigrants.

When the Minister of Environment, Industry & Trade inaugurated the new online portal on immigration for Faroese society on 20 Jan 2020, he mentioned that an integration law is to be passed, and the government is working on it.⁵ Therefore, no review of the law and its implementation is possible, except to add that the two largest municipalities and the Immigration office have since appointed integration coordinators. It would perhaps be fair to say that policy borrowing dominates the Faroese approach in its attitudinal similarity to the Danish one.

Moving onto studying what the educational policy offers the immigrant children, the section below commences with the National Act on Education.

⁵<https://integration.fo/news/50/nu-skal-integrationsloggava-gerast-uvmr>

6.5.2 *Policy Context: The Faroese Education Law of 1997 (Revised in 1999 & 2000) with Reference to its Provisions for Immigrant Children in Compulsory Education*

The policy context of laws on education involve many stakeholders - parents, teachers, school leaders, department of education, politicians and the teacher union. Everyone in a school is affected by policy guidelines, and school leaders need to be clear on how policy is to be whittled down to implementation by using key players to ensure involvement and ownership. This Act covers pre-schoolers and education of school children (7-16 years) in the compulsory schools. At first glance, the policy stance appears to be one of inclusiveness.

6.5.2.1 Policy Text

The document clearly states that education is for all and focuses on the importance of the development of every individual student, so they can achieve the necessary skills to contribute to society. The teaching environment and daily routines should be based on Christian principles, yet grant religious freedom, tolerance, equality and democracy (§ 2:3). The 29 municipalities have to structure education in their jurisdiction according to the national framework.

This local outsourcing of education creates imbalance in the country based on the location, size, and financial resources of the municipalities. For example, the largest municipality of Torshavn offers Faroese for foreigners, and this is also extended to child immigrants, “The 20 hours of free Faroese lessons also apply to school children, who have moved to the Faroe Islands.”⁶ This is not the case with all municipalities and equity becomes a challenge at the outset. In § 5. para 6, the law declares that children with Faroese as their second language can have special help to learn Faroese in compulsory school. This means 20 × 45-minute sessions in all. In some large schools, as this quota is distributed amongst several students, it can result in as low as 9 h per annum per child. The Act specifies mother tongue teaching for this target group in § 4. para 5 and states that bilingual pre-schoolers will be offered support for acquiring Faroese.

6.5.2.2 Policy Consequences

Policy is important in education because it regulates the resources provided for educational activity, and one expects that it will promote equitable education (Razik & Swanson, 2010). The law has made clear that education is to be inclusive, with a

⁶(<https://www.torshavn.fo/in-english/language-training/faroese-language-training/>)

bias towards a Christian background. It has not implemented the provision for pre-schoolers as yet with mother tongue teaching. If implemented, while this might enable children to be better prepared for compulsory education in Faroese, there is no awareness shown for the possible impact on the first language of this group, which must be preserved given its implications for the language and identity of immigrant children.

Extra Faroese classes for immigrant children have been implemented, which is helpful, but inadequate for fulfilling learning requirements. Research is clear that one requires about 6-7 years to acquire competence in a second language. Moreover, the immigrant children are often removed from regular classes for the extra Faroese input, exacerbating the challenges in the learning of other subjects as well. An attempt to redress the apparent drawbacks comes in the form of the next policy as revealed in its analysis.

6.5.3 Policy Context: Executive Order No.144 on Teaching Faroese as a Second Language and Mother Tongue Teaching (Oct 6, 2020)

This executive order came into effect on Oct 7, 2020. In the push to formalise integration, incremental changes ensure that the Education Act can be implemented to lay the foundation for other aspects of integration.

6.5.3.1 Policy Text

The order states that immigrant children should acquire “skills of speaking, reading, and writing Faroese” (§1:1, Executive order no. 144. 2020, translated by author). They should be able to use Faroese as a tool and in communication, so they become “bilingual in terms of being able to use Faroese in speaking and writing” (§1:2). Culture and societal issues should be a part of teaching in Faroese as a second language” (§1:3).

Immigrant children “can be educated in their mother tongues” (§2: 3). The schools have been given responsibility to organise the teaching of Faroese as a second language in consultation with parents and students based on individual. The culture and societal issues of the host and immigrant cultures should be part of teaching (§3:2, 3). The school will organise the teaching of Faroese as a second language with the class teacher and a teacher who is qualified in second language acquisition (§3:4). The hours designated for teaching will be based on student needs and ability. The aim is to give the student 3 years of extra help in Faroese as a second language and extend this period, if necessary, based on evaluation of student progress (§4:4).

The order outlines a possible approach for teaching the immigrant children as part of the mainstream classroom, on an individual basis or part of a group, in a ‘reception’ class specifically constituted of second generation immigrant children

and child immigrants, where they can be placed for a maximum of 6 months (§5:5). Maximum number of students can be 7 and be increased to 12 students depending on the competencies of the students and upto 18, if there are two teachers (§5:6). There be maximum three grades in one class, but if level of language is comparable, 5 grades can be grouped together (§5:7). Furthermore, with parents' consent, immigrant children may be exempt from other subjects, (except Faroese and Mathematics), to facilitate learning Faroese. In place of other subjects, the students will be taught about their heritage and country of origin together with Faroese culture. Teachers are to be formally qualified to teach Faroese as a second language to this student demographic.

6.5.3.2 Policy Consequences

This policy serves to address gaps in previous policies by actually detailing a strategy for implementing teaching of Faroese as a second language. There is much emphasis on proactive help, clear categorisation of how the schools should present these students with clear details in their application to the Ministry of Education and Culture and the obligations of schools.

It is relevant to glean the policy of the host community toward minority (immigrant) languages, i.e., the stance from which the policy is worded as "... the acculturation orientations of the immigrant groups and language policies of the receiving societies have an effect on language use and adaptation patterns" (Yağmur & van de Vijver, 2012, p. 1112). The policy focuses on second generation immigrant children and child immigrants being bilingual, but the emphasis is clearly towards acquiring Faroese language skills and culture. It does not indicate what would be done to ensure first language competence or even consider its implications for immigrant identity.

The Faroese school system is still gearing up to meet the challenges of educating second generation immigrant children and child immigrants. The schools will be required to presumably implement this in the new academic year 2021-22, and the timeframe is tight. The Faculty of Faroese in The University of The Faroe Islands has been tasked with designing the teaching of Faroese as a second language, and the author was asked to be an external advisor in early November 2020. Nevertheless, it is a positive development in a hitherto neglected area of education and may lay the foundations for inclusive education.

It is pivotal that the measures outlined in this directive can and are implemented using a framework that has sought consensus from the internal stakeholders. For a policy to be implemented, availability of resources in terms of funding, teachers and materials are crucial. Understanding requirements of individual students is a time-consuming process necessitating competent evaluation procedures. A synergy must be established through a top down and bottom up agreement and cooperation to fulfil aims and objectives.

The prerequisites of teacher expertise for diagnostic testing, i.e., tests designed to assess student competence, making teaching more focused and tailor made for this

cohort, and plan for teaching these students showing awareness of culturally responsive pedagogy and understanding for their sociocultural identities may prove complex and challenging.

As teachers have not been given the opportunity to become qualified in teaching Faroese as a second language, the initial period will presumably be one of trial and error. Issues of teacher self-efficacy, motivation for teaching immigrant children and the significance of moving from mother tongue teaching to second language acquisition, which would be significant in this context, are not the remit of this chapter.

While this policy cannot be evaluated as yet, it would be relevant to see what it achieves in the integration and education of second generation immigrant children and child immigrants. The acknowledgement of the importance of first language and culture of this target group sounds promising, but time will tell if this policy addresses the goal optimally. If the policy foreshadows the ethos of integration in Denmark outlined earlier, optimism must come with time and proof of positive outcomes.

6.5.4 *The UNESCO Framework of Analysis*

This framework allows for an examination of how inclusion and equity currently figure in policies. Based on the analysis of the documents, the sections in bold identify the status quo in The Faroe Islands as being in the nascent phase. (Adapted from UNESCO, 2017, p. 42).

Points of relevance	Level of progress		
	Nascent phase	Planning phase	Implementation phase
Inclusion and equity are overarching principles that guide all educational policies, plans and practices	Inclusion and equity are not yet strong features of educational policies, plans and practices but initial discussions have begun regarding this	Planning has commenced to acknowledge the role of inclusion and equity with regard to educational policies, plans and practices	Actions have been taken to ensure that inclusion and equity are features of educational policies, plans and practices
The important national education policy documents strongly emphasize inclusion and equity	Although there is little mention of inclusion and equity in important national education policy documents, initial discussions have taken place to address this issue	Planning activities have taken place to make inclusion and equity a feature of important national education policy documents	Actions have been taken to ensure that inclusion and equity are a feature of important national education policy documents

(continued)

Points of relevance	Level of progress		
	Nascent phase	Planning phase	Implementation phase
To what extent are educational leaders (local authorities, senior staff, school principals) trained regarding their responsibilities for enhancing inclusion and removing barriers?	While senior staff at the national and district levels provide limited leadership on inclusion and equity in education, initial discussions have taken place to strengthen this aspect	Planning has begun to encourage senior staff, at the national and district levels, to provide leadership on inclusion and equity in education	Actions have been taken to ensure that senior staff at the national and district levels are providing leadership on inclusion and equity in education
Schools and other learning centres have strategies for encouraging the presence, participation and achievement of all learners from their local community	Although support for vulnerable learners is varied in quality, discussions have taken place to bring about improvements	Planning has been going on to strengthen the support provided for learners at risk of underachievement marginalization and exclusion	Action has been taken to ensure effective support for learners at risk of underachievement marginalization and exclusion

6.5.5 Discussion

When the directive was open to public scrutiny and comments, there was a discussion if “Teaching of Faroese to speakers of other languages”, or “Faroese as a second language” were appropriate, but the directive chose the latter, which was seen as carrying overtones of an assimilative attitude, even though using “second language” is appropriate in the given field.

Access to language learning (formal) and language exposure (informal) impact the development of both first and second languages. As it stands, subtractive bilingualism appears to be a potential risk in The Faroes. Limited exposure to the first language (given the proportionately less time children spend using it actively at home), and the current trend in society with regard to English pose challenges. Education policy states the rights of immigrant children to have mother tongue teaching, but this has never been practised so far as the Integration report 2011 established. The latest directive indicates implementation in the near future without specifying a deadline or a strategy to minimise subtractive bilingualism.

The fact that there are children and youth with more than 50 different languages in Faroese society creates challenges for mother tongue teaching. It requires a logical, clear plan of action conspicuously missing in the government directive. While acknowledgement of the importance of cultural inheritance to identity finds mention at the policy level, there are no strategic plans for implementation in the directive. The time factor for commencing courses for teachers in teaching Faroese as a second

language may have potential implications for fit-for-purpose implementation of the policies.

Additive bilingualism, where support is offered for first language simultaneously during acquisition of second language (Enstice, 2017), is yet to become reality in the islands making achieving functional bilingualism challenging. Av Skarði (2018 in Holm et al., 2019) indicates that “Faroese as a foreign or additional language has not been developed, nationally coordinated or formalized” (p. 399).

The need for ‘extra’ Faroese is emphasised in all documents, and the three years for Faroese as a second language for immigrant children offers ground for cautious optimism. Nevertheless, there are no clear guidelines for school leaders and teachers to navigate these complex paths. The ambitious intention to implement teaching Faroese as a second language does not include how in-service teachers will be professionally trained to competently fulfil the goals, apart from the proposed course. Currently, a working group has been appointed to prepare teachers to teach Faroese as a second language. Further insight on this will be offered in the next chapter.

The policy document may also be evaluated on what is omitted. The concepts of equity or social justice in education find no mention in any of the documents. Absence of terms like ‘multilingualism’, ‘plurilingualism’, ‘multicultural’ is perhaps an indication that the Faroese language and culture are given precedence. It is this focus on Faroese language and culture that dominates the discourse and not one of embracing plurality. Furthermore, policies should be monitored, evaluated, modified and adjusted for improvement and rectifying mistakes (Bianco, 2010) to ensure fairness, and one may hope this will be the case.

6.6 Conclusion

The chapter has studied the *status quo* of education for second generation immigrant children and child immigrants in The Faroe Islands with regard to the policies for their education and inclusion. It has sought evidence for the acknowledgement of ethnic cultural identity of immigrant children as vital to creating a sense of self, the maintenance of the first language of this target group, specific plans for teaching them Faroese as a second language and their inclusion through education towards becoming fully-fledged members of Faroese society.

Lack of focus on the importance of language-identity connection and a social justice stance do appear problematic. Government policies for immigrant children are being generated with apparently unilateral perspectives. They indicate preparing immigrant children for life in society by focusing on Faroese culture, language and traditions. There seems to be no commitment to preserving heritage cultures, no informed discussion of why mother tongue teaching matters or how children with over 50 languages could have mother tongue teaching, but only a delineation that teaching in schools will include these issues.

The policies indicate that the islands are in the nascent phase of inclusion and equity in education. The Faroese approach with its echoes of the Danish model, and the current assimilation-oriented discourse, may undermine an inclusive, socially just approach to education for immigrant children in The Faroe Islands.

6.6.1 Significance of the Study

This study breaks new grounds in research in The Faroe Islands, where no research exists on policies for this target group. This analysis might offer Faroese authorities insight into the salient, though complex implications of the inextricable tie between language and identity. It may highlight the validity of accepting multilingualism, multiculturalism and the significance of inclusive and meaningful education for all children through addressing the incontrovertible importance of heritage culture, identity and language to immigrant children.

As contribution to educational policy, the study adds to the challenges of inclusive education in a society, where the majority language is minoritized, and the ethnic people are predominantly bilingual. It analyses the consequences of policy borrowing and policy diffusion, which may impact the appropriacy of the policy stance in serving local contexts.

Possible author bias is overtly stated here as it may have coloured the study. I am a first-generation immigrant woman with English as my first language and personal experience of being an immigrant in Faroese society. My professional role is in teaching and research. My career began at the tertiary level in India from 1986, in the secondary level in The Faroes from 1993, tertiary level teaching from 2011 and research from 2014 to the present. My two second generation immigrant sons have studied in the Faroese educational system. What I perceive as the failure of the system have created convictions on how integration through inclusive education may be organised. However, in anchoring the study in valid research perspectives in the field and adopting relevant policy frameworks as objective tools for analyses, author bias may have been mitigated.

To establish a fair and progressive nation, every citizen must have a voice and contribute to strengthening the fabric of society. The key to individual development is education, which can facilitate agency and promote equity and social justice. In The Faroe Islands, there is much to be gained from establishing an inclusive and progressive society where policy can ensure inclusion and diversity enrich the ethos of the nation.

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Chapter 7

Does it Matter Where You Live? Young People's Experiences of Educational Transitions from Basic Education to Further Education in Finnish Lapland



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Abstract This chapter describes how young people living in small communities or rural areas in Finnish Lapland portray their educational transitions from primary to secondary school and further to upper secondary school and vocational education and training. The research data consists of 7 focus group interviews, which were attended by a total of 27 students. The research philosophy relied on a phenomenological approach in which the young people's experiences were explored. The data analyses were conducted using the theory-led thematic analysis approach. According to the results, the transition phases resulted in changing roles and responsibilities for the students. The experiences included both positive and negative aspects. The students' social relationships and supporting networks underwent changes, for example, the students were excited about whether they will develop new friends and their parents expected them to be more autonomous than before. Young people leaving their communities encountered diverse challenges. On the other hand, some of the young people who continued their studies in the small community were worried about their privacy and had a fear of stigmatisation. As an answer to the question set in the title of this chapter, we may conclude that it really matters where one lives during educational transitions.

Keywords Educational transitions · Arctic · Lapland · Young people · Experiential expertise

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides insights into how young people living in small communities or rural areas in Finnish Lapland delineate their educational transitions from primary to secondary school and further to upper secondary school and vocational education and training. Smooth educational transitions have the potential to build up transition capital, which can be exploited later during one's life span in case of changes in personal and working lives (West et al., 2010). Negative experiences during transition can have the opposite effects. Additionally, educational transitions are part of young people's choices in life, which are made in relation to families, communities, culture and societal conditions (Anderson et al., 2000). This all means that children and young people navigating their transitions need support, some more so than others.

In remote rural areas with small communities, added to the challenges related to transition itself and changes in young people's lives, they also have to deal with socio-cultural differences. During their transition process, young people often move

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from their communities to localities where further education is provided. This includes usually moving to larger localities away from home. All this has the potential to cause homesickness with lack of support (Mander et al., 2015). The study presented in this chapter aims to seek answers to what kinds of experiences are gained by young people living in and coming from remote rural areas during their educational transitions.

7.2 Context: Finnish Education System

The study's setting is the Finnish far-north geographical area called Lapland. Finland is a geographically long and fairly large country in North Europe. The majority of the inhabitants live in southern parts of the country, and especially in Lapland, the population density is very low, with only 1,9 persons per square kilometre (StatFin, 2021).

The Finnish education system consists of pre-primary, basic and upper secondary education, as illustrated in Fig. 7.1.

In the autumn of 2021, Finnish compulsory education changed from the 10-year to the 12-year system. Children start their pre-primary education during the calendar year when they reach the age of six. The following year, they advance to comprehensive school, which is organised as a single-structure education (integrated primary and lower secondary education) (Eurydice, n.d.). In the first six grades of primary education (ages 7–12), classroom teachers teach most of the subjects. In lower secondary education (ages 13–16), teaching is organised according to different subjects, taught by subject teachers.

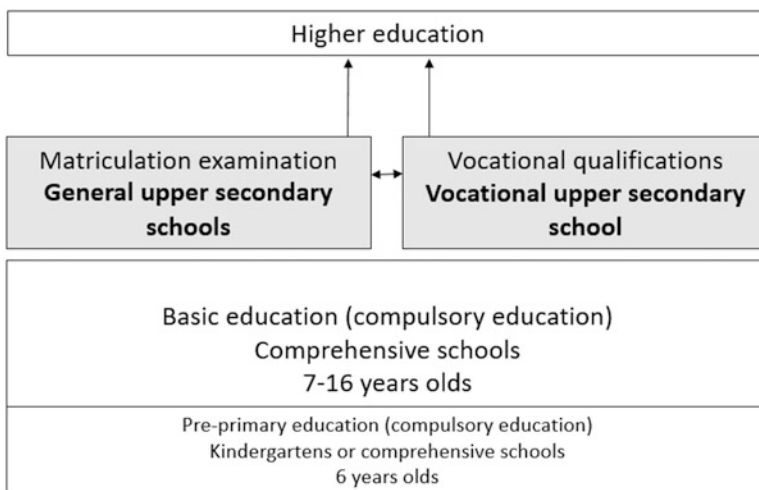


Fig. 7.1 Finnish system of education

The upper secondary education lines – both general and vocational – follow a nine-year comprehensive education. In Finland, general upper secondary schools (i.e., gymnasiums) educate students for approximately three years in preparation for higher education. In turn, Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifies students for the labour market and also offers eligibility for higher education. Some students qualify from both general and vocational upper secondary schools at the same time, completing broader general studies than those receiving vocational education only. In these cases, studies usually require four years.

7.3 Educational Transitions

All children and young people experience multiple educational transitions, such as starting nursery, attending pre-school, starting primary school and advancing to secondary school. These can be regarded as normative, ecological transitions; they represent institutionalised transitions established by laws and educational policies (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Elder & Shanahan, 2006). The normative transitions also form an important part of children's and young people's growing up and taking increasing agency of their career paths and future choices (Marttinen et al., 2018). Previous studies have indicated that transitions present both opportunities and challenges. Some children and young people make successful transitions, enjoy school and demonstrate good academic achievement, while others struggle with their well-being and school performance (de Bruyn, 2005; Kiuru et al., 2020).

Educational transitions can be understood as rites of passage (see, e.g., Turner et al., 1992; van Gennep, 2013), with changing communities, roles and contexts. Children and young people enter a new learning environment, which is often larger and includes more people than the previous one. During the transition, children's and young people's roles change, and they are often the youngest in the new setting. At the same time, they are expected to take more responsibilities than before (Jindal-Snape, 2010). Young people who have good coping and life management skills are able to move on by taking responsibilities in their studies and are more likely to experience successful educational transitions (Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2008; Marttinen et al., 2018).

During young people's transitions, the family is usually the resource that provides continuity in their life in the midst of changes (Turunen & Kearney, 2016). Previous research supports the notion that an encouraging and supportive family environment has a positive impact on successful transitions (Elffers & Oort, 2012; McGee et al., 2003). Young people's parents, siblings and peers have experiential knowledge and know-how, originating from previous experiences, that help the youngsters navigate through their transitions (Turunen, 2014). Siblings, friends and other informal networks can be helpful and provide a sense of safety in giving advice based on their own experiences (Benner, 2011). According to previous research, parents, siblings and friends play a significant role as informants and navigators through the transition to secondary school (Goff, 2017; Turunen & Kearney, 2016).

A lack of support from the informal network represents discontinuity and may therefore cause stress to the young (Galton, 2003). Families' and communities' social, cultural and economic backgrounds and families' abilities to support their youngsters' transition are diverse (Goff, 2017). The families are the original contributors to children's and young people's learning and development. Families can provide a supporting academic-oriented home environment and also foster happiness and a sense of belonging (Swartz, 2008). The lack of family support is not always about the problems or negligence causing stress or difficulties for the youngsters (e.g., Roderick & Camburn, 1999). It can also be related to families' possibilities to share everyday life with their underaged children, for example, if the children are obliged to move to another town to study. Accordingly, this means less parental communication and support (Elffers, 2012).

Another aspect of the informal network comes from the meaning of the peer social system and young people's position in it. The sense of belonging is crucial for successful studies (Hymel et al., 1996). In a large Dutch study (N = 1438), Elffers (2012) found that the young students' social capital and support from community and peers were interconnected or combined with other factors, such as parents' education, economic status and previous school experiences in the family (see also Turunen & Perry, 2017). Sometimes, the lack of support is not due to missing friends but the anti-school attitudes of the student's social network. For example, the young people's cultural environment may be based on a value system other than education, especially if educating themselves means permanently leaving their home region, or the young people's contribution may be needed at home. Thus, the effect of informal networks appears as a complex phenomenon connected with various factors that may either enhance or hinder young students' sense of belonging, engagement and agency during and after their transition (Elffers, 2012; Martinen et al., 2018).

The places where people are born or live during their childhood give them roots, a sense of home (Louhela, 2016). Communities are affected by the broader societal circumstances and policies, but they also have their own cultural habits and norms that shape the community members' identity (Lehtinen, 2006). In Finland, several historical courses of events, definitions of cultural policy and public narrations have affected the experiences and affordances available for young people living in small communities in rural areas (Hartikainen, 2016). In terms of children and young people, the cross-generational community and local culture, as well as the home, the family and the peer network, are crucial determinants of their experiences (Alasuutari, 2003; Turunen & Perry, 2017).

In Finland, small village communities are usually located in rural areas and differ from urban localities in both size and location. Additionally, remote communities are mainly regressive in their economic, cultural and social development (Louhela, 2016). Public services and for example, possibilities to participate in guided hobbies are scarce. For this reason, especially the remote northern rural areas may appear as peripheral places and urban localities present the central and 'real-life' environments (Ollila, 2008). However, some young people want to stay in their home regions and do not find urban life attractive. Nature and close human relationships are important factors in young people's attachment to their homeland and enjoyment of their home

region (Kiilakoski, 2016). These young persons have a dual role: they need to learn to value their own environment and to accept the fact of leaving (Kiilakoski, 2016).

In rural areas, young people transitioning from basic education to further studies undergo the same elements of transition as their peers in urban settlements. Primary education is often available also in small communities, but lower secondary education is offered in larger municipal centres. Regarding upper secondary education, the municipal centres usually have general upper secondary schools, but VET is offered only on a regional basis. This means that those young people who choose the vocational education path are forced to move to regional centres and lodge in dormitories, rent private apartments or live with their family members or relatives in those regional cities. In the far north, this might mean several hundred kilometres' move from home for vocational education.

7.4 Research Design and Settings

In this study, the prime methodological commitment was the perspective of young people's experiential expertise, in which their knowledge formed during the transitional experiences was appreciated. As such, the research philosophy relied on the phenomenological approach. In phenomenology, experiences and their meanings to young people are considered intrinsically valuable. The narrated experiences collected via group interviews were the young people's expressions and conceptualisations of their experiences and ways of sharing these with others (Perttula, 2000). The young participants of this study were given the opportunity to describe their experiences about their transition to a new school. The data were collected via focus group interviews with young people ($N = 27$) from one northern municipality in Finnish Lapland. The municipality covers a large geographical area with a low population density. The municipality is located in the Sámi homeland and organises teaching in both Finnish and Sámi languages. It has a few village schools, comprising one very small single-structure comprehensive school (with approximately 12 students) in a distant village, a larger single-structure comprehensive school (with approximately 200 students) and a small gymnasium (with approximately 15 students) in the municipal centre.

The research data were collected from two educational transition phases. The data from the first transition phase (Transition 1) were gathered from sixteen 12–13-year-old seventh graders, pondering their previous year's experiences about their transition from primary to lower secondary school in four focus groups. Six of those students moved from the small village school to the municipal centre for lower secondary school, and ten students were able to continue their studies in the same building in the municipal centre, as the primary and the lower secondary schools formed a single-structure comprehensive school.

The data from the second transition phase (Transition 2) were obtained from eleven 16–17-year-old students attending gymnasiums and VET, who reflected on their transition from comprehensive school to upper secondary education in three

focus groups. Six students had moved to the nearest city for their studies, and five of them stayed in their home municipality where there was a small gymnasium. The quantitative data about the informants are presented in Table 7.1.

The focus group interviews were conducted during the autumn terms in October and November 2015 and in January 2017. The timing was important because during the interviews, the participants were in the middle of their transition processes. The number of the focus groups, the duration of the interviews and the number of transcribed pages are presented in Table 7.2. The data were collected in Finnish, and the transcriptions were translated into English by the authors.

The data extracts refer to Transition 1 or Transition 2. The 12–13-year-old students are referred to as one group – ‘Transition 1, students in lower secondary education’. In turn, the students in Transition 2 are separated into two groups – ‘Transition 2a, moved to city’ and ‘Transition 2b, stayed in rural centre’ – because the authors are interested in whether and how the young people's experiences differ from one another.

The data analyses were conducted by using the theory-led thematic analysis approach (e.g., Bengtsson, 2016). First, the authors divided the data among themselves and individually performed a preliminary analysis. Next, they held a meeting where they discussed their observations and the main themes emerging from the data. The tentative themes were *living environment and culture, social relationships and support network, roles and responsibilities, learning environment, and wishes and fears concerning educational transition*. Again, the authors divided their work and searched the literature based on their themes, abducting the relevant conceptual terminology and writing about the themes. Then, they met again and polished the

Table 7.1 Participants' target school

Transition 1		Transition 2		
Lower secondary school	Number of students	Upper secondary school students	Number of students	
Moved from village school	6	Moved to city (VET or gymnasium)	6	
Stayed in rural centre	10	Stayed in rural centre (gymnasium)	5	
Total	16	Total	11	27

Table 7.2 Number of focus group interviews and their duration

Group interview	Number of interview groups	Duration	Transcribed pages (Times New Roman, 12 points; single-spaced)
<i>Transition 1</i> . Students in lower secondary education	4	2 h, 23 min	73
<i>Transition 2</i> . Students in VET or gymnasium	3	2 h, 21 min	65
Total	7	4 h, 44 min	138

themes, combining some and reducing them into three thematic categories: (1) *roles and responsibilities*, (2) *social relationships and supporting networks*, and (3) *living environment and culture*. This kind of approach, with several researchers examining the data individually and together, provided a firm basis for triangulation by multiple analysts with deep insights into consistencies and inconsistencies in the analysis process (Patton, 2015). In the following section, the results are presented via the final three thematic categories.

Throughout the research process, the ethical guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK, 2019) were followed. To begin with, the municipal educational administrative authorities were asked for their informed consent to complete the study in their region. Next, the same was requested from the schools. All young participants of the focus group interviews gave their informed consent orally before the interviews started. The consent included relevant information about the research goals and the ways of publication, as well as the possibility to withdraw from the research at any point (Cohen et al., 2011).

7.5 Results

7.5.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The data highlighted how the transition demanded strong agency from the young people. It was presented as new roles, duties and responsibilities in the new life situation, environmental context and relationships. The experiences were narrated through differences between the past and the present.

For example, if you live alone, if something happens, there is no one who will help you. (Transition 2a).

Well, it was a bit like... when you are used to living at home. Always everything is ready and... Well, cooking was... One can cook, but at home, it was much easier when you did not have to do everything yourself. (Transition 2a).

The changing role from that of a child, who was looked after by the parents, to that of an independent young person, was strongly present in the data. This indicated that the process and acquired new skills served as the evidence of a successfully completed rite of passage, moving from the previous phase of life to the new one (see van Gennep, 2013). After this, they could speak authoritatively about matters such as food and transportation expenses, gaining more independence and doing well in their studies:

The bus transportation to the city is so damn expensive. (Transition 2a).

Yes, I also had the expectation that it would be much more difficult, but I have done well here. (Transition 2b).

These kinds of statements emphasised that after the transition, the participants acquired new knowledge and skills and had taken new responsibilities. Therefore, they were more able to look after themselves and felt competent with their new skills

after taking an active role in the transition (Jindal-Snape, 2010; Marttinen et al., 2018).

Although the young people felt that family support was important, they perceived the transition to upper secondary studies as a passage towards adulthood:

I somehow had a really enthusiastic feeling that now I can get to a school where there are more freedoms for myself. (Transition 2b).

The participants wanted to assume more responsibility for their own choices.

They [the parents] have said that I can do what I want [in choosing the school], but they maybe felt more okay when I decided to start upper secondary school here and stay at home (Transition 2b).

As exemplified in the preceding data extract, the parents' role weakened and narrowed, and they allowed their children to make their own choices, especially regarding their studies. However, the interviews also indicated that staying at home for upper secondary school was many parents' priority.

The transition also pushed young people to take a more active role in their studies and in planning their everyday lives. The transition provided both new freedom and responsibilities:

I thought that there would be quite much homework and learning would be more difficult, and that is how it has been. I expected that, too, but I have done well. One must admit that this is quite hard (studies). (Transition 2b).

However, when you have come here (to school) a long way, then it is worth completing your education. Not worth just lying there in the dormitory. (Transition 2a).

As presented in this chapter, the changing roles and responsibilities included both positive and negative aspects. Young people were happy and enthusiastic about the new phase of their life with more independence and agency. At the same time, they were worried about how they would be able to take care of themselves and pursue their studies alone. The positive tone and feeling in making a successful transition indicated that the rites of passage from childhood to more independence were successfully managed and the constructive experiences provided positive transition capital.

7.5.2 Social Relationships and Supporting Networks

Positive and supporting social relationships and networks form a crucial part of a smooth educational transition (Elffers & Oort, 2012; McGee et al., 2003). They were also important themes in the interviews, and the young people had mixed feelings about the relationships and support available for them in their new situation.

The families had resolved the issue of lack of support in different ways obviously according to their resources. Some families had decided to move to the city in order to support their children's everyday life and studies. It was a major decision for each

family, while they would have to acquire a new apartment and perhaps find jobs, among other things.

S: I live with my mom and sister here [in the city], so I don't have to deal with everything myself.

R: So, your family moved here, too?

S: Yes, because of my studies. We still have the house in Xxx. We rented a smaller flat here. (Transition 2a).

Some young people came from reindeer herder families. These families often work together, and teenagers, especially boys, might have a fairly large role in reindeer herding tasks. Doing these tasks with their fathers and extended family is also an important part of growing towards adulthood (Kuokkanen, 2009). This was reflected in the interviews, for example:

Of course, they [the parents] thought that it would be a good thing [to go to school in a city], but there is much work to do at home, so they worried whether they would manage to do all the reindeer husbandry needed when I would not be there. (Transition 2a).

Some young people found it stressful when they left behind their familiar social network. They were worried whether they would manage to make new friends in the new environment:

Of course, [coming to the city and the new school] was of concern. I have some acquaintances [in the city] from my home area but still, not so many. I was worried whether I would make any friends and live on my own, too, although I live in a dormitory. (Transition 2a).

Especially the fact that you are coming from a school with 12 students to a school with 800 students. (Transition 2a).

The importance of peers during the educational transition is well researched (e.g., Evangelou et al., 2008; Turunen & Kearney, 2016). Friends provide a social network, supporting the transition process as they give informal information about the new phase. The worry about making new friends, as expressed in the previous extract, is also a common theme in prior research (Evangelou et al., 2008).

The supporting network was especially important for those young people who had to leave home for their studies. Some students had family and relatives in their new environment. This provided a good basis for their sense of safety. Moreover, many young people from the same locality had already moved to the city, which helped establish new social networks.

R: So, you feel safe having your big brother here already?

S: Yes, he lives in the dormitory, too. Naturally, that helps a lot.

(Transition 2a)

I have lots of acquaintances here. Relatives and friends. Actually, more here than at home. Everybody has come here already. ... I knew that in my free time, I will have friends. (Transition 2a).

These results confirm the findings of previous studies. The informal networks, such as family members and existing friends, support a successful transition process, including the growing sense of belonging, engagement and agency (Elffers, 2012; Marttinen et al., 2018).

7.5.3 *Living Environment and Culture*

On one hand, some students who live or had lived in small villages had nice and warm feelings about the atmosphere in the community. They brought up the safety and the sense of community in the small place. This supported their studies and built up their transition capital.

All communication was easier, flexible [in the village school]. For example, if I didn't manage to take an exam on a certain date, I could do so the next day. Everything was negotiable. (Transition 2a).

Small circles, easy living. ... Cosy, everybody knows one another [in the small village school]. (Transition 2a).

On the other hand, due to the small community where everybody knew one another, the young people were worried about their privacy and had a fear of stigmatisation in school and in the village when they had some kinds of problems or simply due to their origin or family background.

But my parents are friends with my study counsellor and with my teacher. And my big sister had all the same teachers. And then they got to know everything about me even two years ago [well before the transition started]. (Transition 1).

And the downside is that, for example, you cannot hang out in the evening in the village centre. Some of the teachers always come and say, "Shouldn't you be at home already?" [chuckle]. (Transition 1).

The atmosphere is a bit narrow-minded here. People like certain families, and they always ask, "What's your family name?" I'm like, "You don't know me although I will tell you my family name. I am not the same as my family." That is not nice. (Transition 2b).

These findings resonate with Turunen and Kearney's (2016) study, whose results indicate that the previous informally transferred knowledge of young people and their siblings might have a strong effect on how new acquaintances during the transition perceive them. This might lead to a situation where the young people are not recognised as individuals with their own needs.

Well, at least my mother and my teacher are best friends. So, they get along well. And, at the same time, she [the teacher] knows me, too, and my brother. (Transition 2b).

For those who stayed in their home locality for further studies, it was evident that continuing their education there had both positive and negative impacts. In these communities, everybody knows one another, and information flows through informal channels. The teachers are members of the community and connected to the students' families.

The students who moved from their local communities to the city had very different experiences. They told the interviewers about their feelings of culture shock in the beginning of their studies. The transition from a small community to an urban locality made them feel fear and anxiety:

It was very frightening indeed [to move to the urban locality and start new studies]. In a way, it was a bit distressing to go there. I was all alone there. I did not know anyone. It is quite a big change when you don't know any teachers or anyone. (Transition 2a).

In the evening, being a girl, especially in the centre of the city. That you watch out all the time. Usually, friends take me to my apartment, or if I walk home, they say, "Send a message when you get home." (Transition 2a).

Although moving from a small community made young people feel fear and even anxiety, there were also mixed, positive experiences:

... I'm not sure if it was negative excitement. I was quite glad; I knew one of my new classmates. I had met him earlier in aptitude tests. It was nice to know one person there. (Transition 2a).

These results indicate that the context of the transition process plays a large role. In their life course theory, Elder and Shanahan (2006) argue that individual lives are lived interdependently, with shared relationships in social contexts and structured by transition points. These linked lives create the local community history and culture, which have the potential to influence how young people manage their transitions (Benner, 2011).

7.6 Conclusions

The title of this chapter asks if it matters where one lives during the educational transitions. Despite some anxiety, the young people in this study were eager to move forward in their lives and take more responsibilities. Changing roles and social networks were present despite the place of residence after the transition. The changes were both positively exciting and distressing. The results show that educational transitions are significant milestones where the meaning of friendships and the sense of belonging become visible.

Notwithstanding the similarities, there were also differences in the students' experiences, depending on their place of residence. Such differences were due to the VET institutions' locations almost entirely in towns or cities, meaning that those young people from small communities who chose vocational paths had to leave home at a very young age. This triggered a variety of goals and fears concerning educational transition. They were both practical considerations, such as how to manage one's own finances, the possibilities to continue hobbies (related to nature, e.g., hunting), cooking and cleaning, and more general and broader concerns related to a new, more demanding curriculum, making new friends or settling down in the new environment.

Small communities in far-north Finland have a nature-based lifestyle and firm social networks. Their family backgrounds can either uplift young people or set limits in making their successful transition. This calls for a firm professional approach by teachers, school counsellors, healthcare workers and others who work with young people in these communities. The practitioners should be aware of the possible halo effect in their perceptions and reflect on them.

Those young people leaving their community encounter somewhat diverse challenges. They come from an environment where everybody knows one another to a much larger place where they comprise a small group, and their challenges during the transition may go unnoticed. Therefore, these young people need special attention during the transition process. People who work with them should be responsive to their needs, which might vary in the different phases of transition. Before the

transition, the young people need all possible information about their new school and the trade they have chosen. Situations such as living in a dormitory and managing one's everyday life need preparation. In the actual transition, these youngsters need specific information about the people who are there to support them and how they would have access to the services they might need.

To conclude, based on the results, it can be suggested that in educational transitions in the Arctic areas, supporting young people comprehensively and considering both their academic achievements and socio-emotional wellbeing are highly important. This implies that young people need versatile support services during their transition period and early, preventive educational and social interventions. It is essential to recognise the diversity of students and not regard the urban lifestyle as mainstream. It might also be worth exploring whether some parts of upper secondary education could be organised online so that young people could stay more at home during their studies.

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Chapter 8

Personal and Ethnic Identity in Representatives of the Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Far North: The Nenets and the Sami



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Abstract In the modern multicultural Russian society, the preservation of ethnocultural continuity, the formation of modern-day understanding of history, and the integration of ethnic and civic identities in the Indigenous peoples of the Far North and the Arctic, which are currently characterized by the intensification of ethnic processes, are becoming increasingly relevant. When describing the contemporary Russian North, we should note that it is characterized by highly contradictory processes, which combine both the integration of the Indigenous population and newcomers and the separation of different ethnic groups. Trying to understand this highly contradictory situation, we have conducted an empirical study of ethnic and personal identity in adolescents, as described below. Within the study, we have focused on the Nenets and the Sami communities as representative of the Indigenous peoples of the Russian Far North.

Keywords Indigenous communities · Nenets · Sami · Adolescents · Identity development

8.1 Introduction

In the modern multicultural Russian society, the preservation of ethnocultural continuity, the formation of modern-day understanding of history, and the integration of ethnic and civic identities in the Indigenous peoples of the Far North and the Arctic, which are currently characterized by the intensification of ethnic processes, are becoming increasingly relevant. In exploring its history, we find that the Russian Far North is an interesting example of early (twelfth to seventeenth centuries) poly-ethnocultural sphere development, a phenomenon that is closely connected to the development of the modern Russian Far North territory.

The northern territory of European Russia was far from the center of fighting during the Mongol-Tatar conquest and its devastating internecine wars. This fortunate situation, along with a sufficiently high degree of freedom across social, economic, and religious spheres influenced the development of the region. As a result, representatives of different nations and nationalities – Slavs, Karelians, Komis, Nenets, Vepps, Saami (Lapps), and others – migrated to the territory of Arkhangelsk region. Over centuries of coexistence, these diverse groups have developed a tolerant culture of interaction and communication across different social spheres. This has resulted in the Russian Far North becoming an example of a multi-ethnic cultural region. The movement to the north and the development of northern territories by several migration waves of different ethnic groups created a basis for intercultural interaction across the region.

The modern Russian Far North includes multiple groups of distinctive peoples, especially the Indigenous people of the far north. This chapter will focus on two representative groups of Indigenous peoples of the Russian Far North: the Nenets and Sami.

The more numerous of the two ethnic groups under study are the Nenets, who are descendants of the aboriginal population of the White Sea coast. Most of the Nenets population live in the Nenets Autonomous District. The Nenets Autonomous District was formed on July 15th, 1929, in an area bordering The Komi Republic and is called the Yamal Nenets Autonomous District. To the north, the border of this district borders the White, Barents and Kara Seas. The population of the district is 43,997 people, including 7504 Nenets.

The Nenets Autonomous District has adopted the “On the Nenets language in the Nenets Autonomous Okrug.” (NAO Law of 18.03.2013 No. 4-OL). This law states that the Nenets language is part of the culture and traditional way of life of the Nenets people and should be used in the process of everyday communication, in the sphere of public relations, and in education and training. All legislation and administrative documents within the Nenets Autonomous District have been translated into the Nenets language. Official records management is conducted in the Nenets language in the areas where the majority of the population is of Nenets origin. Official printed publications in the Nenets language include three socio-political newspapers and, within the education sphere, the publication of textbooks and teaching aids in Nenets. When using the Nenets language on radio and television, the information provided is simultaneously translated into Russian, the state language of the Russian Federation.

The Russian language is used in the education system in the Arkhangelsk Region. However, in kindergartens and in schools of the Nenets Autonomous District, the education and upbringing of children also include the use of the Nenets language. The native (Nenets) language is taught in 7 kindergartens and in 13 general education schools. All students of grades 8–9 of schools within the Nenets Autonomous District must study the traditions, culture, and life of the Nenets people in a dedicated set of lessons called “Our Land”.

The Sami people also live in the Far North of Russia, mainly in the Murmansk region in the village of Lovozero. The number of native speakers of the Sami languages in the area is just over 350 people. The Sami language is studied in the secondary school of the village of Lovozero. In primary school (from first to fourth grade), the study of the Sami language is an optional choice for students and their parents as part of additional education (1 hour per week). The Sami language can also be studied at the Lovozero National Cultural Center. The challenge of preserving and developing the Sami language has been discussed within the government of the Murmansk region. A research laboratory on the Sami language has been established at the Arctic Center for Scientific Research and Expertise in Murmansk. The laboratory staff members are working on the publication of educational and methodological literature (fairy tales, poems, stories, etc.) in the Sami language.

When describing the contemporary Russian North, we should note that it is characterized by highly contradictory processes, which combine both the integration of the Indigenous population and newcomers and the separation of different ethnic groups. Trying to understand this highly contradictory situation, we have conducted an empirical study of ethnic and personal identity in adolescents, as described below. Within the study, we have focused on the Nenets and the Sami communities as representative of the Indigenous peoples of the Russian Far North.

8.2 Methods

This study was conducted between 2018 and 2020 by Northern (Arctic) Federal University researchers in the Nenets Autonomous District, the Arkhangelsk region, and the Murmansk region, all located in the Arctic zone of Russia. Sami and the Nenets live there side by side with ethnic Russians. The participants in the study were school students (both male and female) aged 12–15 years. In total, the sample consisted of 192 children – 98 boys and 94 girls.

In advance of data collection, the research team prepared a set of documents consisting of thematic justification of the study, description of its aims, objectives, and stages, and description of the research methods. This set of documents was submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Arkhangelsk region. As a result, the research team received authorization to conduct the study.

A number of secondary schools in the Arkhangelsk region and Murmansk region were chosen to serve as a study base. The research team met the principals of each participating secondary school and explained the aims, objectives, and procedure of the study. The parents and legal representatives of the students gave written consent for the school students' participation in the study. The survey was carried out in groups of 10–12 individuals. Prior to the survey, all students indicated their age and nationality in writing. The researcher gave the instructions to the students, and they filled in the answer sheets. When the respondents had questions about the study question, a researcher was available to individually give the necessary explanations.

The research team used two complementary methods within the study: a survey and also a psycho-diagnostic technique. The survey was developed on the basis of the Twenty Statements Test (TST) by Kuhn and McParland (1954). This technique is a non-standardized self-description with the free-response answers. It allows one to measure the different identities adopted by adolescents. During the survey, the respondents were asked to give 20 different answers to the question “Who am I?” within 12 minutes. The answers were written spontaneously in the order in which they came to their mind.

While analyzing the theoretical construct of personal identity, the research team considered the representation of its components: gender, social, ethnic, family, professional, individual, physical, activity, and undifferentiated. The “gender identity” component included a direct designation of gender (boy, girl, young man, future man, etc.). The “social identity” component included a designation of social roles and statuses (pupil, citizen, student, etc.). The “ethnic identity” component included a designation of ethnicity (Nenets, Russian, etc.). The “family identity” component included references to kin relations and intrafamilial ties (son, sister, grandson, niece, etc.). The “professional identity” component included a designation of professional perspectives and intentions related to future occupations (auto mechanic, future doctor, programmer, etc.). The “individual identity” component included a description of one's own personal qualities and traits of character (kind, brave, lacking self-confidence, aggressive, etc.). The “physical identity” component included a description of one's physique and appearance (tall, beautiful, strong,

long-haired, fat, etc.). The “activity identity” component included a designation of one’s interests, hobbies, leisure time activities (I like to walk, I love cats, I am a fan of computer games, I play football, etc.). The “undifferentiated identity” component included a designation of characters from animated and feature films, inanimate objects, abstract images (Spiderman, darkness, princess, wolf, etc.).

The psycho-diagnostic technique in the study drew on “Types of ethnic identity” developed by Soldatova and Ryzhova (Soldatova, 2011). The technique is designed to assess the manifestation of ethnic identity indicators and includes six scales: ethno-nihilism (denial of one’s own ethnic identity), ethnic indifference (uncertainty about one’s own ethnic identity and indifference towards ethnicity of others), positive ethnic identity (respective attitude for any ethnicity), ethno-egoism (emphasizing the advantages of one’s own ethnic group), ethno-isolationism (assurance in the superiority of one’s own ethnic group), ethno-fanaticism (readiness for aggressive actions on behalf of one’s own ethnic group). During the test, adolescents were asked to express their opinion on 30 statements. Points were used to evaluate the statements. For the answer “I do not agree,” the respondent received 4 points, for the answer “I rather agree” – 3 points, for the answer “I agree with some things and disagree with other things” – 2 points, for the answer “I rather disagree” – 1 point, for the answer “I disagree” – 0 points. After the test was finished, the respondents’ scores on each scale were summed up. The degree of manifestation of each of the six ethnic identity characteristics was assessed according to the number of points scored on each scale.

8.3 Results for Nenets and Sami Youth

The analysis of the personal identity study results indicates that differences in personal identity components in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian adolescents are indeed present. It should be noted that these differences are expressed differently in male and female adolescents.

8.3.1 Results from Nenets Respondents

We found differences between Nenets boys and their ethnic Russian peers regarding the ethnic identity, family identity, professional identity, and individual identity components. It should be noted that these differences showed up in boys aged 12–13 years as well as in boys aged 14–15 years. In Nenets boys, in contrast to their ethnic Russian peers, the ethnic, professional, and family identity components are more pronounced, while the individual identity component is less pronounced. These results indicate that it is more important for Nenets boys to realize themselves as members of their ethnic group than for their ethnic Russian peers. Their family roles and kindred relationships are more important for them as well. For Nenets boys, professional perspectives and intentions related to their future occupations are

more important than for their ethnic Russian peers. At the same time, for Nenets boys, their own personal qualities and traits of character are less important in characterizing one's own personality than for their ethnic Russian peers. We assume that such differences are related to the preserved traditional nomadic way of life of the Nenets living in communities. This leads to the greater importance of ethnic and family ties, an earlier and more stable choice of occupation, and a lesser significance of individuality. It is noteworthy that for Nenets boys aged 12–13 years the undifferentiated component of personal identity is less pronounced than in their ethnic Russian peers, which means they are much less likely to associate themselves with characters from animated and feature films, with inanimate objects and abstract images. We assume that this is related to the specifics of the nomadic way of life of the Nenets, who spend most of their time in the tundra, engaged in traditional activities – reindeer husbandry and hunting.

Nenets girls demonstrate significantly fewer differences from their ethnic Russian peers in the manifestation of the personal identity components. For example, for Nenets girls aged 12–13 years as well as in Nenets boys of the same age, the undifferentiated component of personal identity is less pronounced than in their ethnic Russian peers. Nenets girls are much less likely to associate themselves with characters from animated and feature films, with inanimate objects and abstract images. It should be noted that Nenets girls aged 12–13 years show a tendency towards a greater manifestation of the physical component of personal identity than their ethnic Russian peers. That is, for Nenets girls their own physique and appearance are to some extent more important. Conspicuous is the fact that for Nenets girls aged 14–15 years, the degree of manifestation of all personal identity components is close to that in their ethnic Russian peers. We assume that such results are related to the fact that girls tend to be affected by the socio-educational environment at school more than boys.

In Nenets adolescents, we observe a shift in the manifestation of personal identity components between boys aged 12–13 years and those aged 14–15 years. In Nenets boys, the changes are related to components of personal identity such as ethnic and individual identity, while in girls they manifest in components such as physical, undifferentiated, and activity identity. For older Nenets boys (age 14–15) identifying oneself as a member of one's ethnic group becomes less important while personal qualities and traits of character become more important. Both younger and older Nenets boys differ significantly from their ethnic Russian peers, but in dynamics, these differences demonstrate a gradual decrease. Comparing Nenets girls ages 12–13 years with those age 14–15 years, their own physique and appearance become less important as they age, while interests, hobbies, and leisure time activities become more important. At the same time, older Nenets girls show a slight increase in the tendency to associate themselves with characters from animated and feature films, with inanimate objects and abstract images. As was noted earlier, Nenets girls show little difference from their ethnic Russian peers in the manifestation of personal identity components. At the same time, even the existing differences tend to gradually decrease in dynamics.

The analysis of the study results indicates the presence of differences in the manifestation of personal identity components in male and female Nenets adolescents. The differences between Nenets boys and Nenets girls at the age of 12–15 years are observed in such components of personal identity as social, ethnic, professional, and individual. For Nenets boys, the professional, ethnic and social components of personal identity are more pronounced than for Nenets girls. For Nenets girls, the individual component of personal identity is more pronounced than for Nenets boys. It means that professional prospects, belonging to the ethnic group and social roles are more significant for Nenets boys, while personal qualities and traits of one's own character are more important for Nenets girls. We assume that such differences are related to the greater significance of Nenets' traditional lifestyle specifics for boys, while Nenets girls are more focused on conditions and values of the socio-educational environment in which they find themselves at school. This combination of tendencies in representatives of Indigenous minorities towards emphasizing their ethnic uniqueness on the one hand, and the desire to adapt in the social environment of the national majority, on the other hand, was noted in other studies as well (Mukhina, 2001; Mironov, 2012).

8.3.2 Results from Sami Respondents

The results of the study of personal identity in Sami adolescents indicate that Sami boys differ from their ethnic Russian peers in characteristics of personal identity such as social identity, professional identity, and undifferentiated identity. For example, undifferentiated identity is less pronounced in Sami boys aged 12–13 years than in their ethnic Russian peers. That is, they are much less likely than their Russian peers to associate themselves with characters from animated and feature films, with inanimate objects and abstract images. For Sami boys aged 14–15 years, professional identity is more pronounced in comparison with their Russian peers, while social identity and gender identity are less pronounced. That is, for Sami boys, professional perspectives, and intentions related to their future occupation are more important, while their own social roles and gender identity are less important than for their Russian peers. We assume that these peculiarities are related to the earlier professional self-determination of Sami boys, which is due to the traditional role of men in the Sami ethnic group.

For Sami girls, the indicators of the main personal identity characteristics are close to those of their Russian peers. Only at the age of 12–13 years can we observe a tendency towards a greater manifestation of the activity component in Sami girls compared to their ethnic Russian peers. We posit that these results are related to the fact that girls tend to be more affected by the socio-educational environment at school than boys.

We observe dynamics in the manifestation of personal identity components in Sami adolescents between the ages of 12–13 and the ages of 14–15. In Sami boys, the changes are related to components of personal identity such as professional

identity, while in Sami girls it is to such components as individual identity and activity identity. At the same time, in Sami boys, we observe tendencies towards a decrease in the manifestation of the family identity and social identity indicators and an increase in the manifestation of the undifferentiated identity indicators. In Sami girls, we observe a tendency towards a decrease in the manifestation of the social identity indicators. That is, for older Sami boys (aged 14–15) professional perspectives and intentions related to their future occupation become more important, while their family and social roles become less important. At the same time, Sami boys begin to associate themselves with characters from animated and feature films, with inanimate objects and abstract images more frequently. For older Sami girls (age 14–15), their own personal qualities and traits of character become more important, while hobbies, activities, and social roles become less significant. We posit that these peculiarities indicate an increasing influence of the social environment on the forming personality of a teenager and are a reflection of the natural processes of growing up.

The analysis of the study results indicates the presence of differences in the manifestation of personal identity components in male and female Sami adolescents. Thus, the differences between Sami boys and Sami girls at the age of 12–15 years are related to such components of personal identity as professional identity, family identity, undifferentiated identity, and social identity. The professional component of personal identity is more pronounced in Sami boys, while the family component and the undifferentiated component of personal identity are more pronounced in Sami girls. At the same time, there is a tendency among Sami girls towards a greater manifestation of the social component of personal identity. Thus, professional perspectives are more important for Sami boys, while family and social roles – are for Sami girls. It should be noted that Sami girls are more likely to associate themselves with fictional characters and abstract images. We assume that such differences are related to the greater significance of traditional Sami male and female roles and responsibilities for Sami adolescents. However, Sami girls are influenced by the modern adolescent subculture and social environment to a greater extent than boys.

8.4 Comparing Results for Indigenous Youth and Ethnic Russian Peers

The empirical study highlighted distinctive features of ethnic identity development in adolescents from the Sami and Nenets communities living in the Arctic territories of the European North of Russia in comparison with their ethnic Russian peers.

Positive ethnic identity is statistically prevalent in Nenets boys aged 12–13 years. The indicator of ethno-nihilism was least pronounced in Nenets boys at the age of 12–13 years. The differences between Nenets boys aged 12–13 years and their ethnic Russian peers in this indicator are significant. It means that for 12- and 13-year-old Nenets boys their ethnicity is more important than for their Russian peers.

Positive ethnic identity and ethnic indifference are statistically prevalent in 12- and 13-year-old Nenets girls. Significant differences were recorded between Nenets girls aged 12–13 years and their ethnic Russian peers regarding positive ethnic identity. That is, at the age of 12–13 years Nenets girls are less tolerant towards their own and other ethnic groups than their Russian peers.

Positive ethnic identity and ethnic indifference prevail in Nenets boys aged 14–15 years, and the difference between Nenets and ethnic Russian boys in these indicators is statistically significant – these indicators are significantly less pronounced in Nenets adolescents. It means that Nenets boys are less tolerant towards their own and other ethnic groups. For them, their own ethnicity and the ethnicity of those around them are more important. At the same time, the indicator of ethno-fanaticism in Nenets adolescents is significantly more pronounced than in ethnic Russian adolescents. It means that Nenets boys are more willing to act aggressively in the interests of their ethnic group.

Positive ethnic identity and ethnic indifference prevail in Nenets girls aged 14–15 years. Significant differences between Nenets girls aged 14–15 and their Russian peers were observed in the positive ethnic identity indicator. That is, Nenets girls at the age of 14–15 years are less tolerant towards their own and other ethnic groups than their Russian peers.

Positive ethnic identity and ethnic indifference prevail in Sami boys aged 12–13 years. At the same time, the difference in these indicators between Sami and ethnic Russian adolescents is significant only in the positive ethnic identity indicator. That is, a respectful attitude towards any ethnicity is less characteristic of Sami boys aged 12–13 than of their ethnic Russian peers. Positive ethnic identity and ethnic indifference dominate in Sami girls aged 12–13 years. Significant differences between Sami and Russian girls were recorded in the ethno-fanaticism indicator. Sami girls aged 12–13 are less ready for aggressive actions in the interests of their ethnic group than their Russian peers.

Positive ethnic identity and ethnic indifference prevail in Sami boys aged 14–15 years. The differences between Sami boys and ethnic Russian boys are observed in the ethno-nihilism and ethnic indifference indicators. That is, for Sami boys, their own ethnicity and the ethnicity of those around them are more important than for their Russian peers. Positive ethnic identity and ethnic indifference prevail in Sami girls aged 14–15. There are no significant differences in any indicator of ethnic identity between Sami girls and their Russian peers.

In summary, the analysis of ethnic identity components in adolescents from the Sami and Nenets communities in the Far North of Russia has allowed us to uncover several findings. For Nenets and Sami boys aged 12–13 and 14–15 years, their ethnicity is more important than for their ethnic Russian peers. At the same time, Sami boys aged 12–13 and Nenets boys aged 14–15 are less tolerant towards their own and other ethnic groups. Nenets girls aged 12–13 and 14–15 years demonstrate less tolerance towards their own and other ethnic groups than their ethnic Russian peers. Sami girls aged 12–13 years are less ready for aggressive actions in the interests of their ethnic group than their Russian peers. At the age of 14–15, Sami girls are the closest to their Russian peers in the indicator of ethnic identity.

8.5 Implications and Recommendations

The study results indicate the presence of specific features in the development of personal and ethnic identity in Indigenous adolescents. When considering identity development in Indigenous adolescents, it appears that ethnic and personal identities in this social group require special attention. This is due to the need for a well-timed and adequate response to new challenges such as the risks of losing national and cultural identity, reduced quality of life, and the decline of Indigenous populations. To preserve and develop the identity of adolescents within Indigenous peoples living in the Arctic territories of the European North of Russia it is necessary to create a multi-ethnic educational environment that (1) encompasses the local multi-ethnic space, including the ethnic communities of Indigenous peoples; (2) recognizes objective environmental factors influencing the formation of ethnic identity in adolescents; and (3) applies approaches that correct the impact of environmental factors.

Among the factors that objectively influence the development of ethnic identity in Indigenous adolescents, one can name such factors as the specificity of personal development of adolescents, influence of parents, family, influence of peers, influence of society, and presence and quality of ethnic resources. The specificity of the personal development of adolescents inevitably affects all types of identity, including ethnic identity. Each individual has his/her own system of values, beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral stereotypes, and most of them are formed during adolescence. The influence of parents and family as a factor lies in the fact that family and, first of all, parents, through the styles of family education transmit their own perception and attitude towards their ethnic group, towards the degree of its significance among other ethnic groups. The influence of peers, as a factor, includes the representation of members of an ethnic group in the adolescent community, the attitude of other adolescents to the ethnicity of their peers, and the belonging of representatives of an ethnic group to a reference group. The influence of society lies in the degree of society's tolerance towards a certain ethnic group, in the attitude towards various ethnic groups, reflected in the media, in public policy, in the presence of a system of social and state preferences for a certain ethnic group. The factor of ethnic resources includes the presence or absence of ethnic and language centers, museums, community centers, and creative centers for children, which are engaged in reviving and preserving the culture and traditions of ethnic groups, the existence of research institutions (groups of researchers) studying the development of particular ethnic groups and the degree of their community commitment; and, the degree of involvement of certain ethnic group representatives in research activities.

Among the main paths to correct the impact of these factors and affect the formation of identity in Indigenous adolescents, we can single out such approaches as psychological counseling and diagnostics of adolescents, working with parents, with adolescent associations, with teachers from educational organizations, the implementation of information policy and the creation and modernization of ethnic resources. The creation and development of a system of psychological counseling and

diagnostics for Indigenous adolescents is aimed at ensuring their positive personal development and formation of a stable personal identity, leveling the potentially negative influence of objective environmental factors, assisting in defining and building life and professional strategies. The work with parents can include the creation and development of parenting associations, clubs that help to support their ethnic identity, share experiences of ethnic education, and study effective strategies for family education. The work with adolescent associations is focused on supporting the ethnic identity of adolescents, on the formation of tolerance, development of effective interaction and communication in multi-ethnic adolescent groups, on preservation and development of interest in the traditions and culture of different ethnic groups, on the engagement of adolescents, and development of ethnic resources.

Teachers need training on how to work with adolescents from different ethnic groups in their educational activities. Such training could include courses on addressing specific challenges in education for these youth, the psychological and pedagogical support of adolescents studying in multi-ethnic contexts, and the development of guidelines for the preservation and development of ethnic identity in teaching and raising Indigenous adolescents. The implementation of an information policy presupposes promoting a positive image of Indigenous peoples, ideas of tolerance and multiculturalism; an expanded vision of history, culture, and traditions of certain ethnic groups; provision of information about state policy in the field of preservation and development for people from small Indigenous populations and about the system of social and state preferences for certain ethnic groups; and the presentation of success strategies and prospects for the development of various ethnic groups.

Creating and modernizing resources could include opening ethnic and language centers, museums, clubs, hobby groups, studios at community and children centers, which are engaged in reviving and preserving ethnic culture and traditions, and improving the work of already existing centers, clubs, and other institutions. In this direction, an important element is the research activity carried out at research institutes and by specially trained scientists who understand the challenges of preserving and developing ethnic groups at risk.

Thus, an important condition for the preservation and development of identity in adolescents within the Indigenous communities living in the Arctic territories of the European North of Russia is the organization of a multi-ethnic space in a way that considers the impact of objective environmental factors affecting adolescents and uses approaches that address the impact of these factors and nurture the formation of personal and ethnic identity in adolescents.

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Chapter 9

“A Lesson Is Most Exciting [When] the Teacher Typically Explains Complex Topics”: A Student Perspective on Public Schooling in Greenland



Lars Demant-Poort and Louise Pindstrup Andersen



Photographer: Lars Demant-Poort

Abstract Research on and knowledge about the Greenlandic school system is primarily based on quantitative, evaluative measures, such as grade point statistics. Though the aforementioned research is centred around schooling there is a lack of pedagogical research on schooling based on the voices of students and knowledge about what happens inside classrooms. This chapter describes the findings from a survey study of students’ experience of public schooling in Greenland. The goal of

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the study is to identify students' perceptions of schooling and lessons and to broaden available knowledge on what schooling is in Greenland.

Keywords Arctic education · Children's perspective · School-life · School-quality · Greenland

9.1 Introduction and Background

A range of challenges in the Greenlandic school system have been documented, these include: lack of qualified teachers where teachers' qualifications are not matched with demands in teaching (Agency of Education, 2018; Demant-Poort, 2016), students from less privileged backgrounds, teachers describing students with inappropriate behaviour, and head-teachers who often fail in providing a qualified work frame for teachers to teach in (Brochmann, 2015). Other studies show how challenges in schools are inevitable in a country where an indigenous culture meets a western school system and pedagogy (Berger et al., 2006; Christensen, 2014; Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010). Grade point statistics show a drop in students' grades across all subjects in the past 10 years – except Greenlandic (Statistics Greenland, 2019). The general quality of schools regarding learning outcome is often debated and seen as a challenge (Demant-Poort & Lennert, 2019; Økonomisk Råd, 2018 [Economic Council]). The quality of school structure also suffers from severe governance gaps (Lennert, 2018).

Research on and knowledge about the Greenlandic school system is primarily based on quantitative, evaluative measures, such as grade point statistics (Demant-Poort, 2016). The same tendency is applicable in research on children and youth (Glendøfs & Berliner, 2017) where focus is on statistical health measures, i.e., the International survey Health Behaviour in School-aged Children [HBSC-Greenland] (Nielsen, 2019), repeated every fourth year.

Though the aforementioned research is centred around schooling there is a lack of pedagogical research on schooling based on the voices of students and knowledge about what happens inside classrooms. This chapter presents a survey study on students' perceptions of schooling and lessons [Greenlandic and mathematics] in Greenland to broaden available knowledge on what schooling is in Greenland.

9.2 The Setting of the Survey

In Greenland elementary schooling consists of 10 years of compulsory schooling from the age of 6–16. There are roughly 56.000 inhabitants in Greenland – living in 73 towns and settlements along the 4.000 km coastline, from Qaanaaq in the very north to Nanortalik in the very South – to Tasiilaq and Ittoqoortoormiit on the east coast. There are no connecting roads or railroads between towns and settlements. The vast geography of Greenland means that towns and settlements in many cases

are extremely isolated, which in many cases mean that teachers teach on their own and have little room for collaboration with other teachers and schools. Furthermore, the immensely varied socioeconomic background of the students often provide very challenging conditions for schools and teaching. (Brochmann, 2015; Demant-Poort, 2016; Rasmussen et al., 2010; Øgaard, 2015).

9.3 Theoretical Framework

9.3.1 *Different Domains on Schooling*

Schools have as their goal to educate students, to prepare students for a life full of opportunities and challenges. Often schooling and what qualifies as a measurement of the outcome of schooling is based on grade point statistics (Schneider, 2017). Gert Biesta (2010, 2014, 2017) argues that the continued search for learning ‘evidence’ leads to a strong focus on measurable learning – such as grades. Grades and test scores and other statistical data then become the value in the discourse on what is “good education”. The current test regime, not only in Greenland, but in most western countries, emphasises through surveys such as PISA, TIMSS etc. barriers for educating democratic individuals. Biesta argues that the objective of schools is to educate democratic individuals, schools therefore always operate in three equal domains: subjectification, socialization, and qualification (Biesta, 2010). Where *subjectification* is concerned about the process of becoming a subject – becoming an individual, *socialization* deals with the student becoming part of society and thus acquiring social, cultural and historical knowledge and competencies, and *Qualification* deals with providing opportunities for individual students to achieve the proper qualifications to be able to *do* – e.g. acquire skills for a specific job.

Biesta’s argument is that all three domains are equally important in the education system, but through the past several years, a tendency towards learning ‘evidence’ and the quest for ‘what works’ and best practices has led to a strong focus on the qualification domain. In this aspect academic performance becomes the sole focus of evaluation, and then the aspects of socialisation and subjectification become neglected.

In the mid-2010s a project aiming to define other school quality variables than grade point statistics was conducted (Schneider, 2017). The intention of this project was a recognition that grade point statistics only tell a limited amount about what school is really about, what influences schooling, what has an effect on the quality of everyday school life for the individual student. The outcome of Schneider’s work was a framework – a mesh of five categories – split between two meta categories: ‘essential inputs’ and ‘key outcomes’ (Table 9.1).

The perspective of the framework is that the ‘essential input’ categories each influence ‘key outcomes’, hence underlies the importance of including broader aspects of schooling and school life on measuring school quality. Ultimately it is about recognising that schooling is much more than academic learning presented through statistical data, such as tests and grade points. One example is that the *culture* of a

Table 9.1 Aspect for measuring school quality

Essential inputs	Key outcomes
1- Teachers and the teaching environment	4- Academic learning
2- School culture	5- Character and well-being
3- Resources	

Schneider (2017), p. 100

school will affect how students build their character, and affect their wellbeing when in school (Schneider, 2017, p. 101–104). The culture of a school must be seen as” . . . an essential aspect of school quality. It shapes the experience students have in school, influences their effort, and strengthens their commitment to the process of learning” (p. 112). In other words, school culture affects students’ learning processes, thus variables measuring school culture must be recognised in the discourse on school quality. In this perspective ‘culture’ is essential, so that students” see school as a place of learning and are invested in the learning process” (p. 117).

Schneider and Biesta both argue that schooling is much more than academic performance and when discussing and developing knowledge about schools, test scores and grades are not the only sufficient variables to use. Schooling is as much about school culture, teaching, teachers and developing democratic individuals as it is about specific academic qualifications.

9.3.2 *Experience of Schooling*

For some students, education seems to be a threshold; it does not make any sense to them – it may be meaningless; they are unable to connect the idea of an education with their current life experiences. Both Berger et al. (2006), Flora (2007) and Glendøfs (2017) have documented how children in some Inuit communities may have an alienated sense of education as something which either does not contribute to their current way of life, or that an education is meaningless to uphold life in a settlement, in that an education would also be a ticket away from the haven of home.

The content of lessons can be viewed from at least two perspectives of experience; based on how content is able to make sense to students and how it is presented to students. The first perspective is that the content of lessons is based on transmitting knowledge from the past often through books. Dewey (1938) terms this ‘traditional schooling’, and it is founded on knowledge content determined by the past and omits the need for students’ experience. When teaching content in that respect is unable to relate to students’ previous experiences, or to any experience there is a risk that that teaching content may result in ‘a set of catchwords used to render thinking (. . .) unnecessary or impossible’ (Dewey, 1916, p. 80); learning in that context is arbitrary. The second perspective from a learning perspective is based on traditional transferring of knowledge to the student – to the role of the teacher being a guide for the student in his or her learning experience. The learning

perspective is that students learn through experience: ‘...basing education on personal experience may mean more multiplied and more intimate contacts between the mature [the teacher] and the immature [the student] than ever excited in the traditional school and consequently more, rather than less guidance by others’ (Dewey, 1938, p. 21).

In a study on students’ perception of their [science] lessons Demant-Poort (2016) found that students’ perception of their *everyday science lesson experience* was characterised by reading in books and filling out worksheets; they would venture outdoors to do hands-on science only rarely. One way of describing lessons where students are supposed to learn a specific content by reading only, where the learning content is presented to them in fully finished format would in Dewey’s words be a traditional educational approach (Dewey 2008/1902). When students in the same study (Demant-Poort, 2016) elaborated on lessons that were not founded by reading in books solely, they would report on lessons where they work out answers to questions on their own, through their own approach. One way of describing this approach in more recent concepts *Inquiry Based Learning* (Heindl, 2019). A concept based on Dewey’s fundamental ideas of progressive education.

9.4 Methods, Data and Limitations

9.4.1 Methods

The current study is based on a survey methodology (Evans & Mathur, 2005; Bryman, 2016; Frederiksen et al., 2017; Manfreda et al., 2008) with close-ended and open-ended questions. We chose to use an online survey platform as our primary data-collecting tool. The primary reasons for utilising an online tool were due to an ease of use for the respondents. Although we encouraged teachers to help administer the questionnaire in class, the online format also allowed for students themselves to decide when and where they chose to answer (Evans & Mathur, 2005; Park et al., 2019). Furthermore, an online survey platform also provides an ease of use for data-collection and analysis (Evans & Mathur, 2005).

9.4.2 The Instrument – Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire is divided into three major sections:

1. The first section contains questions related to demographics.
2. The second section contains questions related to students’ experiences of well-being and lessons; both from a general perspective as well as from a specific subject matter perspective. The first two sections contain quantitative questions that are similar to all students across grades.

3. The third and last section contain questions related to students' ideas about their future; further education, where they want to live etc. The third section of questions was only directed to students from grades 9 and 10. Analysis of data from the third section will not be included in this paper.

In total there are 49 questions for students in grades 5–8, and 70 questions for students in grades 9 and 10.

The questionnaire consists of both open-ended and close-ended questions and was available to students in Greenlandic and Danish.

Close-ended questions form most of the questions in the survey and is partly based on a well-being survey from the Danish Center for Teaching Environment (dcum.dk, [n.d.](#)), and is subsequently developed within the context of the Greenlandic school system. The open-ended questions were added – primarily in section two of the questionnaire – to allow for students to give their voice on what schooling is – give them the opportunity to describe what a regular lesson in – any subject is like. Open-ended questions were not given to students in grade 5.

To administer the survey to schools across the country a two-step process was initiated. Step-one: all head teachers ($n = 74$) were contacted by phone – explaining the project to them. Step two: a letter was sent to every head teacher explaining in detail the procedure for students to access the online questionnaire.

9.4.3 Data

For this chapter we have limited the analysis of data to three key perspectives; well-being; perception of lessons in general, and perception of lessons in mathematics and Greenlandic.

A total of 1277 students responded to the survey – or 31,2% of the total student body in grades 5–10.

The 1277 students represent all five municipalities and are distributed across grades as shown in Table 9.2.

Of the 1277 participating students 15% ($n = 194$) attended settlement schools, whereas 85% ($n = 1083$) attended town schools. Between the two categories of schools in Greenland – settlement schools and town schools, their relative number of participating students is higher amongst settlement school students than town school students: Across all settlement schools (grade 5–10) there are 385 students, with 194 (50%) participating in the survey. Across all town schools (grade 5–10) there are 3709 students, with 1083 (29%) participating in the survey.

In the 18 towns in Greenland there are 23 public schools and one private school. In two of the 23 public schools there was only one participating student. Those two schools were removed from the data. In the 50 settlements in Greenland there are 50 schools – one in each settlement. Of the 50 schools 38 participated. Participation rates in settlement schools were generally higher than in town schools. In 10 settlement schools there was a response rate of 100%.

Table 9.2 Student participation Across grades

Grades	Number participating students per grade	Percentage of students per grade of the total possible number students in the country / grade	Percentage of students per grade of the total participating number of students (n = 1277)
5	201	26%	16%
6	175	23%	14%
7	316	42%	25%
8	313	39%	25%
9	225	30%	18%
10	47	6%	4%

Students from grades 5–7 and 8–10 have been combined in the statistical analysis. In the school system in Greenland, grades are divided in three major ‘levels’; Grades 1–3: Step 1, grades 4–7: step 2, and grades 8–10 step 3. In the analysis grades 5–7 is thus termed step 2 and grades 8–10 is termed step 3.

9.4.4 Coding of Qualitative Responses

The survey presented us with two distinct sets of data – answers to closed ended questions were analysed using SPSS. Answers to open-ended questions of qualitative character were analysed using NVivo 12.

Questions [23a and 24a] related to perception of lessons in the questionnaire asked students to describe when lessons to them was/is most exciting and most boring respectively. In NVivo, statements from each participant were coded individually, which lead to three main categories – the teacher, the student, and the lesson.

9.4.5 Limitations to the Study

Limitations to the study are concerned with the relatively low response rate of 31,2% – which challenges the generalisability of the study. That online surveys generally have a low response rate is also described by Evans and Mathur (2005). Other surveys in Greenland have similar response rates (Niclasen, 2019). The response across the five municipalities is uniform.

Though an online survey platform seemingly has a positive influence on gaining data from respondents, there are also a significant number of limitations when administering a survey through an online platform. Through Evans and Mathur (2005) we have identified the following strengths and weaknesses to our study:

Major weaknesses include attributes such as: “perception as junk mail, Unclear answering instructions, Impersonal, privacy issues, low response rate” (p.197). To ameliorate for the apparent weaknesses of it being an impersonal approach and to prevent a low response rate teachers and head teachers were contacted personally to help with technical difficulties. An obvious potential weakness to the study is anonymity. Greenland has a very small population (≈ 56.000 inhabitants) and a total student population of around 7.500. To heighten anonymity in this chapter, all data has been analysed from a country-wide perspective.

9.5 Findings

In this section we will present the major findings from the survey in three themes.

Theme 1: Students’ general perception on schooling. Theme 2: Students’ perception on everyday lessons in Greenlandic and mathematics. Theme 3: Students’ perception on when and under what conditions lessons are perceived as either ‘exciting’ or ‘boring’.

9.5.1 *Students’ General Perception of Schooling*

The first part of the survey elicited information about students’ general perception on schooling. The questions were designed to measure to what degree students like or do not like their school. Overall, the data revealed that students from grade 5 to 10 indicate a relatively high satisfaction towards their schooling. The overall response to the question “What do you think about your school at the moment” was positive (Fig. 9.1). The close-ended question utilized a 4-point Likert scale ranging from “really like” to “really don’t like”. 85% of these responses indicated they either “like” or “really like” their school. 15% indicated they either ‘don’t like’ or ‘don’t like at all’ their school. There is no substantial difference between boys and girls.

This overall positive attitude towards schooling is supported by HBSC-Greenland (Niclasen, 2019). Their quantitative survey showed that 78% of the students either “really liked” or “liked” their school, while only 3% “really don’t like” their schools (Niclasen, 2019).

The relatively high satisfaction with schooling varies between grades. Students in grades 5–7 (step 2, $n = 685$), express a higher degree of satisfaction with their schooling than students in grades 8–10 (step 3, $n = 582$). 90% of the students in step 2 either “really liked” or “liked” their school. In step 3 78% either really liked or liked their school. On the opposite end of the Likert scale, only 10% of the students in step 2 indicated that they either “don’t like” or “really don’t like” their school. In step 3 21,7% either ‘don’t like’ or ‘really don’t like’ their school. This finding is

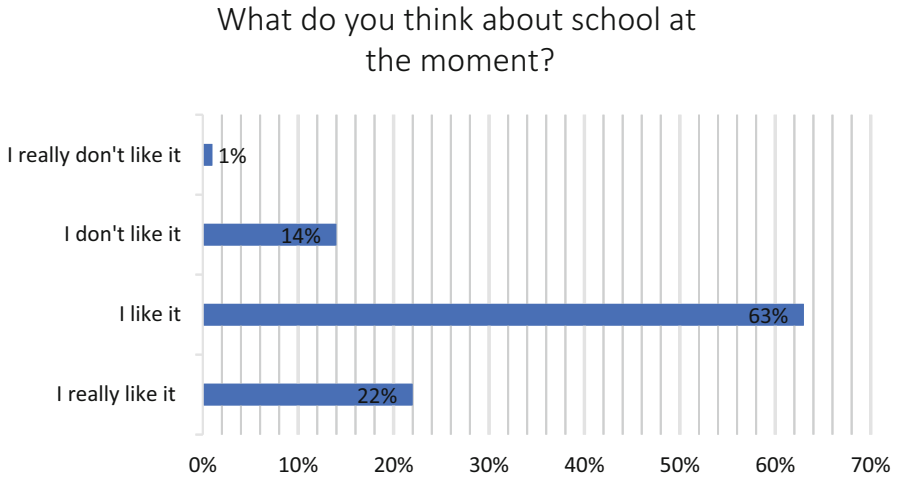


Fig. 9.1 (Question: ‘What do you think about school at the moment?’) N = 1267 students

consistent with Sørensen et al. (2013) who reports student’s motivation towards schooling decreases with age.

In summary, the results indicate that most students from grade 5 through grade 10 like their school. There is a significant difference between step 2 and 3 in regard to how much they like their school. The students in step 3 do not like their school as much as the students in step 2.

9.5.2 *Students’ Perception of Everyday Lessons in Greenlandic and Mathematics*

A considerable part of the questionnaire was designed to ascertain what students experience as ‘everyday teaching activities across subjects. For each subject they were asked the following question “what do you do most often in subject x”. For the purpose of this chapter we focus on Greenlandic (Table 9.3) and mathematics (Table 9.4) only.

In Table 9.3 students have indicated their experienced everyday teaching activities in Greenlandic. Activities such ‘read in a book’ and writing exercises seem to top lesson activities in Greenlandic, whereas activities such as projects or students’ own presentations only rarely seem to happen.

In Table 9.4 students have indicated their experienced everyday teaching activities in mathematics. Activities such as calculating in notebooks and worksheets top their experiences of what happens in an everyday mathematics classroom. On the opposite end of the activity spectrum, we find mathematical investigations and student presentations.

The findings in Tables 9.3 and 9.4 suggest that students are exposed to a traditional teaching approach, where reading, writing and books are the dominant teaching activities. Also, the results indicate that teaching activities do not vary substantially between different subjects. When students describe everyday activities in their own words, they often state activities such as ‘*writing in the notebook*’ (girl – grade 9). These findings resonate with the findings of Demant-Poort (2016), in the case of science lessons, where students express science lessons as largely based on reading books and answering close-ended questions.

Theoretically this indicates a shortage of activities based on students’ own experiences and which are inquiry based (Dewey, 1938). that could provide a meaningful learning environment. The results also indicate an overwhelming focus on traditional academic activities that dominate lessons today and risk neglecting other aspects of learning such as socialization and subjectification (Biesta, 2014).

Table 9.3 Experienced teaching activities in Greenlandic N = 1260

Everyday teaching activities in Greenlandic	
We read in a book	22,60%
Work in a workbook	18,70%
Write in a notebook	16,40%
Work with grammar	10,90%
Read aloud from a book	10,70%
Listen to the teacher who tell stories	5,50%
Work in groups	4,10%
Solve tasks on a computer	2,80%
Work with different other activities	2,70%
Watch movies	2,10%
Other	1,40%
Work with projects	1,10%
Do student presentations	1,00%
TOTAL	100%

Table 9.4 Experienced everyday teaching activities in mathematics N = 1246

Everyday teaching activities in mathematics	
Calculating in notebooks	30,70%
Calculating exercises on a worksheet	17,10%
We read in a book	10,80%
Work with tools e.g. Centicubes	9,60%
Work with different other activities	8,20%
Work in groups	6,80%
Listen to the teacher who tell stories	6,10%
Do math investigations	5,90%
Other	3,00%
Watch movies	1,20%
Do student presentations	0,80%
TOTAL	100,00%

9.5.3 *Students’ Perception of When and Under What Conditions a Lesson Is Perceived as Either ‘Exciting’ or ‘Boring’*

When students ($n = 1262$) indicate when and under what conditions a lesson is either ‘exciting’ or ‘boring’ – data from close-ended questions reveal an apparent dichotomy – that schooling appears to be both exciting and boring at the same time.

When asked, most students, across age, gender and geography find their school experience more exciting than boring. 62% indicated their lessons as exciting either “always” or “often”, whereas 31% indicated lessons to be boring either ‘always’ or ‘often’. Overall, the students’ responses indicate that they find their lessons more exciting than boring. Though most find their lessons exciting, one third find their lessons boring most of the time.

To elicit a further understanding under which conditions students find their lessons either exciting or boring, they were given the statement: “a lesson is most exciting – when. . .” and “a lesson is most boring – when?” using 14 different statements as response categories. Students could indicate three categories. The following two tables show the results across grade, gender, and geography.

Findings from Table 9.5 suggests that students’ experience of exciting lessons occur when the teacher tells stories, they watch movies or they work with computers/iPads or read in a book. The same table also reveals that very few students indicate activities such as presentations, Centricubes and doing the same again and again as something exciting.

In Table 9.6 students’ indications of when a lesson is most boring reveals that reading in a book, writing in a notebook and doing the same again and again are the

Table 9.5 Students’ experiences of when teaching is exciting. $N = 1262$

A lesson is most exciting when	
The teacher tells stories	15,30%
We watch movies	13,30%
We work with tasks on a computer/iPad	12,00%
We read in a book	11,90%
We write in a note book	9,40%
We are outside – in nature	8,90%
We do experiments or surveys	6,30%
We work with projects	6,00%
We work in groups	5,50%
We work with different activities	5,40%
We do student presentations	2,00%
Other	1,70%
We work with tools and instruments, e.g. Centricubes or microscopes	1,40%
We do the same again and again	0,90%
Total	100%

Table 9.6 Students' experiences of when teaching is boring. N = 1230

A lesson is most boring when	
We read in a book	16,30%
We do the same again and again	13,90%
We write in a notebook	13,40%
We watch movies	8,10%
We work with projects	7,30%
We do student presentations	7,00%
We work in groups	6,00%
The teacher tell stories	5,60%
We work with tools and instruments, i.e., Centicubes or microscopes	5,00%
We are outside – in nature	4,10%
We work with tasks on a computer/iPad	4,00%
Other	4,00%
We do experiments or surveys	2,60%
We work with different activities	2,20%
Total	100%

three most boring activities. Few students have indicated experiments and working with different activities as boring. The apparent paradox between findings from Tables 9.5 and 9.6 is interesting, because on one hand the students express lessons as something exciting with the somewhat same categories as when they experience lessons being 'boring'.

Activity categories such as reading in books, writing, listening to the teacher, are all categories which the students identify as experienced teaching activities. Some of the activities are identified as exciting activities, some are identified as boring activities. It is worth noting that only rarely do the students describe lessons as student-involving or that their own experiences are an active part of what teaching is. The above categories seem to resonate with Dewey's (1938) descriptions of traditional education: "Books, especially textbooks, are the chief representatives of the lore and wisdom of the past, while teachers are the organs through which students are brought into effective connection with the material." (p.18). Dewey's take on traditional teaching points to a view on students who need to master the learning content of the past, where teaching is void from students' own inquiries and curiosity. When students describe their experiences of teaching activities using traditional terminology Biesta (2014) argues that it is an expression of a school with a high focus on the qualification domain.

In two follow-up open-ended questions we asked students to describe when a lesson is 'most exciting' and 'most boring'.

A total of 1074 students chose to describe their perception of when a lesson is 'exciting' (Item number Q23a), and a total of 1067 students chose to describe their

perception of when a lesson is ‘boring’ (Item number 24a). Students’ description of when a lesson is either ‘exciting’ or ‘boring’ was coded and resulted in two categories *the teacher* and *the student*. Those two categories broaden the perspective on what influences students’ perception of lessons.

An analysis of open-ended questions aims to broaden the perspective on students’ perception of lessons as either boring or exciting.

9.5.3.1 The Teacher

Across statements and codes students are very aware of how the teacher influences their perception of lessons and class. One of the codes that was generated in the analysis was ‘*expectations*’ – what students *expect* from their teacher.

When students express their *expectations* to the teacher they do so in a variety of statements ranging from short ones such as ‘*when the teachers are good*’ to longer and more elaborated ones such as ‘*I am most happy when the teacher is prepared and has explained to us how we are to work, when the students listen and when they work respectfully and discusses their tasks*’ (Student, grade 9).

Students across grades noted that the mood of the teacher influenced teaching. Several students wrote that they were particularly fond of the teacher when he or she was ‘kind’, ‘happy’ or ‘when the teacher isn’t angry’. The statements from students on the importance of the positive mood of the teacher – also reveals itself from the opposite perspective when students were asked to describe when schooling or lessons tend to be boring. Students’ perceptions of what makes lessons boring seem to be closely linked to the mood of the teacher. Students seem to be particularly focused on incidents such ‘when the teacher is angry’ or when ‘the teacher is sour and boring, but also blames you’ (Student, grade 8).

Another perspective on teachers in relation to either exciting or boring is that students seem to be very aware of how *dialogue* between students and teacher is important for how a lesson is perceived as *exciting*. One student writes:

When a lesson is most exciting the teacher typically explains complex topics, when the teacher asks us relevant questions that we answer. The teacher will also ask about our ideas and what we know about the topic. It almost ends with a dialogue between the teacher and students, and I feel that it gives a very positive experience on a lesson (student, grade 9)

The experience that the student expresses in the quote above points in the direction of the arguments of Dewey (1938), who argues that when education connects to students’ experiences it is something social and collective, epistemologically all formation of an experience takes place in a social and concrete context. The student in the quote above expresses that a lesson is exciting when the “teacher asks relevant questions” and when the teacher “asks about our ideas and what we know”. The students express lessons to be exciting when they connects to his or her (or their) prior experience and knowledge.

9.5.3.2 The Student

The analysis led to a category of ‘student-behaviour’. This category in large part relates to Schneider’s argument that school culture is an “essential aspect of school quality” (Schneider, 2017, p.112). As this analysis shows, students stress the importance of a classroom culture where students collaborate, and do not tease each other.

When students answer the question on when a lesson is boring or exciting and they address themselves – students acknowledge responsibility; both when a lesson is perceived as exciting or as boring. Across the qualitative data there are opinions that address ‘calmness’ as an important aspect in how students act in class; students express a quiet classroom and fellow students who are ‘well-behaved’ as important for their experience of what takes place in the classroom. When students on the other hand express ‘boring’ lessons it is often through statements on fellow students making noise: ‘when my classmates don’t pay attention’, or ‘when my classmates are unable to sit quietly’. Schneider (2017) argues that school culture has an important impact on students’ learning processes. The students explicitly express how their own and their classmates’ behaviour has a negative impact on their lessons. Related to the analysis of student behaviour are students’ voices on how the social life in class has an impact on when a lesson is boring or exciting, the analysis also led to codes or categories of ‘collaboration’ and ‘teasing’.

When students express lessons as exciting they are particularly attentive to what happens when they collaborate – when a group of students work together on a project, or when the mere idea of working together is what defines lessons. To collaborate on a given task is both a subject matter relevant event: ‘When we collaborate and do stuff in projects...’, and an event or incident in a classroom where students’ collaboration efforts must be seen from the perspective of helping one another: ‘when we are allowed to collaborate and help each other’. For some students there also seems to be a direct link between collaborating, helping each other out and the apparent importance of just being together as a class. This also links to Schneider’s framework – students want to be a part of the social sphere of their class. Schneider terms this ‘belonging’ (p. 116). That students have a sense of belonging to fellow students, to teachers – to the school. In those situations, students notice that it is of importance to them that the student[s] are happy and not in a sour mood ‘When we all in class are having fun, collaborate and there is no bullying’ (student grade 7).

Between statements on when students have an influence on lessons being either exciting or boring, there is a contrast from what influences perceptions of *exciting* lessons and boring. The analysis also revealed categories that link perceptions of boring lessons with incidents of students *teasing* one another. When students tease one another, it seems as if it has a profound impact on how they experience lessons. Between students’ experiences from the classroom there seems to be two different perspectives on how teasing affects students’ experiences. One perspective is that *teasing* has a personal psychosomatic impact – that teasing feels like being ‘put down’. Teasing in that perspective can lead to students being upset: ‘When in class

stuff like that happens, for instance when someone is being teased, someone will become upset’ (student grade 7). When students tease one another – it will have an impact on how the school influences student outcomes. Schneider would describe student teasing as an essential input, which influences a key outcome of schooling; character building and well-being (Schneider, 2017, p.101). When a school culture allows for students’ teasing – then it has an influence on students’ emotional well-being, and personal growth.

Another perspective is how teasing disrupts the otherwise harmonious social stability of a classroom setting. Students seem to be aware of how *teasing* affects their capacity to concentrate – that teasing when it happens will disturb other students’ ability to concentrate and to keep up: ‘A lessons is most boring when someone fights, and you would like to keep up, but fall behind’ (student, grade 10).

Teasing – when it happens is thus the cause of both influencing the social dynamics in class on a personal psychological level as well as disrupting or influencing students’ ability to keep up. A lesson in this perspective fails to create a positive and constructive learning environment.

9.6 Conclusion and Discussion of Results

The findings, though not ground-breaking in an international educational research perspective – are however a new perspective on how students in the Greenlandic public school experience education.

The first conclusion to be drawn from the study is that students are fully aware of the purpose and quality of their schooling. By asking the students we gain access to knowledge which has not previously been broadly covered across subjects and geography in Greenland.

The overall findings of the study point towards students’ experiences of schooling and lessons as something which varies immensely. Firstly, the study shows that students are aware of how teaching activities influence their experience of a lesson itself; *is it a lesson that went well and where they learned something, or was it lesson where they spend 45 min answering close-ended questions, or was it a lesson where they were challenged into presenting their own written products.*

Secondly students point to the teacher as having a significant impact on how the students experiences a lesson, especially the mood of a teacher has immense influence on how students experience a lesson; teachers who are often grumpy have a very negative influence on how students experience schooling.

Thirdly students point to themselves (social environment) as having an impact on the lessons they experience; students’ classmates, their behaviour, level of noise in the classroom – all influence their experiences of education. The school culture (Schneider, 2017) in regards to how the school and the teacher is able to orchestrate a sense of belonging to the school community is an important aspect of how students perceive their schooling.

The study presents students’ perception on schooling in general, what goes on in lessons – when a lesson is exciting or boring, and what happens on a regular day in

all subjects. Findings from the analysis show that school – as an institution – for the students is just as much a place to socialise, as it is a place of teaching. Students' overall positive perceptions toward their schooling resonate with findings from similar studies and surveys from the Nordic countries (Niclasen, 2019). This study shows that students' attitudes towards their school worsens from grades 5–7 to grade 8–10.

Students are very attentive to when and under what conditions a lesson is influenced by student behaviour – when teasing has a negative impact on a lesson, or when student collaboration on a task has a positive impact on students' perception of lessons. Students' perception of the role of the teacher is divided between him or her as responsible for quality lessons and perceiving the teacher as responsible for creating either a positive mood in class or situations where the teacher is responsible for disharmony in lessons.

The current study reveals students' perception on a teaching practice that is characterised by teaching approaches such as reading, writing and doing exercises. This suggests an approach to lessons that reverberate back to a classic distinction between 'traditional' and 'progressive' schooling (Dewey, 1938).

9.6.1 Implications

The current study is based on student responses from around 30% of all students in grade 5–10 in Greenland. As such the study does not attempt to be generalizable on a regional Arctic level, however, from a more local perspective in Greenland itself, the study does present perspectives on lessons and schooling that have not previously been revealed.

In the current educational discourse in Greenland, the agenda for legislation and decision on schooling is primarily founded on grade point statistics. Grade point statistics from the past 10 years present a falling trend for almost all subjects (Statistics Greenland, 2019). However, the current discourse on the falling trend on student performance fails to address pedagogical challenges in schooling.

This study is an attempt to provide the student perspective on lessons – to qualify how we address challenges in lessons and schooling. For students to have a better school experience it is necessary to understand and recognise that social and psychological aspects play an important role in their school experiences.

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Chapter 10

Teaching Social Sustainability and About Sweden's Sami Peoples in Senior Secondary School



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Photographer: Karin Kers

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Abstract This chapter outlines an action research project conducted in a Social Studies classroom in a Senior Secondary School in South Sápmi, Sweden. The teacher researcher had noted that despite some of the students identifying as Sami, there was a lack of awareness about Sami history and culture, and that when Sami peoples were referred to it was often in discriminatory and derogatory terms. The unit of lessons aimed to increase the students' knowledge of Sami life both historically and presently, and awareness of how prejudice and stereotyping are used to 'other' certain groups to justify exploitation and oppression. Using the 'Educating yourself in Empowerment for Sustainability' tool and designing learner centred and collaborative activities this research found that when students' knowledge of Sami life increases, their prejudicial ideas about Sami peoples decrease.

Keywords Action research · Sami · Prejudice reduction · Sweden · Secondary education

10.1 Introduction

Despite the polar region and three most northern counties of Sweden being home to most of Sweden's Sami population of between 20,000–40,000 people (Sametinget, 2014), many who live in those areas and do not identify as Sami, admit to lacking an understanding of Sami culture. With a long history of conflicting interests between the Sami and the non-Sami in Sweden comes a high prevalence of prejudice and discrimination directed toward Sami people. Teachers play an important role in changing this narrative, to halt prejudice and discrimination, and to engage their students with greater understanding of both Sami culture and the historical and ongoing injustices experienced by Sweden's Indigenous people (Schlosberg & Carruthers, 2010). A socially sustainable society is based on equality, equity, human rights and ensures all people a good life (United Nations, n.d.). Further, we know that solidarity and cooperation is necessary to achieve sustainability (Quiroz-Niño & Murga-Menoyo, 2017).

One of the authors of this chapter – a Social Studies teacher in a senior secondary school in Sweden's South Sapmi had observed that in the school they worked that when Sami peoples were referred to it was often in discriminatory and derogatory terms and there appeared to be a lack of awareness about Sami history and culture. From that starting point an action research project, was undertaken to answer the following questions:

How can students from diverse backgrounds increase their knowledge and understanding of Sami cultures and peoples?

Will that, in turn, decrease prejudicial attitudes being expressed in a senior secondary social studies class?

This chapter will begin by providing a very brief history of the oppression and displacement of Sweden's Sami peoples. This chapter then describes an action research project conducted in a senior secondary school class in the north of

Sweden.¹ We will introduce the rationale and aims for the action research project, highlight some of the lessons conducted and discuss how student attitudes towards and understanding of Sami culture, and the history of prejudice and oppression was changed.

10.2 A Short History of the Oppression and Displacement of Sweden's Sami Peoples

The Sami peoples have been living in parts of what today is known as Sápmi for more than 2500 years. In what is now Sweden, Sami peoples have been forced to pay taxes to different rulers from at least the fourteenth century, sometimes to several rulers simultaneously, all claiming to have the right to tax the lands. In 1673 the state sought to speed up the colonization of Sami lands and allowed every (non-Sami) farmer who settled in Sápmi an exemption from having to pay taxes and serving in the military for 15 years. This is when the Sami displacement from their lands began in earnest.

During the early part of the twentieth century a number of different mandates further eroded traditional Sami life and increased the oppression and exploitation of Sami culture and land. Sami children were forcibly removed from their families to attend boarding schools which made it difficult to keep the culture and language alive. Often race biologists studying the Sami (by using methods such as measuring Sami skulls for example) considered them to be an underdeveloped race and advocated forced sterilisation (Samer, n.d). In 1919 when the union between Sweden and Norway was dissolved, the natural migration patterns of reindeer were stopped, making reindeer husbandry and finding grazing lands much more difficult. The state attempted to solve this by forcing people to move from one part of Sweden to another, which at times, triggered conflict between different Sami groups over the scarce grazing lands (Harning, 2019; SVT, 2017). Not all Sami historically engaged in reindeer husbandry, Sami people were and remain farmers, craftsmen, involved in fishing or any number of other occupations. More recently conflicts between government and corporate interests and Sami interests remain (Pinto-Guillaume, 2017). For example, reindeer grazing areas are disturbed and destroyed by modern forestry methods such as clearcutting and plowing that destroys both ground and tree lichen (Eriksson & Moen, 2008), mining (Lawrence & Kløcker Larsen, 2017), hydroelectric power generation, and building of large water reservoirs.

The continuing discrimination of Sami today has been investigated by the Swedish governmental agency *Diskrimineringsombudsmannen* (DO, 2008, 2010, 2014) [The Discrimination Ombudsman]. DO found that historical government policies and

¹While not strictly in the polar region the site of this research sits on what is considered South Sápmi, part of the traditional Sami lands Sápmi that covers the northernmost geographies of Sweden, Norway, Finland and the Kola peninsula of Russia.

structures were still having a great effect on Sami peoples living conditions. The legacy of these policies shows how Sami capacities to influence their own lives has been limited and the Sami have experienced discrimination in all areas of society that were investigated: the media, work life, health care, aged care, education, contact with authorities, the justice system and in community life (for example in grocery stores, in contact with landlords). DO concluded that the Swedish government must do more to ensure Sami influence on issues concerning them and fight the discrimination and the prejudice that these are based on. This is the minimum requirement, if the Swedish state is to adhere to international conventions on human rights. The Swedish government has acknowledged the Sami as an indigenous people and have agreed to follow the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, n.d.), but have not yet signed the International Labour Organization's *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention*, 1989 (ILO-convention 69 or C169) that would give the Sami greater control of their traditional lands (Samer, 2015, 2018, 2020).

While this brief context has focused on the oppression and displacement of the Sami in Sweden there has been some cooperation and understanding between many Sami and non-Sami and also the Swedish government has begun attempting to redress the issues. However, this is important work that can never be viewed as completed. Without consistent, open and honest education about the colonizing legacies that have resulted in continuing discrimination and prejudice this cycle will continue.

In addition to this, as more students with diverse backgrounds enter schools in Sweden's north, we see a great need for educating people and working to overcome racist and prejudiced ideas about other minority groups (in the upper secondary school that this research took place in there are an increasing number of students that recently arrived from Somalia, Afghanistan and other places for example). Further we recognise the importance of teaching that "position of indigenous and minority peoples' in society can generally be characterised by powerlessness" (Balto & Østmo, 2012, p.2).

10.3 Methodology

This action research study utilised elements of ethnographic lesson study, self study and case study research (Freebody, 2003), conducted by the researcher who worked as a teacher in a senior secondary school in the Jämtland region of South Sápmi, Sweden. Action research (AR) is a form of research used by teachers (and of course other types of practitioners) that is a knowledge producing practice that has the potential to be 'practice changing practice' (Kemmis, 2009, p. 464). Kemmis (2009) further explains:

People involved in critical action research aim to change their social worlds collectively, by thinking about it differently, acting differently, and relating to one another differently by constructing other architectures to enable and constrain their practice in ways that are more sustainable, less sustainable (p.471)

AR is not only a practice-based form of research but is often concerned with increasing equality (Adelman, 2014). This particular project draws upon the notion considered importance for the improvement and/or transformation of people's actions and attitudes at a local level (Cohen et al., 2018). Arising from the teacher/researcher's observations that the students encountered each day had little understanding of Sami life or history, this research clearly aimed to increase knowledge about and understanding of Sami peoples' lived experiences. The project therefore quite deliberately hoped to "highlight the perspectives of excluded knowledge systems by bringing Indigenous knowledge into [the] educational systems" (Nutti, 2018, p.84).

Action research is a type of reflective inquiry that can be conceptualised in three phases whereupon the researcher at the most basic level, 'looks' – 'acts' – 'thinks' (Stringer, 2008; Woodland, 2018). The 'looking' phase provided the opportunity for the teacher/researcher to comprehend the just how much the students knew and understood about Sami life. This stage – the looking – of this particular AR project was conducted for many months. The 'act' stage was conducted after a series of lessons (Appendix 1) were planned and taught which will be further outlined in the next section. Finally the teacher/researcher in collaboration with a colleague was able to 'think' about the success of teaching and learning of the series of lessons with the help of utilising observation notes and reflections.

This action research project was conducted in a class of 20 students taking the subject *Samhällskunskap* – Social Science in senior Secondary school. The group consisted of those identifying themselves as: both Sami and Swedish; Swedish with different strong village identities (often with prejudice about people from other villages), and people not identifying themselves as either Sami nor Swedish and with different ethnic and national origins such as Somali, Afghan, and Nepalese for example.

Data was collected in a number of ways in this project and because it was part of a teaching unit has been de-identified in order to protect the anonymity of the school students. The students were aware that the teacher researcher was conducting this action research project on the teaching unit, and as such would be collecting data in the form of observation and reflective notes on classes, short informal post-lesson interviews, demonstration of learning in class discussions and activities and assessed tasks. Because all these sources of data were in Swedish they were translated by the authors of this chapter.

10.4 Theoretical Background and the Rationale for the Educational Plan

UNESCO (2019) defines Education for Sustainable Development as that which, empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while

respecting cultural diversity. It is about lifelong learning, and is an integral part of quality education. ESD is holistic and transformational education which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. It achieves its purpose by transforming society (paragraph 1).

After identifying the focus of the action research project, a wide literature was sought to inform the educational plan – the action. This literature was drawn from a range of education for sustainable development (ESD) perspectives (journal articles, UN reports, websites etc) and the plan was guided by UNESCO's (2017) ESD for SD goals. The starting point for the literature search came from the course reading in a Masters of Education for Sustainable Development program.

Ultimately the plan, using a range of literature, was designed with the dual purpose to increase knowledge of and decrease prejudice towards Sami people and culture, and to start addressing notions of environmental justice and care (Gottschlich & Bellina, 2017). Surveying a wide range of literature served the purpose, as Sariwaara et al. (2014) suggest to find different ways of seeing.

Although referring to Environmental Education (EE) specifically Wals et al. (2008), outline education for sustainability (or 'Learning for Sustainable Development- LSD') as being either instrumental or emancipatory. Instrumental education is that which includes predetermined content and "starts by formulating specific goals in terms of preferred behaviour, and regards the 'target group' as mainly passive receivers" (Wals et al., 2008, p.56). In contrast emancipatory (sustainability) education attempts to "engage citizens in active dialogue to establish co-owned objectives, shared meanings and a joint self-determined plan of action to make changes that they themselves consider desirable" (Wals et al., 2008, pp. 56–57). Emancipatory education is democratic, inclusive, collaborative, creative, critical, and analytic. It was important for this plan of action to be a combination of both emancipatory and instrumental education in order to show that different educational concepts as were just different perspectives rather than competing opinions.

There are many benefits of using both instrumental methods to develop knowledge, awareness and skills to address specific sustainability challenges and emancipatory methods to promote transformative, action-oriented, collaborative, participatory learning to develop key competencies in order to identify possible solutions (Wals et al., 2008; Wals, 2012; Wals & Benavot, 2017). Different political, economic and social circumstances and different purposes require different types of learning for sustainability and as schools are "embedded in their communities, seeking to influence not only the views and actions of learners who walk their halls" (Wals & Benavot, 2017, p.410) but also the broader communities within which those schools are situated.

Additionally, the concept of learning as transformation (i.e., transformative learning) as described by Mezirow (2000), provided another framing for the educational plan. Mezirow explains that the focus of transformative learning "is on how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others" (Mezirow, 2000, p.8). This type of learning requires us to recognise and modify the assumptions and beliefs that frame our own world view and inform the actions we may take, and also,

importantly, also those of others (Peters & Wals, 2016). It was intended for the learners in the classroom to become more aware of “their problematic understandings and beliefs, more critically reflective on their assumptions and those of others, more fully and freely engaged in discourse, and more effective in taking action on their reflective judgements” (Byrne, 2016, p.5). The teacher researcher here wanted the learning group to become collaborative learners and “critically assess the validity of norms from alternative perspectives, arrive at best tentative judgments through discourse, and effectively act on them” (Mezirow, 2000, p.11).

Considering these theoretical perspectives on learning, two main influences informed the planning of the teaching unit (Appendix 1Sec11) in this action research process: the “EYE for Sustainability” tool (Tassone & Wals, 2014), and learner-centred activities.

10.5 EYE for Sustainability

The EYE (‘Educating Yourself in Empowerment’) for Sustainability learning tool presented by Tassone and Wals (2014) provided a starting point for designing the series of lessons. Inspired by established concepts “within the fields of transformative learning, emancipatory education and empowerment. . . .[and] developed using classroom experience gained while attempting to awaken personal engagement for sustainability in learners” (p.127), this tool provided a clear direction and parameters of the series of lessons. There are four ongoing and interrelated key elements of the EYE learning tool: understanding, awakening, positioning and enacting that as can be seen in Fig. 10.1.

The teacher aimed to provide lessons that explicitly included opportunities for ‘understanding’ of particular knowledge related to Sami history and culture, ‘awakening’ to previously unknown events and circumstances and a fostering of personal agency, and ‘positioning’ involving an encouragement to (re) position themselves in accordance to what they have learned (Tassone & Wals, 2014). Ensuring that the class activities had an EYE for Sustainability allowed for students to “become more

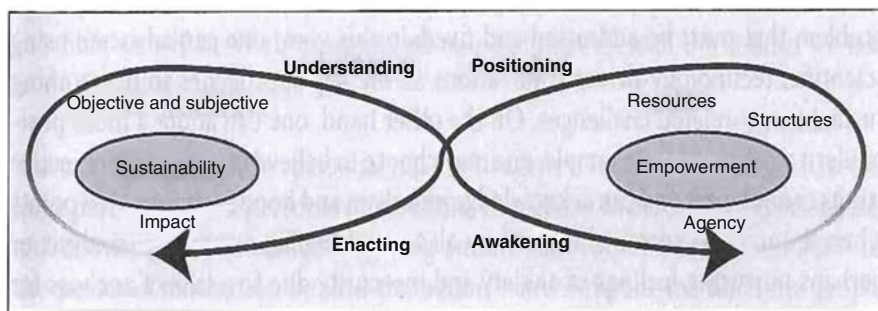


Fig. 10.1 The EYE for Sustainability (EYES) learning tool (Tassone & Wals, 2014, p.129)

aware of the context of their problematic understandings and beliefs, more critically reflective on their assumptions and those of others, more fully and freely engaged in discourse, and more effective in taking action on their reflective judgements” (Mezirow, 2000, p.29). Finally providing opportunities for the students to actively engage in creating a socially cohesive classroom environment was considered the “Enacting” phase of the learning. The goal for this educational plan, like the EYES tool was to “guide learners to become agents of change in a world in need” (Tassone & Wals, 2014, p.134).

The types of activities to be planned were also considered in light of Wals’ (2006) eight criteria important for learning in ESD:

- Total immersion (learning by doing),
- Diversity in learning styles (to be sensitive to different learning styles in a group),
- Active participation (dialogue, ownership of the learning process),
- The value of valuing (develop and reflect on values, motivation),
- Balancing the far and near (education and activities rooted in the life experience of the learner at the same time as developing an understanding of environmental issues at a global level),
- A case-study approach (by focusing on one concrete issue in depth, the learner can develop meaning and understanding),
- The social dimensions of learning (learning in dialogue and social interaction, rethinking ideas in the light of alternatives) and
- Learning for action (developing action competence, by taking charge of some issues students can develop a sense of power and control, to participate/contribute to a democratic society).

10.6 Learner-Centred Activities

The main goal of ESD is to “empower learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity” (UNESCO, 2019 para.1). Thus, designing learner-centred activities was thought to be.

especially applicable in assisting the students to process complex and challenging information from many disciplines; synthesize and apply knowledge to solve problems; consider diverse human perspectives, cultures and scenarios; and identify their own personal ethics, attitudes and desired actions pertaining to human-environment relationships. Successful achievement of these outcomes would require that students be purposeful, reflective, and highly engaged participants in their own learning (Byrne, 2016, p.5).

With a focus on enabling students to take responsibility for their own learning, learner-centred activities would also “increase the chances that the students will be motivated to change their behaviour and affective dimensions related to sustainability” (Byrne, 2016, p.5). However, the teacher plays an important role in facilitating

students' learning by providing and allowing students to discover information as well as uncover and construct meaning to the information that is accessed. Teachers must also allow opportunities for students to practice skills as well as pose questions and provide guidance for students to become more aware of their own thinking.

Tassone and Wals (2014) also point out the importance of a classroom climate that is safe and trustworthy, encouraging dialogue and mutual support. The educator has the role of "a coach, helping the learners define their motivations and deal with adversity" (Tassone & Wals, 2014, p.136). Additionally, McBride (2015) in review of international evidence on prejudice reduction interventions, showed that peer-based learning is effective in reducing prejudice. It was anticipated that engaging students with peer-based and learner-centred activities would therefore be effective for students learning about Sami history and their current situation, as a way of reducing prejudice myths and stereotypes (Monteith & Yau, 2005).

Discussion based activities such as gathering the students in small groups and pairs to talk to each other, and whole class discussions, solve problems, share reflections, debate issues, synthesize information and teach each other were the main focus. This concept of learner-based methods influenced the whole educational plan, with the intention of reducing prejudice and increasing social cohesion in combination with learning about othering and how prejudices form, and doing activities together as a group (Fig. 10.2).

10.7 Findings and Discussion

The activities that were designed to increase the students' awareness of the history of oppression experienced by Sweden's Sami peoples exposed a number of interesting findings. The students in this particular Senior secondary school class displayed changes in their understandings of a) Sami history and notions of colonisation that they previously had relegated to the histories of 'colonising countries' such as England, Spain and Portugal, and b) an increased awareness of (living) Sami culture such as belief systems and language. These findings will guide the discussion that follows.

10.8 Misconceptions of Sami History

At the beginning of this series of lessons some students claimed in whole class discussions that they knew "practically nothing about the Sami" (translated quote) and interestingly, the students that had not grown up in Sweden appeared more curious and interested in Sami culture and history. However, all the students were surprised that they were unaware of certain facts about Sami history and culture. They claimed that they did not know that there are so many different groups of Sami and that, historically, many survived by fishing and farming, not just by reindeer

<i>Understanding, Awakening, Positioning</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch and discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Samernastid</i> (The time of the Sami) • Australia: Aboriginal People’s Struggle. Paquier (2017) • “<i>Die Welle</i>” [The Wave] , about a ‘dictatorship experiment’ <i>The third Wave</i> conducted by a teacher in California in the 1960s • <i>Sameblod</i> (<i>Sami blood</i>). Kernell (2016) • <i>The Eye of the Storm</i> (documentary on blue eyes/brown eyes experiment) Elliot (n.d) • Listen to and discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Om Samisk historia</i> (On Sami History) Samer (n.d) • <i>Jävla vitskallar</i> (Damn whiteheads!) Velasco (2010) • Presentation on othering • Read, look at and discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Where Children Sleep</i> (photo exhibition) Mollison (n.d) • <i>This book is antiracist: 20 lessons on how to wake up, take action and do the work</i>. Jewell (2020)
<i>Enacting</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions on historical prejudice and oppression • Debate on • Activity based on blue eyes/brown eyes experience • Cooking and eating together • Small group activity to reduce prejudice and increase social cohesion

Fig. 10.2 EYES lessons focusing on social sustainability

herding. Other misconceptions or omissions in early class discussions included ideas that the Sami were once more respected and played an important part in the fur trade in Europe, and that there were female hunters. The students were not aware that the Sami had historically had to pay tax to three or four rulers, and that the Sami Parliament does not legally have much power over issues concerning the Sami.

Listening to the podcast *Om Samisk historia* (About Sami history) that gives a comprehensive overview to the historic oppression of the Sami stirred the emotions of all the students. After listening the most common reaction was to express shock, in

both whole class discussion and post lesson interviews, that they had not been aware of this history before. This type of reaction became even stronger after watching three episodes of *Samernas tid* (The time of the Sami), where the Sami peoples became more 'real' and as one of the students claimed "made the history come alive" (translated quote). After listening to the podcast and watching the documentary episodes, students were asked their opinions on Sami history. Two students expressed views that the interests of modern society should come before Sami rights (such as creating jobs by developing mining) which led to a debate where other students argued that Sami interests should be privileged for social justice and when taking environmental considerations in to concern. These two activities seemed to significantly increase the knowledge and awareness about Sami history and culture and many of the students sympathized with the plight of the Sami people.

After watching a video titled Australia's Aboriginal People's Struggle, the students were able to identify the poor treatment of Australian Indigenous peoples and draw parallels to the injustices the Sami have lived through. One student pointed out that it was strange that they -the school students in the north of Sweden- "already had some knowledge about the Australian Aboriginal people and their poor treatment at the hands of colonial powers but not that the Sami had been similarly mistreated" (translated quote). A class discussion on why this was the case followed and the conclusion reached was that the Swedish state had not put much effort in to showing this part of history and as one student claimed "probably because it was not a history to be proud of" (translated quote). Many students were disturbed to learn that the Sami were forcefully removed from areas that they had lived in for hundreds of years, to make way for mining and settling. One student commented

In a larger perspective, one really thinks of Sweden as a country that hasn't been engaged in any large scale imperialism compared to colonial powers such as Great Britain. But the truth is that we have, the Swedish government, has driven an imperialistic policy within its own country (translated quote).

10.9 Increased Understanding of Sami Culture, Beliefs and Language

That Sami were forced to give up their own belief systems to become Christian was also seen as concerning, while many were curious to learn about the Sami belief systems and their close relationship to the natural world which was closely tied to nature. Many students had adverse reactions when presented with ideas of race biology and fact that Sami were subjected to physical examinations and sterilisation. One student raised their hand and expressed the conclusion to the class their belief that "it was awful that it had even existed and even worse that it originated in Sweden since this gave the Nazi's "scientific evidence" to murder Jews" (translated quote). This student continued to reason about how it must have been to experience this type of prejudice and treated as a lower race, and empathised "that it is no wonder there's a much higher rate of depression and suicide among Sami" (translated quote).

Equally upsetting to many students was learning about the poor conditions in the boarding schools that kept Sami children away from their parents and forbid them to speak their own language. As one student expressed it:

It's difficult to imagine what it was like to come to a school and be forced to speak Swedish when the only language you knew was Sami. And at the same time, at such a young age, be forced to be away from your parents and your roots. Unreasonable (translated quote).

All the students upon learning about historical and ongoing injustices, agreed that the historical and current injustices were appalling.

The radio programme *Jävla vitskallar!* (Damn Whiteheads!) (Nechma, 2020) flipped perspectives around for the many of the students, especially those who identified as Swedish. This story of how Swedish people that lived in Spain were “the immigrants” and that the Spanish people held prejudices about them because their country of origin made them the ‘other’. In the discussion that followed, students compared the prejudices expressed by the Spanish people about the Swedes and realized that it was exactly the same type of prejudice typically expressed about immigrants in Sweden. In this whole class discussion one student pointed out the parallels of stereotypes described such as: “they keep to themselves, speak their own language, have their own restaurants and schools, cause trouble, don’t integrate etc” (translated quote). Four students of Swedish origin confided in the teacher after this class that they felt that they better understood that when moving to a new country, it might be comforting to be around fellow countrymen that speak your language.

This activity of changing perspective when paired with learning about how prejudices form and how we use stereotypes and norms to make sense of the world, had an eye-opening effect on the students. Many agreed with the sentiment that “you can’t lump people together based on the one fact that they’ve moved to a place and that if you don’t speak to or socialise with people, it’s easy to develop prejudice about them” (translated quote). The students suggested that to solve this, people should socialise more to get to know each other and learn more about each other which aligns with Hosokawa’s (2012) claim that cultural self-knowledge development has the effect of reducing prejudice. Learning about othering, most students expressed understanding that this was really just a way to ratify exploiting and oppressing people “for example using racism to justify colonialism” (translated quote), which opened their eyes even further as to how these mechanisms work.

10.10 Conclusion

The action research outlined in this chapter, was born from one teacher’s desire to increase the students’ understanding and awareness of the Sami peoples in Sweden, their history which involves displacement, oppression and prejudice, and the ongoing nature of that oppression and prejudice. Arising from the teacher/researcher’s observations that the students encountered each day had little understanding of Sami life or history, this research clearly aimed to increase knowledge about and

understanding of Sami peoples' lived experiences. Action research was chosen for two reasons: (1) to theoretically inform a unit of work addressing important to social sustainability focused learning outcomes in a Social Science classroom that responded to the issues that had been noted; (2) for the improvement and/or transformation of people's actions and attitudes at a local level (Cohen et al., 2018). The activities described above were just part the of a larger unit on Sami life. Several other activities were planned and undertaken to varying degrees. However due to the 2020 pandemic some important activities could not occur that included: cooking using traditional Sami cold smoking, and picking berries and mushroom (vegetarian and non-vegetarian option); a visit to a Sami village to take part in a traditional reindeer separation; and a visit from the current president of the Sami Parliament Youth Council.

The series of lesson was guided by the EYES learning tool (Tassone & Wals, 2014) and focused on empowering students' understanding, awakening, positioning, enacting. Learner-centred methods focusing on student discussions were chosen as it was important to consider diverse human perspectives and cultures as well as identifying personal attitudes, ethics and desired actions (Byrne, 2016). Additionally, it has been found that peer-based learning and settings is an efficient way of reducing prejudice (McBride, 2015).

It was clear before these lessons that students lacked real knowledge and understanding of Sami history and culture and that knowledge and understanding increased after the learning activities. The collaborative learning opportunities (the discussions) among the students enabled them to more deeply understand different aspects of Sami culture and history, and in particular the history of prejudice and oppression and were able to discuss the reasons for and consequences of this. For example, the students realized that Sweden has behaved as an oppressive, colonialist state and were surprised they had not learnt about this part of history before. They concluded that the oppression of the Sami, historically as well as today, was appalling. Students also learned about, discussed and compared the oppression of other Indigenous peoples (in this case Australian Aboriginal peoples) to that of the Sami, realising there were many similarities.

It was also important that the history of prejudice and oppression of the Sami was not just relegated to being a case of historical tragedy for these students. Listening to a radio documentary about Swedish people living in Spain paired with learning about how prejudice and stereotypes form, was a further eye-opener that made students realise how easy it is to assume things about "the other". They came to learn that the prejudices the being expressed about the Swedish in Spain were the same as those expressed about immigrants in Sweden. Taking this kind of othering discourse the students could identify that these kind of racist ideas seemed to stem from, or prosper when different groups did not have the chance to interact with each other. The students also had practical experiences of how othering works as well as taking part in activities to increase social cohesion among them. In addition to this, students took action to reduce prejudice and increase integration by in small groups performing an activity of their choice.

Appendix 1 Summary of Social Sustainability Unit

Intended learning outcomes	
<p>A. Increased knowledge about Sami culture historically and today, focusing on both the oppression, exploitation and discrimination of Sami; and the successful cooperation with non-Sami; all from a Sami perspective.</p> <p>B. Increased knowledge on other indigenous peoples struggles.</p> <p>C. Increased knowledge and awareness on how prejudice, stereotypes and racist ideas form, the concept of "othering" and how they're all used to justify exploitation and oppression.</p> <p>D. Competence to critically analyse power structures, hierarchies, norms and information</p> <p>E. Knowledge about some historical and current examples of exploitation of "others".</p> <p>F. Developing personal agency and motivation to contribute to integration, cooperation and reducing prejudice; to be able to recognize and speak up to discrimination and racism.</p> <p>G. Increased social cohesion, cooperation, solidarity, empathy and understanding of "others" in the learning group (and eventually the community if possible)</p>	
Activity (what)	Details
To get more insight into the historical and current exploitation we will also watch and discuss the video program of three episodes <i>Samernastid</i> (The time of the Sami) and listen to the podcast <i>Om Samisk historia</i> (About Sami History)	First in small groups and then the whole class, discussion will be encouraged with questions like: What did you react to when watching/listening to this program, why? What was new about Sami history to you? How did this make you feel?
A video, Australia: Aboriginal People's Struggle will be watched, discussed and compared to the Sami situation. Compare Sami situation historically and today, to that of the Australian Aboriginal peoples.	By studying the oppression and exploitation of Sami people historically and today, comparing it to other Indigenous peoples struggles and in relation to the perspectives presented on justice; the participants' awareness of and view on Indigenous rights and what is just, will hopefully be affected. Learning about how prejudice and stereotypes form and challenging prevailing ones in a safe non confrontative environment with peers and using peer-based learning, is effective in reducing prejudice
Start by listening to the radio broadcast <i>Jävla vitskallar! [Damn whiteheads!]</i>	This story is about how Swedish people that have moved to Spain are viewed by the Spanish people that don't interact with them and the prejudices they've formed about each other. Velasco interviews both Spanish and Swedish people present a different perspective; that it's the Swedish people that are the immigrants, the "other". It shows that any group of people that are pointed out as different and that the majority community don't interact with, can easily be seen as different and become "the other" who are subject to prejudices that are not necessarily based on any facts. We (students and teacher) will discuss and analyse the events and the meaning of this radio broadcast together (first in small groups and then the whole class).
Watch the movie <i>"Die Welle" [The Wave]</i> , based on the original dictatorship experiment <i>The third wave</i> conducted by a teacher in California in the 1960s. The group will continue to explore how racism and other types of "othering" (for example gender, human-non human, age) is used as a justification of exploitation and oppression of certain groups based on attributed characteristics deemed as inferior to the oppressor.	This lesson looks at how prejudices form, how we use stereotypes and norms to make sense of the world, how we confirm our set views (prejudices and stereotypes) by focusing on the experiences and facts that strengthen them and how knowledge about this can help in diminishing or reducing the power that these set ideas have over us. The discussion will be based on questions like: Why do the students become a strong group and follow the leader so quickly? What makes some students more involved and others oppose the group? Do you have any similar experiences of being submitted to prejudiced ideas/group pressure/following the leader; or have you yourself had or acted on these kinds of ideas?
The participants are divided into smaller groups to work with the photo exhibition <i>Where Children Sleep</i> by James Mollison. This photographic gallery shows children's "bedrooms" in different parts of the world.	The students will work with questions relating to these images and when finished, discuss the questions in the whole class. Questions like: What do these pictures tell us about what the world looks like? What does it tell us about distribution of resources? Why do things look like this? Is it problematic? What's problematic about it? What alternative ways of living are available? Who can choose how to live and why? What constitutes a good life/happiness? Which of the children look happy and which don't, why? Would you like to change this? If so, what needs to change, what can you do?
Practical experience of how "othering" works. Based on the famous experiment by Jane Elliot Blue eyes/brown eyes a modified version will be conducted. After the experience the group will debrief by discussing their experience as equals and watch the documentary film of one of Elliott's experiments, <i>The Eye of the Storm</i> .	Students will be divided into two random groups and treated differently during one single lesson, taking turns to be the privileged and the discriminated group. The different treatment will involve the privileged group getting a cinnamon roll and the possibility to participate in a discussion while the unprivileged wear a green collar, aren't allowed to express their opinion, and corrected if breaking these rules. We will also cook and eat traditional Sami food together, to rebuild a sense of being a group again outside, cooking mushrooms and reindeer (vegan and meat options) on a <i>Murika</i> .
Read <i>Butterfly song</i> by Terri Jenke and watch <i>Sameblod</i> (Sami blood)	The group will also read a book and watch a movie together and discuss these (in small groups and as a whole class). The book <i>Butterfly Song</i> by Terri Janke will be read in cooperation with the students English language class. The fictional movie <i>Sameblod</i> (Sami blood) will be watched to get the perspective on how it could be to grow up as a Sami girl in the 1930's, being subjected to prejudices and race biology. Presenting these narratives aims to increase understanding by asking the students to see things from the perspective of another, put themselves in another's shoes so to speak.
Students will read the book <i>This Book is Anti-Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action and Do the Work</i> by Tiffany Jewell (2020) All students will be divided into smaller groups and given the challenge of performing one small action to contribute to integration/cooperation or reducing prejudice.	The small group action could for example consist of taking an anti-racist stand in a discussion, taking a stand by posting something on social media, educating others on how prejudice form, arranging an activity where people of different backgrounds can participate and get to know each other on equal terms, or educating others on a part of history that is racist and its consequences. The group's action and the results are presented to the rest of the class in an oral presentation with the help of slides (containing the intended purpose, the action itself and an evaluation of the results)

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Chapter 11

Collaborative Pedagogies: Seeking and Finding Truth Within Indigenous Children's Literature Through Multiliteracies



Anne Burke, Benjamin Boison, and Deborah Toope



Photographer: Anne Burke

Abstract In this chapter, we highlight the work of two teachers as they engaged in collaborative practice while designing a curriculum that incorporated Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing through a multiliteracies approach. We describe how these teachers used postcolonial Indigenous children's literature as a launching point to explore historical and critical issues of Indigenous peoples with their

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students in an elementary classroom. We use data generated from interviews, focus group discussions, children’s drawings, journal writings, and photographs of classroom sessions. Using a multiliteracies pedagogical framework (situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformative practice), we show how these teachers transformed their practice and students’ understandings as they participated in learning events together. We also share some possible practices for incorporating Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing into elementary classrooms. In conclusion, we discuss implications for teachers’ practice and the need for further research as we continue the important work towards truth and reconciliation.

Keywords Collaborative teaching pedagogies · Indigenous Children’s literature · Multiliteracies · Government policy · Canada

11.1 Introduction

“One of the things that I was afraid that would come up in class was around the sexual abuse of Indigenous children in Residential schools. I found a YouTube video resource about residential schools and found myself skipping over that part because I knew that they would be upset and would ask me why abuse happened?”

– Teacher

In a CBC TV interview on the day of his retirement, Canadian Indigenous Senator and Chief Justice of Canada, Murray Sinclair, acknowledged that teachers have a beginning awareness of the history of Indigenous peoples since the Truth and Reconciliation Report was released in 2015. In this chapter, we acknowledge the struggles of teachers in finding the truth about the history of Canadian Indigenous peoples and teaching young children about the atrocities that were put upon Indigenous peoples. In the words of Chief Justice Sinclair, “Reconciliation is not an aboriginal problem – it is a Canadian problem. It involves all of us.” These words embrace the difficult decisions teachers have faced in addressing such injustices with children in their classrooms.

Our conversations with Canadian teachers share researcher Fournier-Sylvester’s (2013) observation that “teachers often shy away from... discussions [of controversial issues] because they do not feel like they have the knowledge or skills to work through complex social and political issues. Many teachers also report feeling ill-equipped to deal with the unpredictability of student reactions as well as being concerned about accusations of trying to push a political agenda.” (p. 1). While our findings are similar, with the curricular expectations placed upon teachers to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation report, we observed that teachers often struggle to teach controversial history even though they believe that social justice education for Indigenous peoples has measurable positive benefits for students (e.g., critical thinking, tolerance) (Fournier-Sylvester, 2013). Another challenge that teachers may encounter is a lack of appropriate resources that address particular events in history (Burke et al. (2017)).

Similar to current research, we observed in our study that there are specific strategies which the educators adopt when it comes to teaching controversial or sensitive issues. Some teachers may choose not to address these issues or provide the

information directly from the textbook without inviting further discussion or offering students different perspectives and inviting students to think deeply about the issues presented (Kello, 2016).

The official curriculum may also constrain teachers. According to Higgins et al. (2015), “There is a growing consensus within Indigenous educational literature in Canada that most white teachers deliver a curriculum that is reflective of and is shaped by Eurocentrism and whiteness” (p. 251). It is only recently, for example, that there have been commitments to teaching the history of residential schools in some Canadian classrooms. For teachers, this means developing resources and learning to engage in difficult subject matter with their students.

One way to introduce such issues is through the use of postcolonial literature. In this study, the focus was on Canadian Indigenous history and social issues. Such texts provide teachers and students with ways to engage in conversations that vary from traditional Eurocentric literature often used in the classroom (Wiltse et al., 2014). However, just introducing these texts is not sufficient to increase understanding among students. This is among the challenges that teachers, like the ones in this study, encounter when taking up difficult historical wrongs endured by Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Much of our focus was around Canada’s residential school system for Indigenous children and the widespread suffering that this system inflicted on children and families. Canada has a dark history of injustices against its Indigenous people, ignored until the late 2000s when the federal government convened a Commission to explore and expose these issues. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC 2015a) released an official report about such injustices in 2015. The report was 7 years in the making and based on the accounts of witnesses and survivors of the residential school system and described the forced assimilation within this system. In 1876, Canada introduced “the Indian Act,” which was a formal cultural assimilation policy that, among other things, created residential schools, dissolved Indigenous governments (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), banned traditional ceremonies and dress, and generally ignored the rights of Indigenous people (Moore et al., 2019). The residential schools were a particularly cruel part of this act, deliberately stripping the cultural identity of Indigenous children. When at the schools, children were forced to wear uniforms, speak English, and were separated from their siblings. Indigenous children also often had their traditional names taken away, as well as their belongings. In addition to these injustices, the conditions of the schools were horrendous, having been described as unsanitary, poorly made, overcrowded, and riddled with neglect and abuse (Moore et al., 2019). The report by the TRC had 7000 survivors describe the conditions of the schools, including descriptions of rampant physical and sexual abuse that took place (Puxley, 2015). These schools existed all across Canada and in Newfoundland (which was not a Canadian province for much of this time but had its residential schools). Justice Murray Sinclair, a chair of the TRC, has guessed that the number of deaths was likely as high as 6000 of the 150,000 children who were sent to these schools, which means that around 1/25 children at these schools died. Some of the recorded causes of death were tuberculosis, measles, influenza, and smallpox; however, some

children were classified as missing or discharged. Some parents never even found out what happened to their children (Puxley, 2015).

The residential school system has had lasting adverse effects on Indigenous communities. The Indigenous population has disproportionately high poverty rates, incarceration, children in foster care, and missing and murdered women. Justice Sinclair says that all of these issues can be traced back to the residential school system. As such, many Indigenous advocates have suggested that it is important that the Canadian government and Canadian people become active participants in the process of reconciliation. Justice Sinclair has identified many important actions that need to occur as part of reconciliation, including government and church apologies and improving Indigenous children's general quality of life (Puxley, 2015).

In today's classrooms, teachers have the challenging task of designing and enacting curriculum through a lens of social justice. In this chapter, we explore the events that occurred in a grade 5 classroom to examine the role of teacher collaboration in teaching for social justice. Specifically, we consider how two teachers worked collaboratively to create lessons using a multiliteracies framework. Multiliteracies refer to navigating and manipulating various communications channels and media that transcends cultural and linguistic diversity (The New London Group, 1996). Multiliteracies include a variety of modes that can be used to make meaning, including words, images, gestures, movement, objects, and sounds.

They designed learning events around the Indigenous children's book *Shi Shi Etko* by Nicola Campbell and LaFave (2005), and their collaboration became a critical element of their curriculum design. The children's book, *Shi Shi Etko*, is a story of a young Inuit girl before she is taken from her family and sent to a residential school. Our chapter considers how teachers can overcome challenges through innovative pedagogical approaches when engaging in collaborative teaching framed within multiliteracies (situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformative practice). We show how teacher collaboration created new possibilities for engaging children in learning about difficult yet important historical facts about Indigenous peoples in Canada.

11.2 Collaborative Practice and Multiliteracies Pedagogy

This study draws broadly from the research on teacher collaboration (Hargreaves, 2019; Henning, 2013; Jones & Harris, 2012; Rivera et al., 2014; Villavicencio et al., 2020) and is informed by multiliteracies pedagogy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Teacher collaboration refers to formal and informal meetings between and among teachers, focusing on developing effective practice (Hargreaves, 1995; Villavicencio et al., 2020). Collaboration among teachers can provide a more enriching environment for students, wherein students experience multiple perspectives on the content being taught (Jones & Harris, 2012). Teachers can also benefit from the knowledge and expertise of their peers (Jones & Harris, 2012). However, these positive benefits

are dependent on teachers collaborating and communicating effectively. In this study, two teachers, one early-career teacher and one mid-career teacher with over 15 years of classroom experience worked earnestly to share perspectives and resources to engage in difficult discussions with students about residential schools.

Literacy enables people to negotiate meaning (Leland & Kasten, 2002), and is not limited to a set of learned conventions through print or technological formats (Boche, 2014).

The term multiliteracies emerged from the 1990s by the New London Group (1996) to portray “literacy as a continual, supplemental, and enhancing or modifying established literacy teaching and learning” (Boche, 2014, Pg.116). Multiliteracies were a response to advancements in emergent global trends, including the proliferation of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and increasing linguistic and cultural diversity (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). They influence people to become literate in different forms of languages for various social contexts. With this said, the two teachers collaborated with a plethora of texts to better understand the cultural contexts and sociological implications of residential schools.

The New London Group (1996) extended their definition of multiliteracies to include pragmatic pedagogic strategies that can support students in developing competencies in the multiliteracies framework. Our understanding of multiliteracies pedagogy portrays it as a pedagogical strategy designed to promote engagement between learners while focusing on their background and interests so that they are more prepared to engage with complex societal issues. Kulju et al. (2018) argue that critical reflections from the multiliteracy approach become necessary better to understand multiliteracies and its role in teaching and learning. The change results from rapidly evolving technological, societal, economic, and cultural influences on the curriculum’s literacy resources (Kulju et al., 2018). We were interested in exploring meaning-making framed within the four components of situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformative practice as students engaged with postcolonial texts reflecting Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. In this case, we will show how students in a grade 5 classroom engaged with diverse types of texts with Indigenous pedagogies (Cole, 2019; McGregor, 2017), such as using a talking stick and the blanket exercise. This chapter aims to show how the two teachers collaborated in delivering indigenous pedagogies through multiliteracies. In the next section, we discuss the methods and data sources used in the study.

11.3 Research Design and Methods

This chapter draws from research supported by the Canadian Social Sciences & Humanities investigating the use of postcolonial children’s literature in the classroom. The study involved over 100 classroom teachers in Canada. This chapter focuses on a teacher inquiry group of 15 teachers in Eastern Canada who focused their collaborative inquiry exploration of Indigenous children’s picture books. This powerful literary genre has grown extensively in the past 5 years in Canada.

Postcolonial literary texts such as these can provide a dynamic lens for children and educators to seek truth and further understand social justice's intricacies. Johnston (2012), a Canadian postcolonial children's scholar shares "postcolonial texts invite teachers and students to consider the intersections of the aesthetic and political" (p.197). In particular, teachers were emotionally invested and committed to finding topical books to ensure that difficult truths such as the Canadian shame of residential schools addressed such an intersection.

Most importantly, the choice of Nicola Campbell's book *Shi Shi Etko* (2005) introduced children to this tragic part of Canadian history. The gentle re-telling about residential schools in this book gave way to understanding for the students about indigenous families and cultural experiences through the main character. Children were witnessed taking agency and giving voice to a tragic and hidden part of Canadian history. Developing Indigenous pedagogies within their classrooms was essential for the teachers in their journey to correct the wrongdoing through the past teachings about Indigenous peoples in Canada. Teacher research is a systematic process by which teachers identify 'problems' in their practice within the context of their classroom learning environments and investigate ways to address these problems through inquiry (Chow et al., 2015; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Evidently, teacher research seems to positively impact the professional competence of educators since research is a critical and integral part of an educator's professional development (Furlong & Salisbury, 2005). Both teachers in this study, who were at different stages of their career, shared how collaborating meant that they could discuss their learning journey and the new and older pedagogies they would try out in their grade five classrooms.

Although it is vital to consider these teachers' perspectives as they collaborated, it is also essential to consider their willingness to engage as co-researchers and co-learners along with their students. These teachers were committed to learning alongside their students—reading new books and learning about topics they had little background knowledge. For them, they saw Indigenous children's literature as both a mirror and a window and understood that looking in the mirror would be a particularly challenging undertaking. As one of our teachers shared with Anne, "after reading the children's Indigenous books you brought to our class, I wondered why it (Reconciliation) was not formally in the Newfoundland curriculum." These teachers also recognized the need to provide a supportive environment for the children in their classrooms for these difficult conversations and inner struggles.

The data collection for what we share in this chapter took place over a year with bi-weekly classroom visits at one elementary school with a population of 500 students. Upon receiving ethical approval from our university and the school district, the team met with the school's administration team and staff. We provided an overview of the study and shared a collection of 80 picture books that addressed many social issues such as poverty, bullying, racism, immigration, and Indigenous issues, ranging from residential schools to missing women. Teachers asked questions and examined the research book collection. Three grade five teachers, two grade two teachers, and two grade six teachers volunteered to explore the postcolonial picture books in their classrooms. For this chapter, we focus on two

teachers who collaborated and shared the book *Shi Shi Ekto* in teaching a unit on residential schools.

Over the year, we generated data from children's drawings, journal writings, photographs of classroom sessions. We held two focus group discussions with the children and interviewed the teachers separately and together. The data collection was rich in multimodal texts; as a result, we chose to use a digital visual literacy analysis method of developing what Hull and Katz (2006) a "pictorial and textual representation of those elements" that is creating a graph representation of all data "that is juxtaposing columns of the written text, the images from digital texts, and the data from interviews, field notes, and pictures to create "qualitative analysis of patterns" (p.41). The rich data set with the various multimodal texts was well suited to be considered within multiliteracies pedagogies.

11.4 Indigenous Knowledges and Multiliteracies Pedagogies

The TRC Calls to Action prompted educators to integrate Indigenous ways of knowing and teaching methods into their practice (TRCC: Calls to Action, 2015). However, teachers, even those in this study who are committed to equity and social justice, may experience some discomfort when integrating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into their curriculum and practice. They may feel that their knowledge of Indigenous topics is limited or fear they will say or do something wrong. Some teachers may even believe that only Indigenous peoples are the only ones who can teach about Indigenous histories and topics (Cole, 2019).

Indigenous ways of knowing and doing differ significantly from Western colonial perspectives (Cole, 2019). Knowledges within Indigenous cultures reflect a view of knowing that is situated, contextual, personal, and interconnected with culture, identity, place, and peoples (Cole, 2019; Munroe et al., 2013). This view of knowing is reflected in how these teachers included a talking stick as students shared their responses while learning to make connections through their learning experiences. Knowing also comes from personal and shared experiences. Teachers in this study used the blanket exercise in their elementary classroom as a way for students to deepen their understandings about colonial history by experiencing through a dramatization of how the land was taken away from Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous peoples view land as sacred, shared, and as a teacher (Cole, 2019; McGregor, 2017). Teachers explored these perspectives, particularly the view that land is a teacher and a source of knowledge through the Indigenous children's book *Shi Shi Ekto*, a work of Indigenous children's literature, by Nicola Campbell. Incorporating Indigenous perspectives and knowledges requires self-reflection, learning, and courage to challenge dominant worldviews while engaging in new pedagogical practices (Cole, 2019). Through *Shi Shi Ekto*, students learned about indigenous cultures and history, particularly the Canadian residential school system.

By designing lessons and engaging in new pedagogies, including Indigenous ways of knowing and doing, these teachers transformed their classroom into a space where they could participate actively in the process of decolonization. This was possible through four components of the New London Group (1996) proposed in the multiliteracies pedagogies – situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice. Next, we describe how these teachers engaged in reflection and learning as they integrated Indigenous knowledges and methods into their pedagogical practices by using Indigenous children’s literature, talking circles, and the blanket exercise.

11.4.1 *Situated Practice*

We begin with sharing Anne’s field notes on the first day of her data collection in the grade five classroom. The teacher had contacted Anne to discuss how best to begin her discussion about Indigenous peoples in Canada in the following (Fig. 11.1):

Francis sent an email before I was to arrive at the school at 11:00 in the morning. She communicated that she had been up late the night before trying to decide what information video was best to share with her grade 5 class to introduce her teaching unit about Aboriginal Inuit and Metis people of Canada. She was concerned about the labels that remain in Canadian government laws where an Indigenous person is still referenced as an Indian under the “Indian Act.” She decided to introduce these terms by getting students to draw what they thought the word Indian meant. She was surprised to get these drawings:

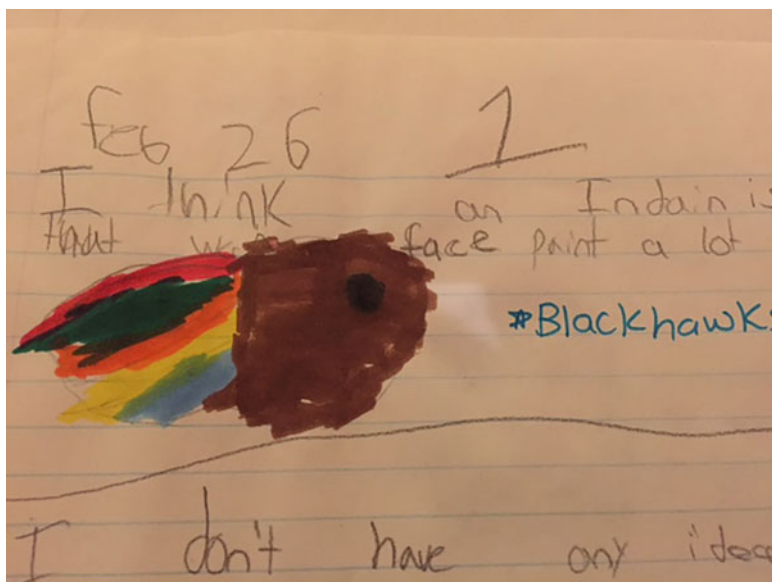


Fig. 11.1 Blackhawk drawing interpretation

In situating the children's learning, she learned about their lived experiences at home. In this drawing, the student writes that an Indian is a person who wears all face paint. His drawing shows the picture of an American professional hockey team logo of the Chicago Blackhawks. He also has written in his paper, "I have no idea." Other children referenced other sports teams, and one child drew a map showing India and said, "Indian people live here; this is where my aunt is from." Teachers were not surprised to read these responses in student journals. One teacher shared, "We do have a unit on Indigenous peoples in our social studies textbook, but the role of the Canadian government in implementing residential schooling is not shared. The book is mostly about customs, livelihood practices and geographical places of aboriginal peoples." In our early discussions with teachers, we realized there was little evidence of authorized or suggested curriculum resources they could draw from at the beginning of the unit.

In this component of the framework, we see how learners participated in activities, which are grounded in learner experiences and interrelationships surrounding their social lives (Westby, 2010; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000), such as understanding the term "Indian" refers to logo for a sports team or "Indian" to a person from India. As such, learners use available meaning-making resources situated in their life experiences to solve real-world problems they encounter. When we first met teachers, they were mostly concerned about students' ability to understand the purpose of residential schools. Understanding that these schools were intended to colonize Indigenous peoples would be a difficult teaching task. These first steps suggested that more understanding and activities would have to be focused more on addressing the history of colonization.

11.4.2 Overt Instruction

Both teachers were very committed to using the Indigenous books, which gently introduced residential schooling from the child's perspective. One teacher shared that Canadian history is taught in small segments that progress through each grade level to more complex topics that build upon what was previously learned. She shared, "what is currently taught in the classroom is about culture only, nothing about "truth and reconciliation." Another teacher shared, "I had began to talk about *Shi Shi Etko* and realized I needed to get the right words to say to the students," as she did not want to offend students in her class that may be Indigenous. She decided that she did not know enough about how indigenous groups identity themselves. In our interview, she shared:

"What terms are interchangeable if any. I looked at an Indigenous website used by Aboriginal peoples to see how I could explain the difference, such as why we do not use the term "Indian" "but Canada laws still have the Indian Act."

Another concern was involving the school community in understanding the new truths coming forth with the release of the Truth and Reconciliation report. In class

discussions, we noted that children used terms about Aboriginal peoples that their parents and grandparents used. During an interview, the teacher gave a take-home assignment asking children to interview parents and grandparents about their knowledge of Indigenous peoples. There were children of Indigenous ancestry who returned to the class with great knowledge to share. However, she had to be cognizant and respectful of what some children did share:

As the unit progressed, she noted that children thoughtfully corrected themselves or paused when choosing Indigenous people identifiers. In this case, we see how both teachers researched online sources and sharing of websites and videos produced by credible sources. This helped students acquire a new understanding and build more confidence in discussing such weighty issues.

The overt instruction component of multiliteracies pedagogy focuses on the teacher's interventions and the learner's systemic understanding of developed resources. According to Westby (2010), the main goal of overt instruction is to support the metacognition development of learners so that they can gain some measure of autonomy in their learning. With a developed metalanguage, the learners can enhance their meaning-making from available resources to better understand various modes of multiliteracies. These teachers engaged multiple resources and discussions using credible sources such as First Nation websites and Government of Canada resource pages. These activities enabled students to gain a new metalanguage and develop a sense of agency to further research for a culminating project.

11.4.3 Critical Framing

Both teachers firmly believed in viewing content material with an informed critical frame. The viewpoints around the resources and textbook produced questioning about how to teach beyond the current textbook fundamentals, which simply identified Aboriginal peoples through their geographical locations and celebratory customs. The current curriculum did not address residential schools. In using the children's picture book, *Shi Shi Etko* (Campbell & Lafave, 2005) tells the story of a young Indigenous girl, Shi-Shi-Etko, age 6, as she prepares to go to residential school in 4 days. The story takes place in her home community, showing how her family lives on the land and the cultural and life teachings shared with her through her close relationship with her mother, father, and grandmother. Shi-Shi Etko tries to remember all of family teachings to not forget her lived experiences when she leaves for residential school – where she will be forced to lose her name and her language. The theme of family and relationships was an important one in the grade five classroom. Both teachers decided that they would engage in two Indigenous practices to share with children the respect of communication using a talking stick and the blanket exercise, which teaches the history of Indigenous peoples.

Before the lesson began, they talked about how we share our traditions and language at home. This teacher revisited the picture storybook through a page-

turning sharing the illustrations and engaging in a critical discussion using the talking stick. She intertwined facts about Canadian indigenous residential schools as shown in the following:

Anne: Do you remember when you used a talking stick in class last week after you read *Shi-Shi-Etko*? (holding the book to show the pictures as cues to the children).

Joel: Yes, it was used so that we did not all speak at once when Miss was asking questions.

Lauren: (quickly adding) It also made sure we listened to what we were saying.

Anne: I think it is important to listen to everyone's thoughts? Do you agree?

Sienna: I liked that Miss C asked questions to explain the story more.

Anne: How do you mean?

Sienna: When we talked about how the little girl would remember everything that her family taught her from the book... you know the picture (Anne passes her the book, and she shows the picture of the main character with her special memory bag collected with her grandmother). Miss C explained that she had to keep her memories safe inside her because when she got to the school, they would give her another name, and she would not be able to speak her own language or speak about home without being punished.

Anne: How did that make you feel?

Sienna: It made me mad, and I asked Miss why that happened.

The teachers showed several Internet resources that supported students' developing understanding of the atrocities and treatment of Indigenous peoples. These resources helped children understand that the responsibility of all Canadians and apologies on behalf of the Prime Minister could not make up for the losses Indigenous children like *Shi Shi Etko* had experienced.

In critical framing, learners are advised to take a step back and critically analyze the contents of the curriculum within its respective context (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). During this time, teachers found that pairing resources and the Indigenous pedagogical practices can provide a lens for children. With the critical framing component, learners can better understand the design's function (Westby, 2010). As such, students learn to appreciate that there is no simple universal truth that can be applied in all contexts. Rather, learners understand the influence of social contexts in selecting and using available resources for a critical selection of suitable resources in various tasks (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000).

11.4.4 Transformed Practice

Another practice used to highlight Indigenous perspectives on historical events implemented by these teachers in their classroom were using Kairos blanket exercise activity. This activity consisted of laying blankets on the floors to represent land treaties. The transformed practice component of multiliteracies pedagogies involves activities involving the application of a learner's acquired knowledge into other contexts for problem-solving. Cope & Kalantzis (2000) recommend that learners implement an established design in different contexts characterized by new situations. As such, the blanket exercise invited children to understand the colonization of Indigenous peoples through dramatic enactment.

This particular learning event is intended to help people understand the history of Canada's relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. In this classroom, teachers asked children to bring blankets from home, which were arranged on the floor to represent Canada before the arrival of the Europeans. In class, one teacher and one student read from a script. As the script is read, children playing the roles of Europeans and newcomers begin to interact with Aboriginal peoples enacted by children on the blankets. Blankets are removed from the floor, and children taking on the role of Aboriginal peoples are left standing together on one blanket, symbolizing the loss of land or being taken by death. The script is read as a timeline and helps children understand how, first, the Europeans and the Canadian government's federal policies have colonized the lives of Indigenous peoples. The children pictured here as they participated in the blanket exercise. Further journal entries shared how this pedagogical practice engaged students in understanding the history of loss endured by Indigenous peoples (Fig. 11.2).

Katie shared the following in her journal response:

"The blanket exercise was fun until it was not. I really liked how my class acted as the aboriginal people. Ethan was a narrator with our teacher. I learned how it started out fine until the Europeans turned on them and took their land. A lot of Aboriginal people died from disease. The blankets disappeared, and there was only a few of us left.

Another student shared the following:

When we read the picture book and did the blanket exercise, I started realizing that residential schools made children lose connections with their family language and what they did to survive like gather food.



Fig. 11.2 Blanket exercise

11.5 Teacher Collaboration

Importantly, our interviews with the collaborating teachers stressed the importance of self-education about Indigenous peoples. In later working sessions as a collaborative effort, they were transformative for themselves as educators and their students. Each day during the unit, teachers met and talked about addressing the missing truths from textbooks and the newly found credible resources they had located.

In Anne's field notes, she discussed ways that teachers shared resources and ideas. In one focus group discussion, teachers shared their concerns about seeking resources and justifying why students were not using just the textbook. These are their responses:

Janette: What I like most is how we shared resources and talked about the respect of knowing the past is important and that this story narrative about Canadian truth and reconciliation must be a part of all of us. We talked about it not... just about content but also what we are... teachers... educators who are apart of this narrative. You know what I mean?

Deirdre: Yes after we talked about *Shi Shi Etko* in class we were in here in the lunchroom asking ourselves did the kids in our classrooms actually get it? You know... that Indigenous children lost their language, culture and families in reality. Francis and I decided to ask the kids "Do you learn everything in school?" "Do you learn some things at home that are also important?". Some of them shared "like how to be respectful", "I appreciate what I got", "I appreciate my family and I am so lucky to be raised like this and be who we are", and "I am safe and my family can protect me". What was the hardest for me was when we were in the talking circle. I was sharing the picture book and they kept asking me if this was "really" their social studies lesson. I told them "Yes, social studies is about the struggles of others and learning about the past to make amends". I showed them the talking stick and reminded them the use of the talking stick is way to listen respectfully to others opinions and ideas and learn how we can make a difference- even now.

Similar to this focus group, we found further interviews with teachers revealed that the unit had been a transformative experience for both students and teachers in making pedagogical decisions in addressing the noted absence of Indigenous history in the curriculum. Indigenous pedagogical practices and Indigenous picture books such as *Shi Shi Etko* made for a transformative experience where children made vital connections. One teacher shared this in our interview:

The children made the connection between being good people and what their parents taught them at home. Parents teach many things such as modelling positive relationships and how to care for your siblings. The children did realize that this explains why some Indigenous families can not take care of their own children because they just don't know how, and because they may have suffered abuse in residential schools

Other children shared how they would feel if they were forced to go to residential school, as recorded in their journals (Fig. 11.3):

If I were taken to a residential school I would feel scared and confused.



Fig. 11.3 Drawing of blanket exercise experience

Another shared:

It would make me feel helpless. . . there are adults that are telling you what to do and if you don't then you get hit.

Through teachers' collaborative practice, these educators found the courage to engage in difficult subject matter. They worked collaboratively to design lessons that included Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. They engaged their students in learning experiences where they had opportunities to explore critical issues and histories of Indigenous peoples through their use of Indigenous children's literature, resources, and dialogue. This was a transformative moment that brought greater understanding, for both teachers and students, about the atrocities experienced by Indigenous people. These learning events brought a new understanding of the historical life realities of Indigenous peoples and the social inequities and social justice avenues that must be journeyed for reconciliation. In our interviews with children, some shared that their parents did not have opportunities to learn about assimilation and the abuse of Indigenous children at the hands of the churches. Others mentioned that their parents sought out more information when they brought home their final research project about Indigenous people in Canada. This project also brought forth a new understanding of some of the classroom children's Indigenous family ancestry. Some were from Inuit and Mi'kmaq backgrounds, a hidden piece of ancestry that was welcomed into this transformational experience.

11.6 Implications for Teaching

Drawing from our own learning experiences with teachers in the study, we explore what it means to use a multiliteracies pedagogical framework to view teachers' approaches to teaching social justice in classrooms. In taking a social justice stance, teachers in this study empower learners by critically understanding the transformative experience when engaging a multiliteracies approach through Indigenous pedagogical practices. In particular, we see how this approach brings new learning and understanding about residential school survivors and the impact on family relationships. When literacy and pedagogical practices are widened to include new meta-languages and new multimodal approaches, we can address the calls of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation report (2015b). We share our findings below:

1. The TRC report can be addressed in a more productive way when school curricula are supported through collaborative practice, shared perspectives, resources, and new pedagogies.
2. Indigenous teaching pedagogies were implemented through collaborative teaching practices using an MLS pedagogy where teachers reflected and critically engaged the four sets of practices as a way forward for social justice teaching and reconciliation
3. Through the use of the MLS pedagogy, teachers could gauge children's learning. Students were positioned as capable critical thinkers and agents of change. Teachers critically framed their teaching to ensure the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, materials, and resources.

11.7 Conclusion

Our chapter considers the collaborative practice that may be implemented with a multiliteracies framework, Indigenous materials, and pedagogical practices. Although this study highlighted the experiences of two teachers sharing the colonial history of Indigenous people, there remains much reconciliation work to be implemented in Canadian classrooms. Some Indigenous youth, in particular, feel that their best interests are not being honored in education systems (Korteweg & Bissell, 2016). They make explicit their desire for education: to incorporate "Indigenous humanity and diversity," colonial history, "Indigenous knowledge, languages, and worldviews" (Dion, 2016). However, school systems have yet to respond to such aspirations (Dion, 2016). To the detriment of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, there is still a lack of curricular content on Indigenous Peoples and histories (Scully, 2012). The latter results in misconceptions among Canadians of Indigenous Peoples' histories and current realities in Canada (Scully, 2012). Education for reconciliation requires educators to respond to the voices of Indigenous youth (Dion, 2016). Reflecting on this, we see the need for educators to learn from and with Indigenous communities and incorporate "territorially and culturally specific

teachings” in their curriculum (Scully, 2012). Using Indigenous knowledge sharing practices, our multiliteracies pedagogical approach can open new possibilities for reconciliation for Indigenous peoples within elementary classrooms.

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Chapter 12

‘Analysis of Policies Supporting Teachers to Tackle Linguistic and Cultural Diversity and Facilitate Inclusion from the Perspectives of Iceland and the Faroe Islands’



Kalpna Vijayarathan-R and Edda Óskarsdóttir



Photographer: Abraham Vijayarathan

Abstract In today's fast changing multicultural societies, governments and organisations must use their agency to ensure the contribution and inclusion of all cultures and ethnicities. A key factor for enabling this is ensuring education plays a leading role in facilitating the creation of an inclusive society. In this context, the education of teachers must be a priority given the reach and impact teachers have on a society. Therefore, teacher education with its role in preparing pre-service teachers for teaching in a multicultural setting is uniquely placed to enable focus on and engender a foundation for enabling inclusivity, equality and social justice in education. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the policy framework needed for preparing preservice teachers to work with learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The aim is to gain knowledge and understanding of how the concepts of inclusion and culturally responsive pedagogy are reflected in teacher education policy in the island nations of Iceland and the Faroe Islands.

Keywords Inclusive pedagogy · Culturally responsive pedagogy · Diversity · Inclusion · Teacher professional development

12.1 Introduction

In today's fast changing multicultural societies, governments and organisations must use their agency to ensure the contribution and inclusion of all cultures and ethnicities. A key factor for enabling this is ensuring education plays a leading role in facilitating the creation of an inclusive society. In this context, the education of teachers must be a priority given the reach and impact teachers have on a society. Therefore, teacher education with its role in preparing pre-service teachers for teaching in a multicultural setting is uniquely placed to enable focus on and engender a foundation for enabling inclusivity, equality and social justice in education.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the policy framework needed for preparing preservice teachers to work with learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The aim is to gain knowledge and understanding of how the concepts of inclusion and culturally responsive pedagogy are reflected in teacher education policy in the island nations of Iceland and the Faroe Islands. Inclusive education is fundamentally grounded in the ideologies of social justice, democracy, human rights, and full participation of all (Black-Hawkins, 2017; Florian, 2009). Culturally responsive pedagogy is a pedagogical approach that aims to achieve student inclusion through focus on their culture, language and experiences (Nieto

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et al., 2008). To that end, we analyse relevant policy documents that influence teacher education to elicit how current policy is guiding the field. The question we aim to answer is: *How does current educational policy influence the development of inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogy in teacher education?*

12.1.1 Why Are We Writing Together?

We met for the first time in Joensuu, Finland, in the UArctic teacher education work group where we discussed the writing of this book. Given our familiarity with each other's cultures and the professional cooperation between the universities, it seemed ideal to jointly write this chapter. The ease with which we could communicate and our interest in the issue made it possible for us to have the conviction that it would be mutually beneficial and interesting for others to have insight into the story of our nations on this topic.

12.1.2 The Differences and Similarities of the Two Nations

The Faroe Islands, nestled in the tempestuous North Atlantic, are a part of the Danish kingdom with self-rule and share much in common with the Danish mainland in educational ethos. Iceland is situated a bit more to the northwest from the Faroe Islands. Iceland used to be a part of the Danish regime but peacefully gained its independence in 1944 and is now a constitutional republic.

In many ways, the Faroe Islands and Iceland are similar given that both are seafaring nations, and our histories are shaped by struggles against nature and survival in the harsh northern climate. Both were settled by the Nordic Vikings mixed with Irish and Scottish blood. Our languages are similar and share the same origin but are today more alike in the written form than in the spoken one. Icelandic and Faroese are the official languages respectively, with Danish being an added official language in The Faroe Islands.

While both countries would fall into the category of being small nation states, Iceland has around 367.000 inhabitants and the Faroe Islands around 52.000 inhabitants. Both nations have through history been monocultural with a homogenous population, but in the last couple of decades this has changed, and immigrants now comprise about 15% of the total Icelandic population (Statistics Iceland, 2020) and 11% of the Faroese population (Statistics Faroe Islands, 2021). This is significant for education and has drawn attention to how schools and teachers can cope with the increased diversity of learners and how teacher education is supporting teachers in working with multiple languages and cultures in their classrooms.

12.1.3 Teacher Education in the Faroe Islands

Teacher education is the oldest course of study in the university and the only one in The Faroe Islands. It celebrated the 150th anniversary of its inception in October 2020. Teacher education is popular in the country, and in recent years has attracted the largest number of applicants with 2020–21 being no exception (setur.fo).

The Faroese teacher education is a four-year 240 ECTS bachelor's degree. It has a three-pronged curriculum as per the course profile for "Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) in Primary and Lower Secondary Education" valid from 2016 (Kunngerð nr. 140, 2009). It comprises general didactics and pedagogy, specialised subject qualification to facilitate teaching of the subjects in primary and lower secondary school only and a practicum that is about a third of the course to be completed in the islands or abroad.

12.1.4 Teacher Education in Iceland

Comprehensive teacher education in Iceland is currently provided at two universities: University of Iceland and University of Akureyri. Since 2008, a 180 ECTS bachelor's degree and a 120 ECTS master's degree is required by law to gain a licence to teach in preschools, grade schools and upper-secondary schools in Iceland. The teacher education program has no centrally defined compulsory core subjects. The teacher education institutions set their own curriculum guidelines for study lines in initial teacher education and determine content areas, competences and learning outcomes. A recent Act on the education, competences and employment of teachers and school administrators includes a specification of the general and specialized knowledge, skills and competences that teachers and school administrators must possess (Lög um menntun 95/2019). This means that the teacher education universities are now in the process of reviewing their programs in accordance with the requirements laid out in the Act.

Looking at the teacher education in both countries, there are similarities and differences as can be expected. The main difference is that the Faroese qualification calls for a Bachelor's degree, while in Iceland, a Master's degree is required for teacher credentials. The Faroese degree qualifies for teaching preschool through to tenth grade, but in Iceland, the degree gives the right to apply for teaching positions at all school levels, from preschool to upper secondary schools.

Given the current demographic composition in both countries, it is useful to explore how educational policy supports inclusive education and culturally responsive pedagogy for equity in education. The aim of this chapter is to investigate how inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogy are reflected in teacher education policies in Iceland and the Faroe Islands.

12.2 Literature Review

Globally, societies are showing a trend towards patterns of multiculturalism and multilingualism. As a response to this diversity, inclusive education has internationally been viewed as a means to promote social cohesion, citizenship and the creation of a more equitable society (Guðjónsdóttir & Óskarsdóttir, 2019).

The emphasis of inclusion in education has moved to meeting the needs of all learners, with all their diversity and differences (Hick & Thomas, 2008). Inclusive education, in this sense, encompasses all learners and places particular focus on those who may be subject to exclusion or marginalisation in schools. It is fundamentally grounded in the ideologies of social justice, democracy, human rights, and full participation of all (Black-Hawkins, 2017; Florian, 2009). This means that inclusive education can be seen broadly as a social justice issue, with a view on the intersectionality of human diversities in relation to ability, gender and sexuality as well as culture, language and socio-economic background. It is grounded in the premise that quality education is a democratic right for all (Crowther et al., 2001; Pantić & Florian, 2015; Reay, 2012).

Social justice in education involves the following four dimensions – educational perspectives from within the context of eliminating structural inequalities for families and communities, developing a community of education through building relationships with various stakeholders, efficacy in teaching to achieve high academic levels, and importantly, creating a foundation on the premise of individual student identity based on culture, languages and experiences to facilitate the creation of an inclusive curriculum (Sleeter, 2015).

Culturally responsive pedagogy is seen as an approach to achieve inclusion and student engagement through a focus on culture, language and experiences (Hersi & Watkinson, 2012; Nieto et al., 2008; Santamaria, 2009; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The strategies that comprise this approach include using student cultural and linguistic resources as enablers rather than barriers to learning. Personal experiences and interests are incorporated to facilitate learning and building on student cultural, linguistic and racial experiences as a basis for interactive and collaborative teaching methods.

Language is key to accessing learning in schools. For immigrant learners, apart from their heritage language, functional proficiency in the majority language is essential for most learning processes, acquiring language skills and interaction with teachers and peers (Nehr, 2001). Florian (2009) identifies that one clear challenge in providing educational equity lies in preparing teachers to cope with teaching diverse learners. Given this difficulty, it would contribute to teacher efficacy to focus on competence building in the areas that may help teachers by both creating awareness and providing pedagogical tools. Howard (2003) explains that a teacher's ability and openness to exploring his or her own attitudes toward diverse students can underpin the commitment to knowledge of one's students and interest in their academic achievement and personal emotional well-being.

Teachers' cultural perspectives and belief systems significantly impact pedagogical approach and decisions (Knopp & Smith, 2005). As purveyors of the dominant culture, teachers may have a perspective that is different from that of their students. Research indicates that one of the challenges in schools is that teacher groups are not as ethnically, linguistically and religiously diverse as student groups (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001; Ragnarsdóttir & Blöndal, 2007). In this context, teachers with immigrant backgrounds may have knowledge and experience of various cultures and understanding of the needs of a diverse group of students. They may be able to create the inclusive space, where immigrant experiences provide a platform for building critical perspectives, respect and regard for what the teacher and student bring to learning (Rodríguez-Valls & Ponce, 2013). Where teachers are from the dominant culture, they may benefit from working with teachers from diverse backgrounds to gain an understanding and awareness of immigrant experience and the importance of an inclusive approach to teaching. Gay (2010) is convinced that the power of caring is one of the fundamental features of culturally responsive teaching as evidenced by teacher attitudes, expectations and their behaviour towards students. So, teacher contribution to creating a culture of respect and acceptance may encourage students' sense of belonging and security in the learning environment, thereby promoting learning.

There is an agreement among educators that the aim of teacher education is to eliminate educational inequalities among people with various socio-economic backgrounds and ethnic identities (Zeichner, 2010). Teacher education needs to include promoting an understanding of the macrocosmic social forces that lead to exclusion and inequality (Slee, 2010). To inculcate this spirit, proper guidance, support and knowledge must be woven into the very ethos of teacher education by providing the necessary tools to transfer theory into praxis. The way forward for teacher education is then to entrench the values of equity, inclusion and social justice in educational discourse and action for their pre-service teachers.

12.3 Methodology

Given the situation in both the countries, it is relevant to explore what policies and frameworks exist and have to be developed to ensure that education benefits all learners, including those of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. To gain a deeper understanding of the situation, we analysed relevant official documents in the two countries to get an insight into how current policy is guiding praxis in inclusive education. Documents can provide a way of tracing developments and change (Bowen, 2009), as well as assist with detecting meaning, develop deeper understanding, and uncover new insights into to the research problem (Merriam, 2009). The data were selected using a systematic procedure for reviewing various forms of printed or electronic documents.

When choosing the documents for review, it was first of all important for us to consider the difference in the number of documents available between the countries

(Bowen, 2009). In order to give a comparable account, we needed to match the documents and choose those that have similar roles in each country regarding teacher education. These documents give an overview of the government policy discussing the matter of how pre-service teachers are prepared to work with learners with diverse language and cultural backgrounds. In the case of The Faroe Islands, personal verbal and written communication with stakeholders, who hold key positions as dean in the Faculty of Faroese at The University of The Faroe Islands and the Head for Child and Youth Affairs in the Torshavn Municipality respectively, are included where formal documentation is unavailable. Table 12.1 gives an account of the documents selected for analysis, how they are referred to in the text and the criteria for choosing them.

Table 12.1 Overview of documents selected for analysis

Country	Type of document	Document	Criteria for choosing
The Faroe Islands	Legal acts	The Faroese Education Act of 1997- revised in 2005 and 2019 – Referenced as (Løgtingslóg nr. 125 fólkaskúlan, 1997)	Selected as they provide the policy frame within which schools and teachers operate.
	Executive order	Executive order no.140 for The University of The Faroe Islands with specific reference to Faculty of Education from Nov 2009 – referenced as (Kunngerð nr. 140, 2009)	Selected as they provide the policy frame within which the university faculty operates.
	Executive order	Executive order no.144 on Teaching Faroese as a second language and Heritage Teaching Oct 2020 – referenced as (Kunngerð nr. 144, 2020)	Selected as they provide the policy frame within which schools and teachers operate for teaching Faroese as a second language.
Iceland	Legal acts	The compulsory school Act – Referenced in text as (Lög um grunnskóla, 2008) Act on the education, competences and employment of teachers and principals at pre-school, compulsory and upper-secondary schools - referenced as (Lög um menntun, 2019)	Selected as they provide the policy frame within which schools and teachers operate.
	Draft policy	Draft policy for the education of children and youth with diverse linguistic and cultural background - referenced in text as (Mennta- og menningamálaráðuneyti, 2020)	Information about the policy vision on education of learners with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
	National curriculum	The national curriculum, 2011. referenced as (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2011)	Selected as it provides the policy frame within which schools and teachers operate.

The analytical process of document analysing involves finding, selecting, making sense of and synthesising the data that each document contains. Document analysis generates data that are organised into major themes and categories (Labuschagne, 2003). As we started our document analysis, we skimmed the documents selected for the study and marked the content that was related to our research question. This was a collaborative study, but as we began our analysis, we needed to do the first round individually as the documents were only available in either Faroese or Icelandic. After this first round of reading, we compared our markings and developed the categories and themes that emerged from the data. Our next step was carefully reading the documents in our respective languages, taking every marking for discussion and examination, interpreting and organising the information into categories related to our question. These categories will be introduced in the section on findings.

The study covers the policies influencing teacher education in Iceland and Faroe Islands. The intention is to explore if and how the policy environment in each country is geared towards supporting pre-service teachers for working with learners with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

12.4 Findings from the Document Analysis

Findings reveal differences in the policy approach to inclusive education between the two countries. The following sections are organised by country with the themes applicable to them. The different policy stances reflect political will, commitment and focus of the two nations.

12.4.1 Policy Findings from the Faroe Islands

The two themes for The Faroe Islands comprise status of policies on inclusive education and teacher preparation for inclusive education. Firstly, status of policies discusses the overall educational framework for the nation and secondly, for the Faculty of Education. The preparation of teachers for working with diversity deals with the policy on facilitation of teaching Faroese as a second language and access for immigrant children to heritage language teaching.

12.4.1.1 The Status of Policies

At first glance, the policy stance for education outlined in the Act (Løgtingslóg nr. 125 fólkaskúlan, 1997) appears to be unequivocal in acknowledging that all children have a right to education. It clearly states that education is for every single student from pre-school, primary to secondary levels. On perusing this Act for the

phrase “inclusive education” or the inherent concepts with a view to identifying policy stance, it becomes evident that these find no mention. The inclusion of students with special needs came in with the 2005 modification of this act.

Subsequent modifications to the Act (Løgtingslóg nr. 125 fólkaskúlan, 1997) in 2019 indicate that only non-ethnic Faroese pre-school children are declared to have the right to Faroese teaching, but this is yet to be practised (B. Hovgaard, personal communication, Nov 24, 2020). This document does not include strategic focus on diversity or inclusion in the context of immigrant students in the compulsory schools or any other group.

Intensive reading of the executive order for policy governing teacher education (Kunngerð nr. 140, 2009), revealed no overt mention of inclusive education. In § 6: 2, it is specified that pre-service teachers should acquire competence to teach in a manner that ensures individual students develop given their personal circumstances. In § 6.3, it is mentioned that pre-service teachers must be taught to cooperate with everyone who has responsibility for the development of all children in school in a changing society. This is perhaps the closest the document comes to acknowledging individual value and worth of students. This executive order lacks key terms and insight into concepts like diversity, inclusion or focus on preparing pre-service teachers for an inclusive approach to teaching.

With regard to status of policies, it would be fair and correct to say that educational policy does not exhibit an awareness of the important facets of inclusive education. This is evidenced by the lack of reference to it in the documents, and thereby, may indicate a lack of awareness of the need to prioritise inclusive education through informed and clear guidelines. Therefore, the policies may be categorised as being in the nascent stage, see definition in K. Vijayarathan Chap. 1 of this book, as the assumption is that these issues may be given due importance once the law on integration has been passed.

12.4.1.2 Teacher Preparation for Working with Diversity

With regard to teacher education, the executive order for Teaching Faroese as a second language and heritage language teaching (Kunngerð nr. 144, 2020) states in section §3.4 that teachers of Faroese as a second language should have experience in teaching in this field and a high degree of competence in Faroese and English or other foreign languages as appropriate for the linguistic background of the children they will be teaching.

The University has now been tasked with creating a course for in-service teachers on teaching of Faroese as a second language by qualifying them in second language learning and teaching (B.D. Hansen, personal communication, Nov 9, 2020). At the time of writing, formal documentation is being formulated and a working group has commenced designing the course. As funding issues too are undecided, currently one can say a plan is in the pipeline for designing a 60 ECTS course divided into four sessions of 15 ECTS for in-service teachers to commence in autumn of 2021 (B.D. Hansen, personal communication, Jan 13, 2021).

This executive order (Kunngerð nr.144, 2020) makes no mention of the word ‘inclusive’ education in schooling and focuses on schooling children in Faroese and Faroese culture. As discussed in Chap. 1, it does mention access to heritage language teaching for immigrant students. They could be exempted from other subjects, except Faroese and Mathematics, to have classes in heritage language and knowledge of heritage culture. This makes it the only government policy to date that deals with inclusion of non-ethnic students in the compulsory school. Crucially, it acknowledges that in-service teachers must be qualified and experienced specifically to teach this target group or be in the process of doing so.

There is an inherent contradiction in demanding experienced teachers in the foreign language teaching field and accepting teachers who are in the process of acquiring this qualification, especially because the course for teachers on teaching Faroese as a second language is yet to be designed. As mentioned in Chap. 1, the course is set to commence in the autumn of 2021. The teacher ‘upgrading’ referred to in the document appears unrealistic given the short time frame, justifiably raising concerns regarding its efficacy.

As the executive order (Kunngerð nr.144, 2020) allows immigrant students to be taught in their heritage language, it has set in place a policy that has been decided at the strategic level, i.e., the political level. In contrast to the detailed account of how schools can organise the teaching of Faroese as a second language, there are no operational plans for teacher preparation or pedagogical instructions on how to implement heritage language teaching of over 50 different languages currently represented in the islands.

12.4.2 Policy Findings from Iceland

The two themes discussed for Iceland are the status of policies and teacher preparation. Within the category of status of policies, the issues of the right to learn Icelandic as a second language and the right to education in heritage languages is discussed. Under the theme teacher preparation, the issues of teacher education are discussed.

12.4.2.1 The Status of Policies

The main educational policy in Iceland is inclusion rather than segregation, as stated in official policies since 2008. According to the laws that govern different educational levels, all students are entitled to an equal education at the preschool, compulsory, and upper secondary school levels (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2011). Schools are expected to provide all students with access to appropriate teaching and learning regardless of their physical or mental capabilities, emotional or social situation or linguistic development. The recent policy draft for the education of children and youth with diverse linguistic and cultural

background emphasises that multicultural education, which celebrates diversity and is based on the resources and strengths of children and young people, should be the hallmark of the school system in future education policy (Mennta og menningamálaráðuneyti, 2020).

The documents analysed for the purpose of this study all emphasise the importance of achieving competence in Icelandic as a second or additional language for learners with immigrant backgrounds as a precondition for taking active part in the society, for acquiring knowledge in school and supporting further education and participation in workplaces (Lög um grunnskóla, 2008; Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2011; Mennta- og menningamálaráðuneyti, 2020). While the national curriculum guide has a section on Icelandic as an additional language that provides criteria for competence, there are no specific guidelines for teachers or schools as to how this should be carried out in practice. Research has shown that this lack of guidance for schools and teachers has led to a disparity between municipalities and schools in the quality and quantity of support this group of students receives (Daníelsdóttir & Skogland, 2018). One main root of this disparity is that financing policies are not the same in all municipalities and thus create different rules for how many hours are allocated for support, who is supported and for how long.

The national curriculum states that it is important to offer students with an immigrant background education in their own language so that they have an opportunity to learn their heritage language, its literature and culture (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2011). There are no guidelines provided on how to implement this vision, however the parents are mentioned as the key persons in making sure their children learn their heritage language and they should be encouraged and supported in 'emphasizing linguistic upbringing at home by nurturing the pupil's heritage language' (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2011, p. 105). Research has shown that immigrant students seem to have limited opportunities to use their languages in education and some have experienced negative attitudes towards its use in school (Einarsdóttir & Emilsson Peskova, 2019; Ragnarsdóttir & Hama, 2018; Tran & Lefever, 2018).

12.4.2.2 Teacher Preparation for Working with Diversity

According to the draft policy for the education of children and youth with a diverse language and cultural background, the Icelandic school system seems to have difficulty accommodating children and youth with a foreign linguistic and cultural background (Mennta- og menningamálaráðuneyti, 2020). Overall, their school outcomes are worse than their peers and the results from the 2015 PISA test underpin this (OECD, 2019). Other statistics show that there is cause for concern for this group of students as they are less likely to graduate from upper secondary school, have a poorer social status and feel worse at school (Ragnarsdóttir & Lefever, 2018). Furthermore, research has shown that many teachers consider themselves ill-equipped to teach this group of students and find it difficult to tailor schoolwork to their needs (Ólafsson, 2019).

The national curriculum guide describes the teachers' roles in teaching diverse groups of students in aspirational terms with an emphasis on meeting the needs of students, a focus on equity and employing diverse teaching and evaluation methods to accommodate students (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2011). Teachers have found it challenging to translate these terms into pedagogical praxis to fulfil curricular demands (Óskarsdóttir, 2017).

The draft policy suggests a new emphasis in the overall school policy to ensure that the pedagogy of teaching students with diverse language and cultural backgrounds is an intrinsic part of the basic education of all teachers and others working with children and youth (Mennta- og menningamálaráðuneytið, 2020). Furthermore, it is suggested that efforts should be made to systematically increase the number of pre-service teachers with an immigrant background (Mennta- og menningamálaráðuneytið, 2020) which could be problematic for some as the explicit requirement set forth in the act on teacher competences is that a basic competence for teachers is to have the ability to teach in Icelandic (Lög um menntun, 2019).

12.5 Discussions

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings and the policy framework needed for preparing preservice teachers to teach and work with learners with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds in Iceland and the Faroe Islands. This section is arranged in three parts. The first two focus respectively on the similarities and differences in the educational policy environment between the countries and the third on the implications for policy development in education for each country.

12.5.1 *Similarities*

The countries share a common perspective that appears to influence policy decision making. Both societies perceive their languages as being under threat of extinction, because of the vulnerability of being a small group of speakers with heavy influence of English (Iceland and The Faroe Islands) and Danish (The Faroe Islands), and therefore, the policy stance is reactionist and protectionist. This may be unwittingly contributing to the exclusion of meaningful participation of immigrants in society and their professional development. This may also have implications for the recruitment of pre-service teachers with immigrant backgrounds, teaching of the languages as additional languages and the role of heritage languages in education.

Currently, there is no provision for immigrant pre-service teachers to be able to teach if they do not pass Faroese in the teacher education course. The stipulation that teaching must be in Faroese, except in foreign language teaching, set out in the Education Act (Løgtingslóg nr. 125, 1997) is yet to be reviewed in the light of promoting inclusion or how this precludes immigrant pre-service teachers from

offering their competence to students in an inclusive setting. This implies that their knowledge of coping with linguistic and cultural diversity, and the challenges of learning a foreign language as immigrants cannot be used actively in the learning environment (Ladson-Billings, 2001). This situation is similar in Iceland, although steps have been taken to discuss *how* teacher students with immigrant background, not fully proficient in Icelandic, can acquire teacher education credentials.

In both countries, there is call for review of the curriculum so that guidelines on Icelandic or Faroese as a second language are similar to those provided for other language instruction. In this context, in the Faroe Islands, The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), is being used to design the course. As access to education and society is dependent on knowledge of the dominant language, every effort must be made to ensure functional proficiency in the language for immigrant students.

Our findings indicate that educational policy in both countries appears ill-equipped to support schools to work systematically with students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Culturally responsive pedagogy requires a focus on individual student culture, languages and experiences (Sleeter, 2015). Many teachers at the compulsory school level are insecure about allowing students to use their heritage language in school, especially as it is stated in the national curriculum guide for both countries that the official languages should be the language of instruction (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2011; Løgtingslóg nr. 125, 1997).

12.5.2 Difference in Emphasis Between Countries

The main difference in policy between the countries lies in the reference to inclusive education. In Iceland, the focus on inclusive education in policies is aimed at meeting the needs of all students in compulsory schools, while in the Faroe Islands, although it is also aimed at all students, the focus on 'inclusive' appears to be an addendum.

The fundamental lack of perspective of 'inclusive education' as including immigrants in policy documents in The Faroe Islands indicates that this crucial concept does not underpin educational policy design. This leads to a lack of awareness of how culturally responsive pedagogy can usefully inform the approach to teaching. The implementation stage of the policy is yet to commence. In Iceland, the emphasis on inclusive education has been visible in policy since 2008, but the implementation is still ongoing. Awareness of immigrant students is high in the policy documents, although the emphasis on culturally responsive pedagogy is not as clear. Efforts are being made to ensure that new policies include this focus.

12.5.3 Implications for Policy Development

A possible value exists in analysing the origin of policy making in heritage language teaching. In recent years, in both countries, discourse in the media about the importance of offering quality official language teaching to this target group has created pressure for policy making in the field. Policy creation appears to be a reactive response to a political development regarding integration of immigrants perceived as assimilation, rather than a focused, planned stance on education for second/foreign language learners.

The marked absence of the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy in both countries, and the lack of importance given to inclusive education, when it comes to immigrant students in the Faroese policy, suggest that policy has been formulated to ‘hit the ground running’, i.e., an operational goal without the underpinning strategic focus or tactical depth. This might be an indication of policy formulation and implementation being near simultaneous, which might potentially impact implementation.

If implementation is not planned, then according to Dyer (1999), it may not only lead to a resistance to the policies and have unforeseen results but promote *ad hoc* changes that may undermine the efficacy of the policies. The assurance for heritage language teaching for immigrant children expressed for both countries underplays logistic and resource challenges as the number of heritage languages represented in this group is high. Hope (2002) cautions that insufficient time for implementation, availability of resources, commitment from the top and motivation may pose significant barriers to policies being successful.

While the policies could be interpreted as accommodating immigrant education, the lack of focus on key factors related to this issue implies insufficient knowledge of and understanding of how to formulate overall pertinent policy. A well-planned, informed policy, with a realistic implementation time frame may serve speakers of other languages in learning Faroese/Icelandic and benefit them. It would provide the educational system time, and the wherewithal to be prepared for the fundamental changes involved.

12.6 Conclusions

The island nations of The Faroe Islands and Iceland have registered a marked surge in immigrant population, and their policy environment appears to be struggling to keep abreast of the developments. There are some indications that policies in both countries may be on the right track to support inclusion of students of immigrant origins. While implementation has commenced to some extent, enough has not been done to ensure that teachers can be supported for adopting the principles and approaches of inclusive and culturally responsive education. Iceland, with its larger population, has come further in policy development. This may provide The Faroe

Islands the opportunity to learn from Iceland, while mitigating the pitfalls Iceland has experienced in implementation.

The sensitivity in our countries about the perceived status of Faroese and Icelandic as endangered languages complicates issues. It undermines the value of heritage language teaching and leads to a lack of recognition of its vital contribution to the development of immigrant students. The policies focus on protecting the languages instead of understanding the value of heritage languages as meaningful resources for students. Perhaps, the latter attitude would contribute to the dynamism of both the languages to mirror the changes in society.

To ensure equity in education, teacher education policies need to have an explicit focus on inclusive education and culturally responsive pedagogy. This would prepare pre-service teachers for working in schools with diverse groups of students, no matter their origin or cultural background. Furthermore, the policies must consider the importance of bringing people with immigrant backgrounds into teacher education programs and find flexible means to offer accreditation to those already having teacher licences from other countries.

Socially just societies build on giving everyone a voice, equal access to education and respect for individual identity and ability (Sleeter, 2015). Given this perspective, the role of language is significant as a vehicle for having agency in society and a portal to learning and knowledge. Therefore, teacher education has a dual responsibility - firstly, to prepare the pre-service teachers to meet the requirements for inclusive education, and secondly, to offer quality teaching in the official language as pivotal for immigrant inclusion in society.

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Chapter 13

A Walk on the Wild Side – On the Motivation of Immigrant Workers to Provide Public Service in Greenland



Benedikte Brincker and Lene Holm Pedersen



Photographer: Diane Hirshberg

Abstract This chapter explores the recruitment and turnover of a particular type of immigrant workers, namely, school teachers in Greenland. The central research question is: What are the motivational bases for recruitment and turnover of school teachers, comparing the West and East coast of Greenland? A wider discussion is whether particular motivational forms are worth fostering in the educational sector in Greenland, and if they may hold a potential for mitigating some of the recruitment problems the educational sector in Greenland is facing. The chapter focuses in particular on three motivational forms: Public Service Motivation, Sense of Community/Sense of Community Responsibility, and “excitement motivation”. By exploring their potential for mitigating turnover among school teachers in Western and Eastern Greenland, the chapter offers insights into how motivational forms interact and overlap. This insight may help practitioners actively mitigate turnover among school teachers and underlines the potential that lies in the intersection between public management and community psychology for both practitioners and researchers.

Keywords Greenland · Motivational forms · Teacher recruitment · Teacher turnover · Qualitative research

13.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the recruitment and turnover of a particular type of immigrant workers, namely, school teachers in Greenland. The central research question is: What are the motivational bases for recruitment and turnover of school teachers comparing the West and East coast of Greenland? A wider discussion is whether particular motivational forms are worth fostering in the educational sector in Greenland, and if they may hold a potential for mitigating some of the recruitment problems the educational sector in Greenland is facing.

The recruitment of teachers is a salient societal problem in Greenland. For years, the country has struggled to address and do away with a competence gap, which stifles the labor market. The competence gap that confronts Greenland means that employers demand skills that are not – or only to a limited extent – present in the labor force in Greenland. As a consequence, employers recruit staff internationally, most notably from Denmark. This also pertains to school headmasters, especially those in peripheral areas of Greenland, who turn to Denmark to recruit trained teachers.

Job motivation is central to the recruitment of a qualified work force. A number of motivational factors may be of importance here, and in this chapter we focus on other-oriented versus self-oriented motivational forms on the one hand and motivational forms which are addressing a specific versus an abstract referent on the other

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Table 13.1 Dimensional framework: PSM, SOC-R, SOC and EM

Employee motivation referent	Self-oriented	Other-oriented
Specific referent	Sense of community (SOC)	Sense of community responsibility (SOC-R)
Abstract referent	Excitement motivation (EM)	Public service motivation (PSm)

(see Table 13.1). Public Service Motivation (PSM) is an other-regarding motivational form defined as “an individual’s orientation to delivering services to people with a purpose to do good for others and society” (Perry & Hondeghem, 2008). This motivational form has proved to be important both to recruitment and performance in the public sector in a number of Western welfare states, and indeed also in the educational sector (Andersen et al., 2014; Ritz et al., 2016). The argument is that people seek employment, where they expect to find a fit between their motivation and the job-content and organizational goals, and hence employees with high PSM will seek employment in jobs providing public service.

Recently, community psychology has attracted attention as a related field working with other-regarding motivational forms such as sense of community responsibility (SOC-R) and sense of community (SOC). It holds a potential to cross-fertilize the field of public management and contribute with an understanding of how community settings matter, which may potentially add to the understanding of how pro-social motivational forms matter to public service provision. Studies are being produced on how PSM, SOC-R and SOC interact in relation to employee engagement and well-being (Boyd et al., 2018), collaborative leadership behaviour (Nowell et al., 2016), and political leadership behaviour (Pedersen et al., 2020). These studies argue that SOC-R and SOC may shed light on the way community experience can be used in public service settings (Boyd et al., 2018).

This is an important issue, which we aim to take one step further by exploring the variation between the center and the periphery, since much – if not all – public service provision takes place in organizations and local communities. It is, however, not evident that it is prosocial motivational forms which make people take on the provision of service under challenging circumstances. Extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors are both likely to be important explanatory factors (Brincker & Pedersen, 2020). One particular type of intrinsic motivation which has proved to be important to the recruitment of personnel to urgent tasks, such as going to war, is “excitement motivation” (Brænder, 2016). Now, without claiming any resemblance between being a soldier in war and being a school teacher in Greenland, this motivational form may still be worth paying attention to as excitement – as well as PSM – may be relevant to the recruitment of in particular immigrant school teachers, if they perceive to Greenland as remote and adventurous place.

Remoteness is often an aspect of what people perceive to be an authentic place, and furthermore authenticity can increase motivation and employability (Petersen, 2011: 21–23). Therefore, the case studied is the recruitment of school teachers in the

Municipality of Sermersooq in Greenland. Geographically the municipality encompasses both some of the most remote and some of the most populated areas in Greenland, that is the capital Nuuk located at the West coast of Greenland and the main town in Eastern Greenland called Tasiilaq. As the cases are located in the same municipality they share a number of similarities with respect to governance structures and regulation. However, the two locations vary on the center-periphery dimension. While Nuuk, being the capital, is centrally placed in Greenland, Tasiilaq is much more remotely located on the East coast of Greenland. Thus, the research that this chapter reports upon is a comparative case study between recruitment and turnover in Nuuk, i.e., the center, and recruitment and turnover in Tasiilaq, i.e., the periphery. The central claim is that attraction to adventure is a more relevant motivational form in the periphery than the center. The periphery Tasiilaq is seen as an extreme. If attraction to motivation is not present here, it is unlikely that it holds a potential for recruitment in other remote locations.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. First, the paper engages with the theoretical framework, focusing on Public Service Motivation (PSM), Sense of Community Responsibility (SOC-R), Sense of Community (SOC), and excitement motivation (EM). Thereafter, it unfolds the methodological considerations that underlie the research that informs this chapter and offers insights into the data and how it was collected and analysed. This paves the way into the analysis that is in two parts: the first part concentrates on recruitment, the second on turnover, in West and East Greenland respectively. Finally, the paper briefly sums up its findings.

13.2 Concepts and Theory

In motivational research a central distinction is between *self-oriented and other-oriented motivation*. Recently, this has been supplemented with the distinction between the recipient as being identified versus un-identified. Whereas PSM researchers refer to the recipient as a ‘beneficiary’, we employ the term ‘referent’ to signify that albeit there is no beneficiary of self-oriented motivation, its fulfilment still takes place in an interplay with the external environment (Schott et al., 2019; Vandenabeele et al., 2018).

In line with this we make a distinction between four motivational forms (Brincker & Pedersen, 2020), see Table 13.1.

13.2.1 *Sense of Community (SOC) and Sense of Community Responsibility (SOC-R)*

SOC is defined as a feeling that members have of belonging, that they matter to one another and to the group, and that they have a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). For

SOC to be present, individuals have to both acknowledge their membership in the community and have it acknowledged by others. Individuals have to experience that their needs are fulfilled and that they can influence the collective. This is captured in the four sub-dimensions of SOC: membership, influence, needs fulfilment, and shared emotional connection (Nowell & Boyd, 2010; Boyd & Nowell, 2014). SOC-R has been formulated as an alternative conceptualization due to the limitations associated with a purely need-based approach to a psychological sense of community (Nowell & Boyd, 2010). SOC-R draws on alternative complementary perspectives that ascribe significance to values, norms, and feelings of responsibility towards others, and is defined as ‘a feeling of personal responsibility for the individual and collective well-being of a community of people not directly rooted in an expectation of personal gain’ (Nowell et al., 2016). SOC and SOC-R constitute two distinct models that reflect different theoretical traditions, which taken in combination offer a more complete understanding of psychological senses of community, but also share the understanding that a specific referent can be a motivational force also for other-regarding behaviors.

13.2.2 PSM

PSM has four sub-dimensions (Perry, 1996). First, attraction to public policy making (APP), a form of instrumental motivation, is directed at doing good for others through influencing organizational decision-making and implementation in order to build better framework conditions for public service. Second, commitment to the public interest (CPI) is a normative form of motivation, which refers to actions generated by efforts to conform to values and norms (Kim et al., 2013). Third, identification with a specific group is the core of affective reasons, and compassion (COM) is the dimension of PSM that is based on this type of reason (Andersen & Pedersen, 2013:841–842; Kim & Vandenabeele, 2010). The fourth dimension, self-sacrifice, serves as the footing and accelerator of the other three (Kim et al., 2013). Compared to SOC and SOC-R the referent of PSM is society or societal groups at a general level rather than specific communities, i.e., the referent of PSM is abstract and is often coined by referring to ‘the public good’ (Brincker & Pedersen, 2020).

13.2.3 Excitement Motivation (EM)

EM draws attention to the fulfilment of inner needs and can as such be seen as an intrinsic motivational factor. This is reflected in behavior as “people engage in the activity for its own sake, that is, because they experience the activity as inherently enjoyable and satisfying” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 56). EM emerges in studies of soldiers’ motivation when deployed to war zones (Brænder, 2016; Brænder & Andersen, 2013). This research points to the significance of EM to the recruitment of personnel

for urgent tasks. EM lies conceptually close to what psychologists call sensation seeking – that is “the need for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences, and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experiences” (Zuckerman et al., 1978). As this definition confuses causes and effect, Brænder defines EM as the desire for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences (Brænder, 2016, p. 4). Based upon two surveys conducted with Danish combat soldiers before and after their return to Helmand, Afghanistan, Morten Brænder detected that many were eager either to serve in Afghanistan again or to be deployed in similar areas under similar circumstances. The latter includes the danger of combat exposure. Additionally, the data indicated that the likelihood of accepting another deployment of the same type increased with the degree of combat exposure. Hence, Brænder observed a direct proportional relationship between combat exposure and deployment. It seemed that much to his disbelief soldiers returned wanting more (Brænder, 2016, p. 3). In search for a persuasive argument for why this is the case, Brænder turns to behavioral psychology and argues that much like real drug addicts develop a tolerance to their drug, soldiers can become ‘adrenalin junkies’ who move on to ‘the next fix’ when the excitement fades over time (Brænder, 2016; Andersen & Pedersen, 2013). In line with this, EM may hold the potential of recruiting personnel to remote areas in the periphery that may appear to involve adventure and excitement for many reasons, their remoteness being one of them.

13.2.4 Center and Periphery

The distinction between center and periphery has been employed by scholars from many different disciplines within social and political science and it has been applied to many different cases and contexts. The aim of the distinction is to capture internal differences and divisions within a country or a region in terms of economic development or lack thereof, socio-economic conditions, culture and so on. Hence, it is employed as an analytical tool to unfold internal boundaries within a region or a country.

When applying the distinction to Greenland, the country stands out as an extreme case. Greenland is the largest island in the world. It is inhabited by approximately 55.000 people who live along the coastal line with a predominance of settlements on the west coast. This includes 17.000 people living in the capital Nuuk, Greenland’s largest city, and another approximately 16.000 people residing in the four major cities north or south of Nuuk or in the Disco Bay area: Sisimiut (5500), Ilulissat (4500), Aasiaat (3100) and Manitsoq (2600). In sharp contrast, the entirety of Eastern Greenland is populated by only 3000 people, 2000 of whom live in the city of Tasiilaq. With the structural reform in 2009, the capital Nuuk and the entire region of Eastern Greenland was merged into one municipality – one of the largest in the world – which encompasses the very center of Greenland, i.e., the capital Nuuk, and the most remote and poorly developed periphery, i.e., Tasiilaq and Illorqoortormiut (Brincker, 2017).

Given that the center/periphery distinction is extremely pronounced in Greenland and especially in the Sermersooq Municipality, it is highly relevant to explore if, and if so how, it impacts motivation for recruitment and turnover among school teachers. However, the distinction should not be taken lightly. Critics have raised concerns that the distinction between center and periphery should not be considered an ontological phenomenon. Rather it should be seen as a social construction that perpetuates the categories of insider and outsider that it merely seeks to describe. Rather than reflecting existing boundaries, it contributes to their construction within a region or, in this case, a country (Brubaker, 2004; Malesevic, 2010). These concerns are important to keep in mind when using the distinction between center and periphery in an analysis of the role of motivation for recruitment and turnover. While they are relevant and important to keep in mind, it is equally important to recognize the fact that in the case of Greenland, the on-going social construction of internal divisions between insider and outsider are accentuated by geographical distance, a poor physical infrastructure which makes travelling between center (West) and periphery (East) very costly, and finally, language (Brincker, 2017).

13.3 Method and Expectations

In line with the interpretivist tradition, we do not aim to falsify the existence of particular motivational forms. The qualitative data collected is simply not suited for such falsification. Instead, we formulate expectations, which make our theoretical concepts and preconceptions explicit and which guide our qualitative analysis in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the motivational dimensions, and how they interact in processes of attraction and attrition.

The following expectations summarize the discussion above:

- (A) If employees expect that a certain job fits to their motivation (EM, PSM, SOC and/or SOC-R), they are attracted to this job.
- (B) If employees feel that their job fulfils at least one of their motivational needs (regarding EM, PSM, SOC and/or SOC-R) retention is achieved.
- (C) The motivational factors vary between the center and the periphery.

13.3.1 Research Design and Data

The comparative study between West Sermersooq (Nuuk) and East Sermersooq (Tasiilaq) that informs this paper was conducted from August 2014 until May 2017. In Nuuk, four schools out of a total of six took part. They were selected according to criteria ensuring that they covered both the so-called old part of Nuuk, i.e., the highly urbanized center, and the new satellites, i.e., the suburbs. Furthermore, the four schools include state schools and a private school. In Tasiilaq there is only one

school. In order to ensure the quality of the data collected at the school in Tasiilaq, we visited the school twice a year, i.e., in the beginning and in the end of the school year in 2014, 2015 and 2016. In so doing, we gained a unique insight into processes of and the motivational basis for recruitment and turnover at the school.

The study is exploratory and relies predominantly upon qualitative methods. It combines interviews with school managements and teachers, interviews with parents to school children, a mini-survey (in the first grade at Tasiilaq School (2014)) and finally class room observations (for details see Table 13.1). The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended. The shortest interview lasted 1 hour, and the longest, 2 hours. All interviews were conducted using an interview guide. The first section of the guide explored attraction and started out with the question: Why did you decide to take a position at Tasiilaq School? This was followed by queries about hopes and expectations associated with the position, and then a set of questions focusing on attrition enquiring whether the interviewee had – or had not – considered turnover and the reason for (not) doing so. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interviews were conducted in Danish except the interviews conducted in the context of the mini-survey among parents to first grade pupils at Tasiilaq School, which were carried out with the help of an East Greenlandic translator. The use of the Danish language as the working language reflects the fact that Danish is the first foreign language in Greenland and that education in Greenland from upper secondary school is conducted in Danish.

Besides relying upon qualitative data, the insights presented in the present paper are informed by descriptive statistics from Greenland Statistics and a number of reports by the Danish Institute for Evaluation (EVA) about the educational system in Greenland which were published in the past few years. Furthermore, the paper is informed by the annual reports submitted by state schools to the Sermersooq Municipality at the end of every school year. The reports from schools in Sermersooq Municipality are publicly available on the website of the municipality (www.sermersooq.gl) (Table 13.2).

In analyzing the interviews, a two step coding approach was adopted using NVivo. First, the transcribed interviews went through an inductive coding process in which the four topics were identified: recruitment and turnover; teaching languages; social problems; and professional expertise and support. For the purpose of

Table 13.2 Overview of data

Schools	Management interview	Teacher interview	Parents interview	Class room observation	Annual reports
West Sermersooq – Nuuk					
4 schools	4	4	5	2	2014–2017
East Sermersooq – Tasiilaq					
1 school	5 ^a	15	Mini-survey	4	2014-2017

^aThe high number of management interviews in Tasiilaq reflects the fact that the school has a relatively high level of turn over among managers – 5 in the period 2014–2017

the present analysis, the topic of recruitment and turnover was analysed in depth. It went through a second deductive coding, which was conceptually guided and informed by the theoretical framework of this paper. In doing this, it became apparent that the significance and weight ascribed to recruitment and turnover varies from school to school. In some cases, recruitment and turnover are on-going concerns that the management of the school pays attention to and handles. In other schools, they are extremely pertinent and pressing challenges that confront and at times disturb management, teachers and students every day. This led to the formulation of the overall expectation that the motivational forms relevant to recruitment and turnover vary between center and periphery.

Before turning to the analysis, it is important to acknowledge a number of limitations in method and data which are common to qualitative studies. Even though the interviews are repeated in the East Greenland case, and have all been conducted by the same investigator, it is still a small sample of the population. Furthermore, in the present analysis, the sample is treated as one uniform group and in the reporting we have not stratified the interviewees according to nationality, regional identity, gender, or early/late career. In this context, it is important to recognize that the sample reflects the fact that Tasiilaq school relies to a large extent upon teachers recruited from Denmark. This is not the case with the schools in Nuuk. The difference in sample between East and West Greenland may affect the findings of this study, especially with respect to the presence/absence of excitement motivation. We explore this elsewhere (Brincker & Pedersen, 2020).

13.4 Analysis

The following analysis presents the result. The first section explores recruitment. It is divided into two parts. The first part explores motivation in the center (Nuuk) and the periphery (Tasiilaq) respectively. The second part takes the analysis to the conceptual level. It explores if and if so how types of motivation, i.e., PSM and excitement motivation, constitute contrasts. This is followed by the second section that analyses turnover and engages with SOC and SOC-R as possible mitigating factors.

13.4.1 Analysis I: Why Do Teachers Seek Employment in West/East Greenland?

Analysis 4.1.1: Being Motivated in Nuuk and Tasiilaq (Table 13.3)

When analyzing the data from the school in Tasiilaq, two types of motivation stand out: attraction to adventure and compassion as a central component of PSM. The attraction to adventure is intimately linked to the remote and peripheral nature of Eastern Greenland. It captures the excitement stemming from going sailing, dog

Table 13.3 Motivation in Nuuk and Tasiilaq

	Nuuk	Tasiilaq
Attraction to adventure	—	×
Attraction to pub. policy making	×	—
Commitment to pub. interest	×	—
Compassion	—	×
Self-sacrifice	×	×

sledging during winter, and even having your own pack of dogs, which several of the interviewees had. These are reasons why the interviewees decided to carry out their job as teachers under circumstances that were exceptionally difficult and challenging. These circumstances include very poor housing conditions for many and a working environment that is strongly influenced by the fact that abuse and poor child welfare is unfortunately part of everyday life.

When exploring the motivational basis for recruitment at Tasiilaq school, compassion, as an aspect of public sector motivation, was another significant motivation for taking up a job in one of the most remote and isolated parts of Greenland. The experience of working as a teacher with children who do not have the most basic things and the satisfaction of gradually developing relations with them through various activities at the school were pronounced drivers among many of the teachers at the school.

When comparing the motivation to take up a position at a school in Nuuk and a similar position at the school in Tasiilaq, there are pronounced differences. When exploring what motivates immigrant school teachers to take up a job in Nuuk, two factors stand out: Their motivation to do good stems from an abstract notion of serving public interest. Hence, teachers in Nuuk expressed the hope to be able to contribute to the improvement of the quality of education through their work as teachers and to pave the way to a better future both for the abstract notion of the individual child and for society at large. This in turn taps into the other motivational basis that we detected among teachers in Nuuk, namely attraction to policy making. Also in the context of this type of motivation, teachers in Nuuk seem to be attracted to the school as an organization and the educational system as a platform 'to do good', rather than the concrete individual child or groups of children. When asked if they would ever consider taking up a position as a teacher in Eastern Greenland, they rejected this option. They preferred to invest their energy in school on the west coast, most notably Nuuk, where they believed they could make a difference.

When carrying out interviews with teachers and management at schools in West and East Sermersooq respectively and comparing their motivation, it becomes clear that both groups identify an element of self-sacrifice as an innate part of being a teacher. However, they do so in different ways. In West Sermersooq both teachers and managers underline that being a teacher is more than just a job. It is a calling. Hence, self-sacrifice has to be addressed in the context of the teachers' profession. Furthermore, self-sacrifice feeds into and accentuates the two most pronounced types of public sector motivation that we found in this group: Their motivation to deliver public service as reflected in a particular set of norms and values

(commitment to public interest) and their desire to feed into policy making in order to improve it (attraction to policy making).

In East Sermersooq, self-sacrifice had an entirely different character. Several of the teachers lived under housing conditions that were relatively poor compared to those of most other cities in Greenland, including poor sanitary facilities, the fact that the city is partially isolated half of the year, 4 months of complete darkness, and an internet connection with very low functionality. While teachers in East Sermersooq spoke of the poor living conditions as a nuisance, they also considered them part of the adventure. We thus found that self-sacrifice is intimately linked to excitement motivation – a point to which we shall return. A similar pattern was found in the case of compassion, though it was not pronounced to the same extent.

The fact that different types of motivation appeared to interact with each other in our data paves the way into the conceptual part of the analysis, which explores contrasting motivations and addresses the question if and if so how types of motivation, i.e., PSM and excitement motivation, constitute contrasts that influence motivation.

Analysis 4.1.2: Contrasting Motivations in Sermersooq (Table 13.4)

When analyzing and comparing the data from the school in Tasiilaq with the schools in Nuuk it became clear that different types of motivation interact. In some cases, they even constitute contrasts to one another. In both Tasiilaq and Nuuk, we found the pattern that adventure constitutes a contrast to policy making and commitment to public interest as two types of public service motivation. Hence, teachers at Tasiilaq School whose motivational basis was informed by adventure expressed a lack of interest in policy making and commitment to public interest. In some cases, they even described these forms of public service motivation as demotivating seeing them as far removed from ‘real life’. These teachers had deliberately chosen the location of East Sermersooq because it offered them something that West Sermersooq could not possibly offer: the thrill of the adventure and the sensation of an overwhelming nature. The teachers based in Nuuk in turn were not willing to take up a job as a teacher in East Sermersooq. They simply could not see the point of being tucked away in the periphery of Greenland far from where it was possible to really make a difference. In their perspective, to make a difference was not attached to any concrete individual child or group of children. Instead, they were motivated to make a difference by improving the quality of education in Greenland. In this context, Nuuk offered the perfect setting. Thus, the data that informs the present analysis suggest that there is an inverse proportional relationship between

Table 13.4 Contrasting motivations

	Adventure
Attraction to pub. policy making	High
Commitment to pub. interest	High
Compassion	–
Self-sacrifice	Low

excitement motivation and public service motivation: attraction to policy-making and commitment to public interest. If a teacher is attracted to adventure the motivation of the same teacher is highly unlikely also to be triggered by policy making and commitment to public interest. Those types of motivation constitute contrasts and appear to out rule each other.

The sharp contrasts that we found between excitement motivation and PSM (policy making and public interest) were not as pronounced in the cases of compassion. In the case of the former the two types of motivation, i.e., adventure and compassion, seem to co-exist at the school in Tasiilaq (which is the only case where we can explore this relationship since that the schools in Nuuk are not characterised by excitement motivation). There are few overlaps, if any, between adventure and compassion. However, they do not constitute contrasts. Instead, those teachers who were motivated by adventure were aware of compassion as an alternative type of motivation that they themselves were not subject to. Along similar lines, those teachers who were attracted and recruited to Tasiilaq School because of compassion paid attention to adventure as an alternative. They were even able to identify colleagues who were triggered by it. However, they themselves did not have the heart for it. Hence, our data indicate that excitement motivation and compassion as a type of PSM do not constitute contrasts. The two only interact to a limited degree.

Whereas there is only limited interaction between compassion and excitement as two forms of motivation, it appears that adventure and self-sacrifice feed into each other. Our data indicate that there is a direct proportional relationship between excitement motivation and self-sacrifice and that there are very few – if any – contrasts between the two. Thus, teachers whose motivational basis for taking up a position at the school in Tasiilaq was predominantly triggered by adventure often mentioned self-sacrifice as part of the adventure. They unfolded their unusual and from a modern European point of view rather uncivilized living conditions, and they told tales of how they had in many instances been at risk, potentially sacrificing their good health in the pursuit of a life as a teacher in Tasiilaq. It is possible to detect an element of neo-paternalism in this scenario. Immigrants workers – in the present case teachers typically recruited from the former colonial power, Denmark – take up positions in the former colony. They are attracted by adventure (EM) and are apparently willing to self-sacrifice in pursuit of their endeavor ‘out in the wilderness’ of the former colony. It raises the question of how this form of motivation and orientation towards adventure is perceived by the local community and of course the school management.

13.4.2 Analysis II – Why Do Teacher Leave Their Positions in West/East Greenland

During our interviews in West and East Sermersooq, both teachers and managers were asked about their motivation for taking up a position at a school in West and East Sermersooq and for considering abandoning it. In this context, it is important to

bear in mind that schools in Nuuk are not confronted with the same degree of teacher turnover as the school in Tasiilaq, which has a teacher turnover of approximately 30% every year (trained teachers). Hence, the question of turnover is much more pressing in the East than in the West. In Eastern Greenland, even if you are not yourself considering moving on, you are constantly confronted with the coming and going of both colleagues and managers, and this is likely to affect your work life. Therefore, turnover is a topic that is discussed openly and frequently in the East, whereas it receives far less attention in the West. In both cases, however it was legitimate to discuss turnover and we had full access to these data to the extent that they exist.

The most obvious thing that stands out when coding for motivation in an analysis of turnover among teachers at Tasiilaq school is that excitement motivation constitutes a motivational basis for both recruitment and turnover. Hence, when teachers explained why they had decided to abandon their job at the school they told that they no longer found the place, i.e., Eastern Greenland, exciting. The adventure had lost its attraction. We visited the school in the beginning and again at the end of the each school year in 2014, 2015 and 2016. Given that the school has a 30% turnover among its trained teachers every year, many of the teachers that we interviewed at the end of the school year were departing. Often, they felt the urge to move on because they no longer found the place thrilling.

Several of the head masters that we interviewed in Tasiilaq were keenly aware of the fact that while adventure may attract teachers to the school, it also makes the same teachers leave again. Hence, they were generally very critical towards hiring teachers who appeared to be looking for an adventure in Eastern Greenland because they felt unsure as to whether this group of teachers would contribute to continuity and stability. While they accepted that adventure constitutes a factor that attracts teachers to schools in the remote and poorly developed parts of Greenland, they were concerned to make sure that this was not the only motivational basis that inspired applicants to take up a position in East Sermersooq. An obvious possibility was to seek to couple excitement motivation with compassion as a form of public service motivation particularly when bearing in mind the conclusion drawn in the previous section that the two types of motivation appear to co-exist. However, just as excitement motivation has its dark side, so does compassion. Many teachers in this part of Greenland are driven by compassion. They have great ambitions for helping some of those children who suffer various types of hardship. However, teachers who are emotionally driven by compassion risk becoming greatly disappointed because things do not work out the way, they had expected, and disappointment leads to burn out and derecruitment. Hence, although compassion seen as a dimension of PSM may constitute a remedy against turn over triggered by excitement motivation, it may also generate turn over itself.

Our study indicates clearly that although turnover is pronounced among both local and immigrant teachers, turnover triggered especially by fading excitement motivation and PSM compassion occur particularly often among immigrant teachers. Therefore, it was an ongoing concern among head masters in Tasiilaq School to recruit teachers whose form of motivation was not only adventure/

compassion, and who as a minimum gave the impression of having the capacity and wish to develop other forms of motivation during their employment. One headmaster in particular was eager to ignite a sense of community (SOC) and ultimately a sense of community responsibility (SOC-R) among the newly recruited teachers. This entailed setting up small groups among the teachers who engaged in social activities after work, for instance, chess, a book club or hiking. These initiatives became an important element in retaining immigrant teachers and thus creating stability and continuity at the school. Head masters revealed how when reading a CV they were inclined to read it upside-down, i.e., starting with the personal interests of the applicant that are usually displayed at the end of a CV to see if there was a match with the social activities in the community, before turning to the applicant's formal qualifications. Returning to the theoretical framework that guides this analysis, this draws out attention towards the fact that forms of motivation that have a specific referent, i.e., SOC and SOC-R, may mitigate some of the problems associated with turnover. If this is indeed the case – and more research is needed to substantiate this finding further – it constitutes an important lesson for practitioners who struggle to deal with and ultimately limit turnover among teachers, especially those who do so from a position of being located in isolated and remote areas.

13.5 Conclusion

This chapter set out to analyze the motivational bases for recruitment and turnover in the educational sector in Greenland comparing the center and the periphery. The results indicate that motivational forms differ in recruitment to the center vs. the periphery. Employees who are both driven by excitement motivation and compassion and willingness to self-sacrifice seek employment on the East coast. In contrast, excitement motivation is not found to be a strong motivational factor on the West coast. Instead, the normative and the instrumental dimensions of PSM are pronounced in this part of Greenland, though we also we find self-sacrifice here.

Besides engaging with recruitment, the chapter has also explored turnover among trained school teachers in the East and West coasts of Greenland respectively. Acknowledging the fact that turnover is a pressing issue in both the center and the periphery, the study reveals that it is the most pronounced in the periphery and, furthermore, that it is most prevalent among immigrant teachers whose driving motivation for recruitment is excitement motivation (EM) or PSM compassion. The study draws attention to the role that a sense of community (SOC) and a sense of community responsibility (SOC-R) may have in adding more dimensions to teachers' motivation once recruited, and points to SOC and SOC-R as potential mitigating factors against high teacher turnover.

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Chapter 14

Multi-grade Teaching in a Small Rural School in Northern Norway



Anne-Mette Bjøru



Photographer: Anne-Mette Bjøru

Abstract This chapter investigates multi-grade teaching in a small rural school in Northern Norway. The aims of the chapter are to show what characterizes the teaching practices in a multi-grade school in a small rural community, and how these practices enable inclusion and adapted education. The chapter gives a brief insight into parts of the Norwegian framework for education; the Education Act and the Core- and Subject

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Curricula, and theory about didactical tools that are useful in multi-grade school settings. The data were collected during a visit to a small rural school. The field work lasted two full days and included observations of classroom sessions, participation at recess and informal talks with the teachers. Findings show that the three didactical tools student group formation/subject organizing, peer-learning and pupils' personal working plans are useful when conducting multi-grade teaching in a small school with few pupils. Alongside the subject orientation, the chapter also discusses the Norwegian Core curriculum's focus on social learning and how this is an important fourth element when working towards a practice that is inclusive and adapted to the individual pupil.

Keywords Rural community · General education · Didactics · Inclusion · Adapted education

14.1 Introduction

Norway is a narrow and stretched piece of land situated furthest west on the Scandinavian Peninsula, and in the middle of the five Nordic countries. It is approximately as big as Japan or Germany in area, but the distance from Norway's North Cape to its southernmost point Lindesnes is 1700 km by air route. It is shaped a bit like an open parenthesis, with a long coastline to the west and borders to Russia, Finland and Sweden in the east. The country has five and a half million people. The biggest city Oslo, the capital, has just over one million inhabitants. There is a big gap between the population of Oslo and the rest of the bigger cities in Norway, with only 53,000 inhabitants in the tenth biggest city, Tønsberg (Statistics Norway, 2021). Thus, Norway is a sparsely populated country, with a large number of small towns, villages, and communities. Norway and, to borrow from Corbett (2016), "most of the world remains predominantly rural" (p. 272).

The Northern part of Norway, north of the 65th parallel north latitude, consists of the counties Nordland, Troms and Finnmark. These counties together are one third of Norway's area, but have only 9 percent of the country's total population (Thorsnæs, 2021). All counties experienced a decrease in population in recent years (Hykkerud et al., 2020), a trend that seems to continue its foothold despite political willingness to support the north via incentives, such as lower payroll tax, lower private tax, and higher child support (Rolland, 2019). The challenges that the already small communities face when the population continues to decrease are many. One easy-to-imagine scenario could be: lower income via taxes, less investment, fewer jobs, not so many families, hardly any kids, empty houses, no pre-school facilities, tiny schools, and uncertain futures (Fredriksen, 2020).

This chapter explores one small rural community in Northern Norway. More precisely, the object of this study is to explore the organisation of one tiny school in a small community. The school is situated on an island, which is not connected to the mainland by bridge. The only way to arrive to- or leave from the island is by ferry or private boat. Due to the low number of pupils in the school, less than ten, the school has no choice but to organize the school days in multi-grade teaching sessions.

The chapter presents examples of how the teaching and learning activities are organized in the different subjects in a multi-grade setting. In addition, it shows how the practice in this school meets the Norwegian national framework for education, in particular concerning how inclusion and adapted education are met by way of its multi-grade practice. The chapter seeks to answer the following question: *What characterizes the teaching practices in a multi-grade school setting in a small rural community school, and how do the practices enable inclusion and adapted education?*

14.2 Theoretical Backdrop

To contextualize this study further, the chapter includes an introduction to the Norwegian school system; regarding both division between rural-urban school settings in Norway, as well as excerpts from the framework for education that target all schools, and in particular small community schools.

14.2.1 *Small Schools in Small Municipalities*

According to statistics, Norway had a total of 2830 grade 1–10 schools in the school year 2018/19 (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2018). While the number of schools with more than 300 pupils is increasing, schools with fewer than 100 pupils is decreasing. This has both positive and negative effects. In brief, a better economy, enhanced learning environments and easier access to qualified teachers are arguments for closing small schools (Ertesvåg, 2019). On the other hand, among negative consequences is that pupils who change schools get a long commute to and from the new school (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). Most of the schools that have been closed down in Norway over the past 10 years are small schools, in small municipalities with fewer than 5000 inhabitants, reducing the number from 700 to 550 over the last 10 years (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). This is of great concern to those who lose their local schools as it makes their village or place of home in rural areas less attractive (Solstad et al., 2016).

One central aspect in the discussion about rural schools and rural education is questioning the future for the pupils who attend rural schools (Corbett, 2016; Berg-Olsen, 2012). It seems to embrace both a worry that the school system works to educate the young away from rural areas (Berg-Olsen, 2012), as well as the notion that rural youth should be allowed to have the same aspirations and be given the same opportunities as the young in urban areas (Corbett, 2016). The latter meaning that the worry of the first claim, in fact, often becomes a reality.

Corbett (2016) claims that following one's aspirations to pursue a higher education make youth leave rural areas – naturally, because the higher education institutions do not exist in their local community. However, the “neoliberal agendas”

(Corbett, 2016, p. 274) that shape education policies often do not fit the agenda of the rural communities. The agenda of some people in the rural communities is what Corbett (2016) calls the “learning and earning” correlation and the “jobs mind-set” (p. 277). Indeed these are aspirations, just different aspirations than those held by the young who pursue a higher education. Secure employment in businesses that do not require higher education may be considered twofold; on the one hand, it is good for both the rural community that is able to offer jobs to its own youth, and for the youth who seek steady income and a future where they grew up. On the other hand, there are fewer opportunities in the work-sphere without a higher education, and all have the same right to education so why not “dream big” (Corbett, 2016, p. 279). The central issue here is who owns the big dream, and in what ways may upbringing and compulsory education create an agenda that allows that the big dreams are realized also in small rural communities. This brings us over to the school’s mandate, and the framework that sets its agenda.

14.2.2 The Education Act and the Right to Attend School

The Norwegian *Act relating to Primary and Secondary Education and Training’s* (1998) (hereafter named: *The Education Act*) chapter eight refers to the ‘Organisation of the training’ and states that:

Primary and lower secondary school pupils have the right to attend the school that is closest to where they live or the school designated for the catchment area where they live. The municipality may issue regulations concerning which schools are designated for specific catchment areas in the municipality. (The Education Act (1998), Section 8-1)

Looking at this section in more detail, the pupils’ right to attend the school ‘closest to where the pupils live’ and ‘catchment areas’ are interpreted to be decided by geography, topography and safe access (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2014). Thus, the municipality cannot decide to move pupils from the school closest to their home in order to, for instance, increase the number of pupils at certain schools, gather all minority- or special education resources in one school, etc. (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2014). This is known as the ‘nærskoleprinsipp’ (nearest-school-principle), which stresses the municipalities’ responsibility to educate pupils at their ‘nærskole’ and that “local schools are thus required to educate children as far as is practically possible and professionally reasonable” (Maxwell & Bakke, 2019, p. 94).

This is relevant when investigating teaching practices in small schools in rural communities. This chapter shows an example of practice in a small community school, which aspires to combine the two. First, the multi-grade organization makes it practically possible to cater to the pupils’ different age- and grade-levels with few teachers employed. Second, the variation between two smaller groups and teaching all-pupils-together creates professionally reasonable solutions to the teaching and learning activities. More about this and the practical “doings” in the school below,

but first it is useful to look at other aspects of the Norwegian framework for education.

14.2.3 Adapted Education and Inclusion

To begin with, this chapter aims to study *how the teaching practices in a multi-grade school enable inclusion and adapted education*. This will be further explored in the results and discussion below, but a brief insight into the frames for education and how it treats inclusion and adapted education provides a useful backdrop.

A central principle in the Norwegian framework for education is section 1-3 in The Education Act (1998) on adapted education. It states: “Education must be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of the individual pupil, apprentice, candidate for certificate of practice and training candidate” (The Education Act, 1998, section 1-3). As this is stated by law, all schools must practice adapted education and organize their everyday school days so that each individual pupil is taking part in learning activities that are adapted to the pupils’ level.

No sections in the Norwegian education act uses the term “inclusion” directly, but Chap. 9 A ‘The pupils’ school environment’ states: “All pupils are entitled to a good physical and psychosocial environment conducive to health, well-being and learning” (The Education Act, 1998, section 9 A-2). In order to meet the requirements in this section, it is essential to establish an inclusive practice and school culture. The importance of creating an inclusive environment in the school is also stressed in *The Norwegian Core curriculum* (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, n.d.). It is an overarching curriculum that concerns the organization and values of the education, and should be considered part of the teaching and curricula of all the different school subjects. Chapter 3, ‘Principles for the school’s practice’ has five sub-chapters, where the first two are about adapted education and inclusion. It stresses the school’s responsibility for creating “an inclusive environment” (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, n.d., ch. 3.1) because this helps the pupils to develop both academically and socially. Further, the second sub-chapter is entitled ‘Teaching and differentiated instruction’ (ch. 3.2) which points to the importance of giving all pupils equal opportunities to learn and develop even though they all have different abilities and come from diverse backgrounds. A prerequisite to create equal opportunities is adapted education, also referred to as differentiated instruction (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, n.d., ch. 3.2).

In summary, two important principles in the Norwegian system of education are inclusion and adapted education. This is connected to the part of the Norwegian framework for education which underlines that the learning of subjects and social learning should receive equal focus in school. This is also expressed in the *Core curriculum* (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, n.d.), and a way to ensure that social learning do happen on equal terms to the learning of subjects, is through a focus exactly on inclusive practices and adapted education. To further

explore the link between inclusion and adapted education and social learning, let us have a closer look at social learning in the Norwegian framework for education.

14.2.4 ‘Social Learning’ in the Norwegian Core Curriculum

The Norwegian Core curriculum (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, n.d.) outlines the values and principles for primary and secondary education. It says:

A pupil’s identity and self-image, opinions and attitudes grow in interaction with others. Social learning takes place in both the teaching, training and in all the other activities at school. Learning subject matter cannot be isolated from social learning. Bearing this in mind, in the day-to-day work, the pupils’ academic and social learning and development are interconnected. (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, n.d., ch. 2.1)

The above excerpt shows that academic and social learning is valued equally in Norwegian schools, but the argument seems to lose attention as a focus on academic performance has gained a stronger standing due to national tests and result-orientation in all levels of school (Mausethagen, 2013). However, teachers may find support in the frames provided by The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training in their work to develop the pupils’ personal growth socially, alongside academically. In my understanding, this means that the activities in school should include a dimension that focuses on social learning.

14.2.5 The Norwegian Subject Curriculum

One central change in the Norwegian Educational Reform, *The Knowledge Promotion Reform* in primary and secondary education from 2006, was that the competence aims of the different Subject curricula changed from yearly aims to being organised as competence aims to be reached after second, fourth, seventh and tenth grade.¹ This structure of the subjects’ competence aims is continued in the new reform from August 2020.

This is relevant in a study about multi-grade teaching, because the way the competence aims are structured in Norway, gives the teachers an opportunity to work with the different competence aims over longer periods than one single school year. Thus, when teaching a multi-grade group of pupils the competence aims will encompass pupils of different age and grade-levels. To specify, eighth, ninth and tenth graders in Norway are taught by targeting the same competence aims, because these grades are collected in one group of aims; namely those after tenth grade. This

¹See The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training web page for info about curricula and competence aims: <https://www.udir.no/in-english/curricula-in-english/>

again, means that multi-grade teaching should be somewhat practically easier because of the division of competence aims in the curricula.

14.2.6 Useful Didactical Tools in Multi-grade Teaching Practice

In this study, I define multi-grade teaching as a classroom context where one or more teachers teach/es a heterogeneous group of pupils according to their age, subject- and curriculum-level (Berg-Olsen, 2012). Furthermore, I see multi-grade organization of teaching as different for large schools, which may choose multi-grade-groupings because it gives greater opportunities for adapted education (Hyry-Beihammer & Hascher, 2015b) and shared use of teaching resources (Berg-Olsen, 2012). Whereas in small schools, the number of pupils could be so low that there is no other choice but to teach all pupils in one composite group. The different settings in schools will influence the motivation behind implementing multi-grade teaching, as well as pedagogical ideologies behind making that choice (Berg-Olsen, 2012). This chapter shows an example from the latter type of school, where the schooldays are organized in multi-aged groups out of necessity because the number of pupils is fewer than ten.

In the following I address the second aim of the chapter: *what characterizes the teaching practices in a multi-grade school setting in a small rural community school* which means a focus on didactics. Didactics are part of pedagogics, but rather than theories about how one learns, didactics describe the theory and practice of teaching and learning (Uljens, 1997). In other words, the actual “doings” that take place during a school day.

Hyry-Beihammer and Hascher (2015a) introduce three tools that they found to be central to help teachers cope with the multi-grade setting and the diverse needs of the pupils in schools with a multi-grade organization: student group formation/subject organizing, personal working plans and peer-learning (Hyry-Beihammer & Hascher, 2015a, p. 97). Inspired by Hyry-Beihammer and Hascher (2015a) set-up of useful didactical tools in this type of learning environment, I have structured my findings around the same three elements with the addition of a fourth element: social learning. First, student group formation/subject organizing helps the teachers to consider different ways of working with the subject curriculum; for instance for the individual pupils’ level simultaneously in same session or whole-class teaching where all pupils use the same curriculum and material (Hyry-Beihammer & Hascher, 2015a, p. 97). Second, the personal working-plans aid teachers to organize time and create opportunities to follow up on the individual pupil. Thus, a useful tool for differentiation among the pupils at their different levels (Hyry-Beihammer & Hascher, 2015a, p. 102). Third, peer-learning is defined as “different practices in which students may learn from and with their peers in multigrade classes” (Hyry-Beihammer & Hascher, 2015a, p. 98). They elaborate by explaining how older pupils help the younger ones when they are done with their

own tasks, and how younger pupils watch what the older ones are doing while asking for- and receiving explanations. Hyry-Beihammer and Hascher (2015a) call this social learning (p. 104), but I understand all three tools that they introduce as connected to academic learning, the learning of subjects. My definition of social learning is from the *Core curriculum* (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, n.d., ch. 2.1) where it is a specific dimension of learning, separate from- but parallel to academic learning which helps pupils develop personally. Thus, it is a central addition to Hyry-Beihammer and Hascher (2015a) three practical tools, also to show its important position in the Norwegian framework for education.

14.3 Method

14.3.1 *Field Work*

Importantly, this study is about multi-grade teaching and the study is conducted in a small community school on an island in Northern Norway. With that said, I imply that both the community and the practices in the school most likely represent something that is different from the regular single-grade/age-divided schools in other, more urban, areas. I am learning about, and reporting on, a culture through doing fieldwork in that culture. Thus, this chapter is an ethnographic study, as it joins fieldwork and culture (Van Maanen, 2011) as part of the meaning process.

As mentioned in the introduction, the community where this study was conducted is very small and the school could possibly be recognized if described in detail. To ensure anonymity for the school, teachers, children and community, I have given a more general description to show how a small rural community school organizes its schooling in a multi-grade fashion. I use descriptions of pupils such as “the youngest” or “the oldest” when describing the lessons so that the reader may follow who is involved in the different teaching activities.

The school is a grade 1–10 school. Three teachers work at the school, all full time, due to the division of subjects and levels. The number of pupils is less than ten and their ages span 9 years, from the youngest to the oldest. There are pupils of different nationalities, but all of them speak Norwegian and all teaching and learning sessions are in Norwegian. At recess, the pupils use mostly Norwegian, but some communication among the pupils is in their first language.

The fieldwork was conducted over two full days at the school, where I was a non-participating observer in the classroom, but a participating observer during recess. Each school day has six teaching sessions, two short breaks and one longer break for lunch. The lunch break is in the middle of the day, after the third teaching session. All pupils leave the building during breaks, to go into the yard where they move around, play or hang out.

The study includes observations of classroom sessions, field notes from the classroom sessions and during recess, as well as informal talks with the teachers.

The field notes consist of 11 hand-written pages structured chronologically according to the schedule of the school days. The notes include topics of teaching sessions, descriptions of what happened in the classroom, teachers and pupils' interactions in classroom and at recess, drawings of classroom set-up, as well as my own thoughts and questions that I wanted to raise to the teachers. As far as possible for an experienced teacher observing a new teaching environment, or 'culture' to use Van Maanen's (2011) words, I wrote the notes as objectively as possible noting down simply what I saw. The informal talks with the teachers happened at the teachers' office before welcoming the pupils in the morning, between classroom sessions and at the end of the school day after the pupils had left. The talks centred on questions I asked to clarify the teachers' choices and actions in classroom sessions.

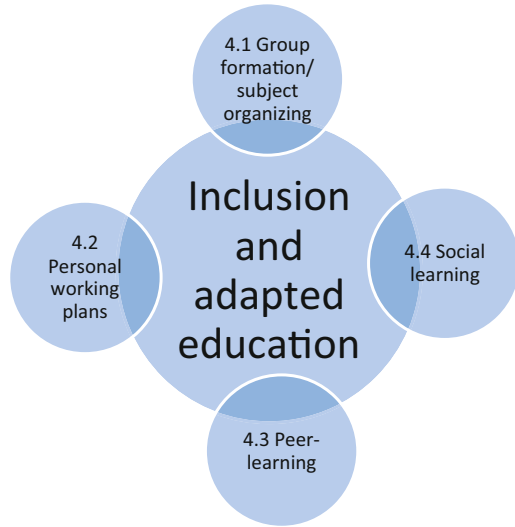
14.3.2 Limitations

As the study is based on field work conducted over two school days only, it gives merely a glimpse into the school's culture. Still, because of the low number of pupils and teachers it was easy to get an overview of the teaching and learning activities despite the short time-span of the school visit. Another limitation to this study is the fact that it is based on the practice in one school only. Thus, the findings will not represent a general picture of multi-grade schools in rural Northern Norway. However, the description provided based on my acute observations shows examples of the ways of teaching in a multi-grade rural school that may transfer to other teaching communities similar to the one shared here. In particular, the chapter's description and focus on how the multi-grade teaching practices enhance inclusion and adapted education could be useful for other school settings.

14.3.3 Analysis

I analysed my observations and the notes using the theoretical backdrop from Hyry-Beihammer and Hascher (2015a) as a lens, adding social learning as a fourth element. This helped me structure the findings from the field work into the four sections in the results and discussion chapter below. During the analysis it became evident that each of the four categories together contribute to the overarching principle of inclusion and adapted education, which is central in Norwegian schools (The Education Act, 1998; The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, n.d.). The analysis led to the research findings that may be illustrated by this figure:

Fig. 14.1 Shows the link between the four tools and ‘inclusion and adapted education’. (Figure made by author)



The results and discussion section is divided according to these four categories as seen below.

14.4 Results and Discussion

14.4.1 *Student Group Formation/Subject Organizing*

During my field work, both school days were divided between theoretical and practical subjects. Day 1: Mathematics, Norwegian, Physical Education and Home Economics. Day 2: Norwegian, Mathematics, Religion, Music and Art. The group of pupils were divided in all theoretical subjects – Mathematics, Norwegian and Religion; first through fourth grade together in one group, and fifth to tenth grade in another group. However, both groups followed the same time schedule, meaning that all of the pupils in the school had recess together, as well as practical subjects – Physical education, Home Economics, Music and Art. Put another way, this means that throughout the school day the pupils were together for parts of the day and divided into two smaller groups during other parts of the day.

The informal talks with the teachers showed that the division in mathematics and languages is useful because the pupils’ abilities vary greatly in these two theoretical subjects. The youngest is learning to read and write while the older pupils, naturally, need to focus on other subject tasks than beginner training. To exemplify, one teacher wrote the schedule for the whole day on the blackboard in the beginning of the first session. In addition, the teacher also spent time going through the day orally, explaining in detail what the pupils needed to remember in particular sessions, for instance getting ingredients for the home economics class. In our informal talk at the end of the day, I asked about the choice of doing both, and the teacher explained that some pupils prefer the schedule on the blackboard so they can refer to

it throughout the day, while others prefer it explained orally because they are weak readers or because they remember better when they have heard it.

Even though the Norwegian Subject curricula is structured around competence aims that include more than one year-courses, the teachers still had to follow all four chapters of the competence aims due to the spread in age between the pupils. However, the fact that the competence aims are divided into four chapters that span 10 years of schooling illustrates how some competence aims are meant to be stretched across a bigger time span than a single school year. This again gives the teachers greater flexibility when planning the teaching sessions and learning activities, and it creates possibilities for including multi-grade pupils in the same session and yet the group may work towards common competence aims.

14.4.2 Teachers' Overview of Personal Working Plans

Although Hyry-Beihammer and Hascher (2015a) stress the importance of independent working plans that the pupils themselves have control over, this was not the case in the school in this study. Here, the teachers kept their own log and overview of the curriculum that they had worked with, and where they needed to go next in the teaching of the pupils. During the observation of a session in a theoretical subject, it was clear that the teacher had good knowledge of the academic level of the pupils, when help and explanation were necessary, on what aspects they needed more practice before moving on, as well as making smooth shifts between individual and pair work among the pupils.

To elaborate, at the start of the session the teacher quickly put the individual pupils to work with their different themes according to their level of knowledge in the subject. While the pupils worked with individual tasks, the teacher explained two different problems on the blackboard – one at the time. These two explanations were aimed at two individual pupils and the support they needed in order to be able to move on in their independent work. While the pupils listened attentively, one at a time to their separate instruction from the teacher, the rest of the group carried on with their own individual tasks. The teacher then moved around the classroom and approached each and every pupil to “keep in touch” (Ur, 1991, p. 265) and make sure they understood the tasks and were able to solve the problems. According to Ur (1991) keeping in touch with all pupils during classroom sessions is essential because the pupils notice that the teacher is aware of them, and this encourages the pupils to participate. Keeping in touch may mean having an overview of the classroom and all pupils from the teacher’s desk, or approaching each pupil’s desk by walking around in the classroom to reach out to the individual pupil (Ur, 1991). When I visited, the teacher moved around the classroom, thus coming closer to the pupils, their course books and notebooks, which again gave the teacher a chance to see their work and more easily spot how the pupils were moving along with their tasks. The teacher encouraged two pairs of pupils to help each other when they had difficulties with their tasks, by giving reassuring comments such as “You understand this, please explain to the other pupil”. At the end of the class, the teacher introduced a riddle to the whole class, which was shared on the blackboard. All the pupils were

engaged in trying to solve it. The task was more of a general character, involving the topic of shopping and paying for goods, which ensured that all pupils, whatever age, could get involved in discussing the riddle. Here we see that the teacher uses a series of different approaches in the session; besides both individual, independent study and common tasks, there is also a shift in teaching approaches between individual work, pair work, and the whole group working together.

The session in the rural school described above, is an example of adapted education in practice. Even though the pupils did not have individual working plans that they themselves had control over, the teacher put each individual pupil to work on certain tasks according to how far they had come and which course book they used. In the informal talk, the teacher explained that it was quite easy to keep the detailed overview because the group consists of very few pupils. The teacher explained that it allows time to help all pupils, and focus on their individual levels. The observation of this example from the session may be understood as a positive aspect of multi-grade teaching in a small school. Both the observations and my talk with the teacher confirmed that the different learning activities aimed at the different pupils in the group also seemed to meet the individual learner's needs.

Often the pupils' different ages in multi-grade classrooms presents challenges to teachers because of the "variety and diversity of learners' needs" (Hyry-Beihammer & Hascher, 2015a, p. 91), where the concern is how to create teaching sessions that meet all the different learners. As inclusion and adapted education are central principles in the Norwegian framework for education, it means that teachers must adapt their learning activities to a heterogenetic group of pupils, whether teaching in a multi-grade or single-grade/age-divided school. In both settings, the teacher will have to differentiate the subject sessions to the abilities of each individual pupil within the group. This suggests that a transfer of the multi-grade practice in the rural school described above, to regular age-division schools is useful, "since every class is characterized by heterogeneity" (Hyry-Beihammer & Hascher, 2015b, p. 111). In addition, this shows how the nature of multi-grade teaching may form a practice that is recognized by inclusion and adapted education, and which is transferrable to all schools whatever way they organize the division of their pupils.

14.4.3 Peer-Learning

As well as peer-learning in the theoretical subjects, as shown above, the elements of peer-learning were particularly vivid in the practical subjects. Perhaps it was even more vivid in these subject-sessions because all the pupils, from youngest to oldest, were together. In the following discussion, practical subjects are exemplified through Art and Home Economics.

The teachers expressed that it is easy to include all pupils in practical sessions as there will always be some tasks or activities that are suitable for all, whatever age and level. In art class, the whole group of pupils was first indoors where they were introduced to a video about stone balancing. This was followed up by a talk about

materials, stones and the seashore and what one may find and use to create sculptures. It seemed as this first part of the session was included in order to inspire the pupils by showing examples of what they could construct outdoors with random stones they found around the yard. The video surely did inspire, and all the pupils both young and old, made stone balancing sculptures. They interacted with each other during the building; they commented on the creativity of their peers, helped each other find suitable stones, as well as holding the structures for each other while in the making (Figs. 14.2 and 14.3).

Again, this is an activity where age does not matter neither when performing the learning activity, the process of the task, nor the outcome of the final product. The younger pupils managed this just as well as the older ones, and this gave them a sense of mastering that was easy to see when they compared and discussed options and possible ways to better balance the rocks while making the sculptures, as well as when comparing the final products.

My observation of home economics showed that all pupils collaborated well. One example is when the youngest made and stirred the meat-and-spice-mix in the frying pan while the oldest helped read the recipe of the named mix. They divided the tasks of cutting vegetables, setting the table, serving, and cleaning the table, kitchen, dishes, and pans amongst them. Each pupil had their own tasks that they performed, and it looked as if all were busy the whole time; while preparing the meal and when cleaning up afterwards.

The action of sharing a meal together, whether it is the daily lunch or weekly home economics class, is an important arena for social learning (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, *n.d.*, ch. 2.1). It is debated whether meals and lunch hours should be considered settings for learning or rather be a break from schooling and learning (Persson Osowski & Fjellström, 2019). Still, it is argued that adults should eat together with the pupils to “spend time with the children socially



Figs. 14.2 and 14.3 Stone balancing sculptures made by pupils during art class. (Photos by author)

... [moreover] children appreciate the presence of adults” (Persson Osowski & Fjellström, 2019, p. 394) during meals. The practice in the school I visited follows that of Persson Osowski and Fjellström’s (2019) findings – the teachers had their lunch together with the pupils, and they also enjoyed the meal that the pupils made in home economics together with the whole group. To my understanding, the meal-times were a combination of break time and a setting for learning, as the pupils were calm and well behaved, made conversations and cleaned up after themselves after all the meals. I consider this an essential arena for social learning (Lalli, 2020, p. 599), as the conversations around the table while eating were not subject based, but about issues of more social nature such as favourite music and TV-series.

These descriptions from the sessions in practical subjects show examples of peer-learning, but the last example also bridges into the fourth aspect – social learning.

14.4.4 Social Learning

In addition to Hyry-Beihammer and Hascher (2015a) three tools that help to conduct teaching practice in multi-grade schools, social learning is added as a fourth dimension. As discussed in Sect. 14.2.4, social learning is considered equally important to learning subjects in school, and it is when interacting with others that the pupils develop identity and self-image. The Norwegian framework for education underlines that in everyday schooldays, academic and social learning are interconnected (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, n.d., ch. 2.1). Thus, I find this fourth dimension relevant because, together with the three tools (Hyry-Beihammer & Hascher, 2015a) that are useful for planning and conducting multi-grade teaching practice, social learning contributes to the goal of meeting the principles of inclusion and adapted education. Actions that may be understood as social learning occurred numerous times during the school days, for instance during meal times as shown in Sect. 14.4.3. Another example is when pupils of a similar age sat together during parts of recess in private conversation. One more example is when young and old pupils played together at recess, and the older “overlooked” the younger so that the short legs of the younger had a chance to keep up with the older pupils in the race towards the goal line.

Even though Hyry-Beihammer and Hascher (2015a) connect peer-learning to social learning, they still “suggest that teachers require more knowledge on how they should guide peer-learning processes and organize peer groups in order to optimize their ‘social pedagogic’ potential” (Hyry-Beihammer & Hascher, 2015a, p. 107). This clearly shows how peer-learning is a way of practically “doing” social learning in school. Still, in my understanding peer-learning is first and foremost a method in the teaching of subjects, which sometimes leads to social learning as some sort of bonus along the way. Thus, peer-learning is a didactical tool that is useful when focusing on subject content, but it includes a “social value” (Hyry-Beihammer & Hascher, 2015a, p. 106). Nonetheless, I argue that social learning should be a dimension on its own, simply to mark its central position in

the framework of education and schools' practices. Social learning is not only connected to subject teaching but rather an equal parallel to subject teaching, which overarches all school activities in the pursuit to prepare the pupils for life (The Education Act, 1998, Section 1-1).

14.5 Scholarly Significance

The question that this chapter sought to answer was: *What characterizes the teaching practices in a multi-grade school setting in a small rural community school, and how do the practices enable inclusion and adapted education?*

The study has shown what characterizes the teaching in a multi-grade school setting in a small rural community school, by describing examples of observed classroom practices and talks with the teachers about how this specific school organizes teaching and learning activities. Presenting these examples within national frameworks for education and theoretical perspectives as backdrop creates new understandings of pedagogical possibilities when teaching multi-aged groups. In addition, the study may enhance our understanding of inclusion and adapted education, both as principle and as practice. As a principle, by showing how they are implemented in the framework for education. As practice, from the examples provided in the chapter showing how the four elements; student group formation/subject organization, personal working plans, peer-learning and social learning together contribute to ensure an inclusive practice and an education adapted to the individual pupil.

This school's practice may transfer to other school settings; whether a school has a multi-grade or single-grade/age-divided organization, all pupil-groups will consist of a variety of individuals with different aptitudes and aspirations. Thus, the way the teachers in this study work to meet the level of the different pupils in their multi-grade setting, could be useful for teachers who work in other school settings and with other ways of organizing the school days.

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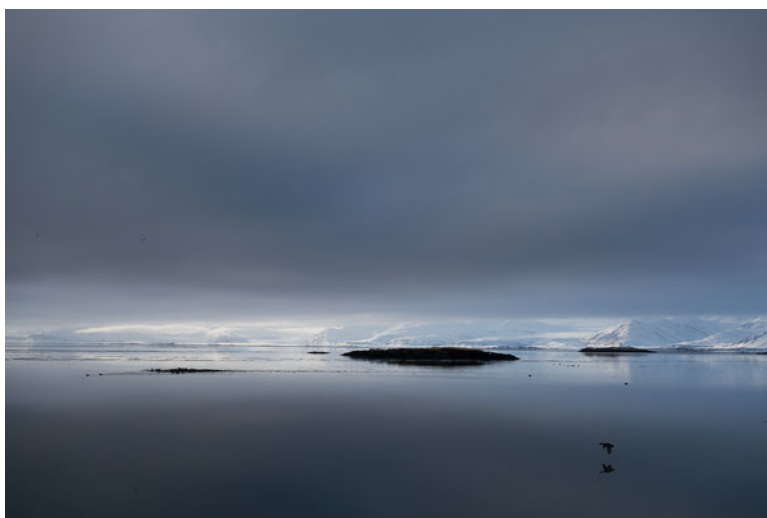


Chapter 15

Fostering Professional Development for Inclusive Education in Rural Iceland: A Collaborative Action Research Project



Edda Óskarsdóttir and Anna Katarzyna Wozniczka



Photographer: Edda Óskarsdóttir

Abstract This chapter discusses collaborative action research carried out by the authors while preparing and teaching a professional development course to develop inclusive school practices. The purpose was to understand how a professional development course on inclusive education can be developed through a distance learning module for diverse participants. The authors discuss how they explored how they were able to be inclusive throughout the course as well as the insights they gained into how course participants developed their own inclusive practice and pedagogy.

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Keywords Inclusive education · Distance teaching · Professional development · Rural context · Collaborative action research

15.1 Introduction

The idea of inclusion first appeared in the Icelandic education laws in 1995 (Óskarsdóttir et al., 2019). At first, the laws required schools to welcome all learners living in their catchment area, teaching them according to their needs as equals, but not specifying that this should be driven by the notion of inclusion. Thus, disabled learners were educated in the same building and space as their non-disabled peers, but without access to equal education opportunities (Jóhannesson, 2006; Marinósson, 2011). However, the most recent Compulsory School Act from 2008 states that all learners have the right to quality inclusive education in their neighbourhood school (Compulsory School Act No 91/2008).

Preparing a new education policy 2030, an audit was performed on the implementation of the inclusive education policy. The audit showed that while the official policy is in accordance with international treaties, the concept of inclusive education in schools is not clear and there is need for all school-level stakeholders to develop the capacity to think and act inclusively in their daily practice (European Agency, 2017). As a follow-up to the audit, a compulsory school in rural Iceland contracted with the University of Iceland to provide a professional development course to develop inclusive school practices. All school employees, including teachers, social educators, teacher assistants, custodians, the librarian, the office secretary, after-school staff, the school principal, and assistant principals participated in the course.

This chapter discusses collaborative action research carried out by us, Edda and Anna, the authors of the chapter, while preparing and teaching this course. The aim was twofold: first, to explore how we were able to be inclusive throughout the course; second, to gain insight into how the course participants developed their own inclusive practice and pedagogy. The purpose was to understand how a professional development course on inclusive education can be developed through a distance learning module for diverse participants. The research question was: *How can we design a professional development course that is responsive towards participants and empowers them to develop their inclusive practice?*

15.2 A Whole School Professional Development Approach

Professional development is important for teachers to further their knowledge and develop their competences in working with diverse learners. Professional development (PD) refers to activities focused on the education, training and development opportunities professionals can access (Sheridan et al., 2009). The goal for school staff who take part in PD courses is to improve learners' developmental and educational outcomes.

Three core issues in professional development need to be considered (Slot et al., 2017): *the who*, *the what*, and *the how*. The *who* focuses on the identities and background of participants and the learners with whom they work. The *what* addresses the focus of the PD course and the knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, or expectations it is aimed at, as well as the specific content areas. The *how* refers to the strategies used to deliver the PD, such as face-to-face, online, or a hybrid. Building on this model and looking towards writings about reflection in PD, it can be hypothesized that change in professionals' behaviour and practices develop through enactment and reflection on practice, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs (Leitch & Day, 2000).

Meeting the challenge of strengthening the competences and professionalism of school staff working in inclusive settings calls for professional development opportunities. School leaders are instrumental in collecting the information needed to create professional development opportunities at their schools that will support and motivate each teacher and staff member to work for all learners (Black & Simon, 2014). School leaders should, according to Dorczak, 'release and develop the talents of all teachers or other members of staff as well [as] recognising and activating the potential of all students' (2013, p. 55).

Creating a course for a broad group of participants working in schools calls for the employment of inclusive pedagogy and practice, as teacher educators need to be role models in their teaching. Inclusion is grounded in the ideologies of social justice, democracy, human rights, and access to education for all; it focuses on how to meet the needs of all learners with their diversity and differences (Hick & Thomas, 2009; UNESCO, 2020). Inclusive pedagogy focuses on the beliefs, knowledge, design, and actions of teachers as they strive to include all learners in their classrooms. This involves what teachers do, and how and why they choose to do it (Florian, 2014; Gale et al., 2017; Slee, 2018). Inclusive practice, on the other hand, are the actions and teaching practices carried out by teachers that foster the learning and engagement of all learners (Florian, 2015). Collaboration is an essential ingredient and condition of inclusive practice (Óskarsdóttir et al., 2019). The aim of this collaboration is to support teachers in working with diverse students in their classrooms. Thus, teachers and others with different skills and expertise work together and reflect on situations in daily routines to respond more effectively to the needs of learners (Ferguson, 2008).

Adult learning is selective and self-directed (Knowles, 1973), therefore a professional development course should focus on setting goals which are directly applicable to their work or life. While many adults have been away from school for some time or have had some negative school experiences, which may result in low self-esteem or even anxiety (Rubenson, 2011), they bring knowledge and experience, as well as a set of values and beliefs, to the classroom (Illeris, 2011). In teaching adults, using diverse approaches, sharing power (Brookfield, 2013), combining theory with practice, stimulating discussion, listening to students and acknowledging their backgrounds; and being approachable, flexible, and empathetic (Hill, 2014) contributes to the learning process. Extrinsic motivation, such as a hope for a better job or higher pay, play a big part in adult learning. However, intrinsic motivation, including

gaining more work satisfaction, self-confidence, and quality of life, is crucial for a meaningful adult learning experience (Rubenson, 2011; Wlodkowski, 2003).

One way of ensuring participation of adult learners in professional development courses is through establishing learning communities that promote diversity and collaboration and provide space for all voices to be heard (Bell-Angus et al., 2008). Through learning communities, adult learners can develop shared understandings by relating their previous experience, current professional context, and new knowledge, and by mirroring their own perspectives in the experiences, values, and beliefs of others (Cornelius et al., 2011).

Today, many educational institutions provide distance education, with courses varying in structure. While some are strictly online, others represent a “hybrid” or “blended” model, combining online and face-to-face teaching (Bates, 2015). Synchronous distance teaching, in which all students participate in the course at the same time, enables interaction between participants and facilitates the creation of learning communities and support networks (Rao et al., 2011).

However, while distance education encompasses the idea of inclusive education, as it increases opportunities of diverse adult populations for professional development (Cocquyt et al., 2017), it involves several challenges, especially while creating online courses for rural and remote communities (Rao et al., 2011). These may include high dropout rates, feelings of isolation, difficulty accessing computers and internet, and too much reliance on text-based learning. Moreover, teaching in a distant setting may be irrelevant if teachers do not understand issues specific to local communities. Thus, educational institutions should consider the context in which the teaching takes place and the realities of the students (Rao et al., 2011). To overcome students’ challenges with distance learning, it may be helpful to offer them dynamic connections between classes, for example through online discussions (Hall & Villareal, 2015). Moreover, when distance learning students gather in a single location to attend an online class, they are more likely to continue and finish the course despite the challenges involved (Rao et al., 2011).

The three core issues of developing a professional development course – *the who*, i.e., all school employees with various backgrounds as adult learners; *the what*, i.e., a focus on developing inclusive practices; and *the how*, i.e., a blended model of teaching that is responsive to participants’ needs (Slot et al., 2017) – encompass the diverse issues involved in teaching a professional development course and should guide their development.

15.3 Collaborative Action Research Design

This collaborative action research project was built on collaborative inquiry and reflection seeking to understand and transform our practice of teaching (Carr & Kemmis, 2009). By systematically investigating our own practice as teachers we aimed to generate knowledge for ourselves as well as for others (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015). Our practice of inquiry requires that we engage in creative and

reflective work, take risks, and use failures as points of departure for new learning and teaching approaches (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015). Throughout the research process we sought to articulate our questions, make an action plan for implementation, outline ways to document the implementation and outcomes, and then reflect on both our learning and that of the course participants. Thus, the research process was intended to be cyclical and iterative (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015; Waitoller et al., 2016).

The chapter builds on data collected during preparation and throughout teaching the course (May 2019–May 2020). All school employees (around 60 people) participated in the course; most of those with a BEd/BA/BS degree worked towards credits, while others took the course as part of their professional development. Data included participants' written assignments and self-evaluation at the end of the course, as well as Tickets Out of the Classroom (TOCs) that participants submitted after each session and consisted of answers to the following questions: What have you learned or what do you take with you after the day? And what would you like to focus on during the next session? Additionally, 45-minute focus group interviews were conducted at the end of the course, with four groups of course participants. Interviewees were chosen through purposeful sampling considering different age, gender, origin, work and educational experience and needs. They were invited to join via email. In addition to data from the participants, we used meeting minutes from our preparation meetings and individual journal notes. Table 15.1 presents an overview of the data collection process.

We discussed the research with all participants at the beginning of the course and asked them to sign an informed consent form. We ensured the anonymity of the

Table 15.1 Overview of data collection

Types of data collected	Participants	Date/period of data collection
Participants' assignments, including self-evaluation	All participants in the course	August 2019–March 2020
Tickets out of the classroom (TOCs)	All participants in the course	August 2019–March 2020
Focus group interviews	Representatives of four groups: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers taking the course for credit (8 persons) 2. Teachers who did not work towards credits (6 persons) 3. Other staff (8 persons) 4. Members of the school leadership team (3 persons) 	March 12, 2020
Notes from final project presentations during the harvest festival	Edda and Anna	March 13, 2020
Meeting minutes	Edda and Anna	May 2019–May 2020
Individual journal notes	Edda and Anna	May 2019–May 2020

participants by giving them pseudonyms and de-identifying the data. All data were kept in a secure place and only the authors had access to them.

Throughout the course, we used discussions for our continuous data analysis and reflection. During the analytical process, we applied a grounded theory analysis approach in coding the data. We understand grounded theory analysis to be an approach that enables generating a theory to explain what is central in the data (Punch, 2014). Grounded theory analysis is compatible with action research, as one feature of the latter is that it builds on a cyclical procedure in which data can be collected and analysed simultaneously (Charmaz, 2015). In grounded theory, as in action research, the data shapes the research process and its product in a responsive and often innovative way (Waring, 2021).

Our data analysis was a collaborative effort conducted in three phases. In the first phase, we each read and reread through the data to find meaningful messages. In the second phase we read through the data and our initial analysis together and assigned descriptive and interpretive codes to different fragments of data. In the third phase we grouped or connected the main substantive codes into categories such as challenges, responding to challenges, peer-pressure, and support and leadership. The goal was to identify patterns, themes, or threads in the data that would illuminate how we and the research participants developed our practice throughout the study.

15.4 Findings

The findings are presented in three main sections that reflect the timeline of the research: a prologue that presents findings from the stage of preparing the course, an action stage that presents findings from teaching the course, and an epilogue that presents findings from the data gathered at the end of the course.

15.4.1 Prologue

A compulsory school in a rural town in Iceland requested that the University of Iceland offer them a whole-school professional development course focusing on inclusive education. Edda, one of the authors, who specialises in inclusive education, was asked to develop and teach the course. The first step was to have an online meeting between the school leadership team and Edda. In this meeting the school leadership team discussed their vision for the course and determined that it should be 10 ECTS, it should run over more than one term (from August till May), and it should be a blend of online classes and onsite days. Through our discussions we decided that the course should have an inquiry focus where participants would look at their own work and identify what they would like to develop further in their practice; this would allow them to create a learning community in the process. The aim would be to enable participants to use the course to strengthen their practice and

deepen their understanding of their own work, of the concept of inclusive education, and how practitioner inquiry can be applied as professional development.

The next step was to create the course outline, aims, and timeline before travelling to the rural town to meet with the whole school to introduce the course. The point of Edda travelling to the school was to support the school principal in selling the idea to the school staff, assuring them that this course was tailored to their needs and could be an opportunity for professional development, without requiring them to travel to Reykjavík (more than 600 km away).

15.4.1.1 First Encounters

During this first visit to the school, Edda had a chance to meet the school leadership and staff. While introducing the course she got questions that suggested there would be unanticipated challenges. She wrote in her journal:

Some of the non-teaching staff wanted to discuss with me privately, telling me that they never worked on a computer, that they never read or write anything, and they had not been students themselves for decades. They sounded scared or threatened and I tried to be reassuring, telling them that I would accommodate their needs, we would find a way for them to participate. . . I think this will be more complicated than ‘just’ teaching a course.

When Edda returned, she contacted Anna, the co-author of the chapter, and asked her to co-teach the course, as she saw that it would be important to have someone to share the responsibilities of teaching and planning it. We have worked together in various courses through the years and know each other well, trusting in each other’s knowledge, professionalism, and complementary competences.

15.4.1.2 Planning the Course

After the first visit, the preparation phase began. The aim of the course was for participants to strengthen their teaching and practice in an inclusive school and to reflect on their practice with the goal of improving it. The course focused on the theoretical foundations of inclusive education and explored what it means to meet the learning and social needs of all learners with human value, democracy, and social justice as guiding lights. A secondary focus was on how to do a practitioner inquiry, connect it to literature, collect and analyse data, and disseminate the findings. Collaboration was a central theme throughout the course, as the participants were expected to form learning communities where they would learn together and support each other in developing the school practices and ethos.

The course was divided into four themes: theoretical background of inclusion, gathering data, analysing and reflecting on data, and writing and disseminating results. There were also four assignments: a research plan, a literature review, a final assignment (composed of the first two assignments, research findings and suggestions for next steps) and a self-assessment.

We organised the course into four onsite whole day sessions dispersed over 8 months. In the months when there was not an onsite day, we had online afternoon classes for 2 hours. Between these course meetings, participants were expected to do independent work and take part in online discussions. We used Zoom for online meetings and Moodle for online discussions, assignments, and overall course materials.

15.4.2 Action Stage

The action stage is divided into three acts representing our and participants' experiences from the course as it progressed: The Honeymoon, Emerging challenges and opportunities, and All's well that ends well.

15.4.2.1 The Honeymoon

We were satisfied after the first onsite teaching and thought it went well. We were aware of participants being stressed about the course, the workload and what our expectations were. At the same time, there was some excitement in the air, as shown in the TOCs: "I look forward to thinking about my research question and working on something that would be useful for myself and my work" and "what I would like to get out of this course are happier students." The participants enjoyed learning new teaching methods that we modelled during the day, and many were eager to take on the challenge of changing their own practice.

The online sessions took place in the afternoon and the participants were situated in two school buildings, while we were in Reykjavík together in one room. The participants were using two computers, one in each building, and for each there was a person in charge of the technology who asked us questions or told us what was happening. On our screen we only saw a part of the two rooms and there was little interaction between the participants and us, as we could not hear them very well. This felt a bit like teaching through a mail slot. So, we quickly decided that we would either provide pre-recorded lectures or shorter online lectures and use more of our online time for group work. Our aim was to ensure active participation, discussions on the content of the lectures and collaborative work related to preparing inquiry into practice.

During the first afternoon session we divided participants into groups of five. They were asked to draw a large flower with five petals on a sheet of paper, write something that they had in common in the centre of the flower, and then fill the petals with something about them that was unique. Participants were instructed to focus on attributes other than physical ones to encourage more meaningful discussions. As participants stated in the TOCs, this method helped them to "learn more about each other" and "find a common goal". Having evidence of the effectiveness of this approach, we aimed at using at least one groupwork method, such as Walk & Talk, a

Three-Step Interview, or Think-Pair-Share for future sessions (for further discussion see: Alisauskiene et al., 2020).

15.4.2.2 Emerging Challenges and Opportunities

We felt, as the course progressed, that we were facing similar challenges as encountered by every teacher of a diverse group of students. Early on it was clear that the participants had different reasons for attending the course and their engagement level varied. We found our biggest challenge would be to work with the non-teaching staff and some teachers not taking the course for credits. Arna, one of the non-teaching participants, admitted: “We can never use anything to raise our wages, maybe we would have been more positive if we could. . . . It felt a bit unjust.” Some participants even felt that the course was imposed on them. Eva said: “I am a university student and I have enough work already and I find this to be yet another burden for me and I was just: ‘sorry, I don’t have time for this’.” Participants themselves noticed that this influenced the dynamics of the course, especially in group activities. Tóta gave an example of a group exercise for which “in a group of five, three participants felt they had nothing to contribute to the discussion.” Similarly, Tómas stated that “the biggest challenge was to be in group work with people who didn’t show any interest, they did not get the ECTS for the course and did not show any ambition to participate in an activity.” Our intention with group work was clearly not working. We felt we had little control and overview of the group dynamics when we were teaching online.

The emergent challenges for some participants included access to and understanding of technology such as an online classroom system, returning to school after a long time, and insecurity about being in the position of a learner and about academic writing and reading texts in English. As Auður, a non-teaching employee, stated: “employees have such diverse jobs [. . .] the emphasis in the course is on our students. Although we are around them for the whole day, we don’t participate in their learning process as such.” Moreover, some participants experienced technical challenges. Theodóra admitted: „Using Moodle wasn’t easy. We submitted everything that we should, but I don’t consider this environment fun to work in.” We had also experienced problems with downloading larger recordings of sessions to Moodle. We felt that the platform provided by the University was not only limited and outdated, but also difficult to manoeuvre, especially for participants who have never experienced a distance online learning platform.

For an online course to be inclusive, it is important that everyone has access to and understanding of technology. This was not necessarily the case in the school where the course took place. Eik, a non-teaching participant, explained: “Teachers have computers. But if other employees want to use a computer and go on Moodle to work on their projects during working hours, where are they supposed to do that?” Thus, together with the principal, we decided early on that the non-teaching staff and those who were not taking the course for credits would have a different way of going through the course. They would turn in a research plan and deliver a final presentation but were not expected to take part in online discussions. We expected them to

participate in the onsite and afternoon online sessions, but they could choose which course material they read. Additionally, we formed a group on Facebook as, according to the school principal, participants felt the Facebook platform was more accessible for informal discussions. We also allowed participants to submit assignments through email. In the case of participants who did not have access to a computer, the principal forwarded their assignments to us. We found that regular connection and sharing experiences from the course with the leadership team was important in keeping the course going because we lacked an insight into what was happening in the school.

Participants' levels of engagement were influenced not only by current work, but also by previous educational experience. Embla noticed that "for those who have never attended an upper secondary school nor a university it was very difficult, for example videos and other stuff in another language, in English." Although reading material in English is widely used in Icelandic secondary and tertiary education, the diversity in the group meant that we had to give presentations that were not too theoretical but still provided teachers with the necessary pedagogical grounding. These presentations also had to serve the purpose of encouraging other staff to reflect on their work. We also incorporated more visual material such as YouTube videos.

Participants who were used to tackling various academic challenges in their previous university studies mentioned that they had rarely before experienced the freedom we offered in selecting the project topic and its form. Though they welcomed it as a positive change, it also caused some concern. Telma admitted: 'Freedom in working on the projects in this course was considerable and I found it a bit uncomfortable, and it led to some insecurity at the beginning. [. . .] The freedom was so much that I was never really sure if I was doing the right thing.' Similarly, some participants with university degrees experienced difficulties with coming back to school. As Tinna explained:

At the beginning of autumn when it was decided to run this course, I was so excited and looking forward to it. I felt this was a great opportunity to get a chance to go to school and have the teachers come here and skip going to Reykjavík... But as soon as I had to start writing something seriously, I began to lose the motivation and I wasn't quite prepared for master studies because many years have passed since I last went to school.

We needed to think of ways to keep all participants motivated and engaged by looking for sources, topics and using vocabulary that would apply to them all. We worried about whether we were succeeding in reaching out to all participants.

15.4.2.3 All's Well that Ends Well

As the course was coming to an end, we wondered if our approach in the course and the changes we had made bore the fruits we had hoped for. The last session we planned in spring of 2020 was a so-called "Harvest Festival" during which participants presented their projects, either through an oral presentation (for those seeking course credit) or a poster (for the remaining participants). The projects' aim was for

participants to research their own practice with inclusive school as a focus, conduct field study by gathering evidence, analyse data in collaboration with course teachers and other practitioners, introduce their findings, and decide on the next steps – all in the spirit of forward-looking and innovative thinking. The overview of participants' final projects is presented in Table 15.2.

This day was an “a-ha!” moment for everyone. We discovered that, despite our worries, most participants were developing their understanding of how to employ inclusive pedagogy and improving their inclusive practices. As the table above depicts, the projects focused on various aspects of school practice, including

Table 15.2 Presentations

Presentation type	Project type	Project title
Oral	Pair	Teachers' collaboration
	Individual	I am not doing this alone. WE should rather do it TOGETHER
	Pair	Teaching natural sciences
	Individual	Science literacy
	Pair	Social skills
	Individual	Teaching bilingual students
	Group	Theme-based teaching – subject integration
	Pair	PALS in mathematics
	Individual	My goals
	Individual	Support services
	Individual	Green screens and talking stop-motion movies – collaborative learning at the lower secondary level.
	Group	All on board – mother tongue, bilingualism and multilingualism in a preschool
	Individual	To be and to do...
	Individual	Fab lab, knowledge dissemination as a facilitator of students' creativity
	Individual	How can I develop culturally responsive teaching of Danish?
	Individual	What is the story of my school? Supportive services at a crossroads
	Pair	Development of inclusive teaching practices in the sixth grade
	Individual	Using technology in school activities and in planning teaching
	Individual	How do I support the work and professional development of all employees to ensure that all students enjoy schooling?
	Poster	Group
Group		Support staff looking at their practice
Group		Restitution in the after-school programme
Individual		More kitchens, better teaching?
Individual		Support for students with ADHD
Individual		Teaching swimming through play
Individual		Goal setting in one's own practice
Individual		Reading practices in the tenth grade
Individual		The path to improved attention

developing collaborative practice, and rewriting subject curriculum to make it more student-centred, all with the aim of improving teaching practices to include all learners.

The non-teaching staff showed how they had learned about the importance of their contributions to the school. Their projects showed how their understanding of inclusion as a school policy had strengthened. As an example, employees of the after-school programme presented a poster depicting changes in the organisation of their activities. These included dividing students in grades 1–4 into two groups, offering a calmer learning environment and a more personalised approach, as well as improving collaboration between staff of the after-school programme and other school employees. Another group of non-teaching staff prepared a digital presentation of the changes they implemented in the school corridors, canteen, and staff rooms. The group gave examples of how small details, like informative texts or photos on the wall, positively affected accessibility and tidiness in the school and raised awareness of the shared responsibility in the entire school community for keeping the school neat and welcoming for all.

In the end, many participants reported that engaging with the course was a rewarding and eye-opening experience. Amalía, a non-teaching staff member, stated that: ‘I value my job more than I did before. [...] when people start to talk, and you start to hear what the others are doing, then OK, I do matter. We are all important where we are.’ This gave both us and the participants strength and confidence that they can and are prepared to change their practice and to work in learning communities by building on the diverse resources they all bring to the school.

15.4.3 Epilogue

When reflecting on the course, we could clearly see that both we and the participants had to tackle various technological, pedagogical, organisational, and personal challenges. At the same time, we all benefited from these experiences and learned important lessons about the roles of peer pressure and leadership, as well as the prerequisites needed for the development of communities of practice when designing and running a whole school professional development course through distance learning.

As the participants were all working together in the same school, peer collaboration was crucial to sustaining their engagement. The teacher Tara revealed: ‘to be honest, I was about to give up several times, but because I was doing the project in cooperation with my co-worker, I felt I could not leave her alone with the project.’ Annika, a non-teaching participant, said: ‘this was the worst, to have to put it in words, what am I supposed to write? But when we worked together it was totally different.’ Other participants seconded Tara’s and Annika’s experiences. Telma, a teacher, observed: ‘I am really satisfied with the fact that we got so many opportunities for group discussions, Our work during this course has strengthened

cooperation and opened new possibilities for cooperation in the future.’ This reassured us that our emphasis on group work, discussions and collaboration paid off despite us not being able to monitor the progress of participants’ projects on a regular basis.

The school principal had a key role in creating a collaborative space for the non-teaching staff, as she made the decision to meet with them every week to ‘spend more time with them and to discuss the goal of our practice, the school policies and how they could be more effective and attend to their well-being at work.’ She also used these meetings to support them in the coursework. Ally, a non-teaching staff member was satisfied with this support from the principal: ‘I think [...] it almost feels as if it was crucial to create a club, for non-teaching staff [...] it is good to discuss sometimes the things that we cannot discuss otherwise... We enjoyed a lot working on this together. We couldn’t have done this without her.’ This platform for non-teaching staff to discuss the issues that they encountered in their daily routines was clearly satisfying an unmet need.

One of the most important outcomes for nurturing inclusive practices in the school was development of communities of practice. Shortly after the course finished, we received some positive news from the school principal, who was planning another short course for the teachers on team teaching and collaboration. The idea emerged based on their positive experiences and the benefits they noticed while collaborating on the final projects for our course. This reassured us that the participants would continue to develop their practices and professional learning communities after the course was over.

15.5 Discussion

The aim of this research was twofold: first, to explore how we were able to be inclusive throughout teaching a professional development course focused on developing inclusive school practice, and secondly, to gain insight into how the course participants developed their understanding of inclusive practice and pedagogy.

The course developed through identifying and taking on the various challenges that participants and we faced as we responded to the diverse needs of participants. The challenges were similar to the ones described in previous research on distance or hybrid courses conducted in other contexts, including rural ones (Hall & Villareal, 2015; Rao et al., 2011).

We learned that regardless of the mode of teaching being online or onsite, the responsibility for running a whole school distance education professional development course is different from running a regular graduate level course at the University of Iceland. One main difference is that while most graduate students are powered by intrinsic motivation for studying, the motivation for participation in a whole school development course can be extrinsic (such as orders from the principal or peer pressure), or even non-existent, as some participants may feel that they are being forced to take part (Rubenson, 2011; Wlodkowski, 2003).

This connects to our findings regarding the advantages and disadvantages of offering a whole school development course. On the positive side, it can be a catalyst for developing professional learning communities and improving the staff knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards a specific topic (Leitch & Day, 2000). However, we learned that creating a learning community depends greatly on group pressure and support. One challenge of the whole school development course is that individuals who are not motivated to participate may pass negative attitudes on to other participants. This means that to keep everyone motivated, there is a need to attend to the diverse knowledge, experiences and needs of participants, their distinct roles and power in the school— as suggested by Brookfield (2013) and Hill (2014). Some participants had already finished their graduate education, while others had not been students for a long time, and their low self-confidence or even anxiety influenced their attitudes and motivation in participating in the course (Illeris, 2011; Rubenson, 2011).

This is where the school leaders stepped in as important if not essential actors. Because the school leadership team knew their staff well, they were able to stay alert and work with those who seemed uninterested or unmotivated in taking part in the course (Black & Simon, 2014). For us, communicating and collaborating with the school leader was crucial to be able to acknowledge and respond to participants' needs and challenges. This communication supported us in developing the coursework in the manner of inclusive pedagogy, with equity and flexibility as our beacon (Florian, 2014; Gale et al., 2017; Slee, 2018).

Our experiences with online teaching in this course were somewhat stressful to begin with, as we felt we had little control and a limited sense of what was happening in the school during these classes. However, as our and previous research have shown (Rao et al., 2011), gathering distance students together in the school in proximity with others supported them in overcoming some of the challenges involved in distance learning, and led to a sense of community thinking 'we are in this together.' The lesson we learned was that our emphasis on collaboration was the greatest support for participants' learning (Ferguson, 2008). Relating their experiences and mirroring their own perspectives in the experiences and attitudes of others (Cornelius et al., 2011) gave our participants the courage to reflect on and make changes in their own work for the benefit of their students and the entire school community.

15.6 Conclusion

The chapter offers insights into a whole school professional development approach as means to promote equity and access in education and to positively influence school practices in a rural school. The findings suggest that the co-teaching went well, and we were able to build the course on both our expertise and backgrounds. However, we felt we lacked the knowledge, imagination, and experience to attend better to the realities and needs of employees other than teachers. We also realised

that splitting the school staff into smaller groups might have led to a more personalised approach and would create a space for more tailored content. Another important finding is that there is a need for support and full participation of the school leadership team, as a large part of the course success can be attributed to their involvement. Our research shows that attending to all employees of the school in a professional development course is crucial, as they all contribute to inclusive practices, despite working with students in various areas and to different extents. In the future we could invite colleagues who have the knowledge and experience of teaching courses with non-teaching staff to join us and help us in developing an even more inclusive course, in line with the ideas of inclusive practice (Óskarsdóttir et al., 2019).

Although our study is limited to a single professional development course in rural Iceland, it explores experiences, challenges, and opportunities for both teachers and participants that are common to many other educational contexts and stresses the importance of continuous professional development. Development of innovative distance teaching for the whole school community is one of sustainable pathways to education for all, regardless of the remoteness and diversity of the community, provided it is well prepared, and all employees are motivated to participate and work to a common vision. Those teaching such a course need to be responsive to the needs of participants; flexible in adjusting the learning environment to enhance participation; and open to different teaching, learning, and assessment approaches – just like all teachers in inclusive settings.

Since the course ended in April 2020, we have both had to completely change our university teaching to online-only because of COVID-19. Our experience of teaching this course, and the knowledge gained from researching it, has had a profound influence on our teaching practices and on the inclusive pedagogy we now employ in our online courses.

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Chapter 16

Southern Reflections on Education Toward a Sustainable North



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Photographer: Sue Dockett

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Abstract To those of us closer to the Antarctic region of the world, the concept of the Circumpolar North is quite intriguing. The chapters in this book provide some insights into the lived experiences of people across the Circumpolar North, with a specific focus on educational equity and inclusion. In their descriptions of what it is like to live, work, and be in this place within the Circumpolar North, the authors explore learning, teaching, educational provision, and connections between culture, identity, and language. The chapters provide points of connection, enabling readers to highlight both the similarities and differences between their own contexts and those described. One of the great values in promoting such connections lies in the generation of opportunities for reflexivity, as we each consider our own context, question what we take for granted, and why that might be so. At the same time as recognising the uniqueness of the region, the chapters in this book draw us away from romanticised tourist images of the Circumpolar North that focus on snow-covered wonderlands, pristine landscapes, and thriving Indigenous communities living in harmony with nature. While acknowledging the challenges associated with remoteness, they also steer us away from stereotypes of disadvantage that automatically equate remoteness with deficit. Rather, the chapters describe contexts across the Circumpolar North that are both similar and different – from each other as well as from those of readers living and working outside the region. The rich culture and history of each context is noted, providing a base for addressing the complex challenges associated with promoting educational equity and inclusion.

Keywords Circumpolar north · Equity · Inclusion · Colonisation · Indigenous languages

16.1 Introduction

This book has been generated through the project entitled *Enhancing Equity in Education in the Circumpolar North*, supported by the *University of the Arctic Thematic Network: Teacher Education for Diversity and Social Justice*. It draws together authors from many locations within the Circumpolar North, sharing perspectives from Norway, Finland, Scotland, Canada, USA, Iceland, Sweden, Faroe Islands, Russia, and Greenland and reflects the aims of the network which include a focus on education for equity and social justice, cooperation among members, and the exchange of ideas and information.

To those of us closer to the Antarctic region of the world, the concept of the Circumpolar North which encompasses

the area traditionally covered by the terms ‘Arctic’ and ‘Subarctic’, the northern lands of the world’s eight most northernmost countries (the Arctic Eight): Canada, Finland, Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States (Alaska)” (UArctic, 2021)

is quite intriguing. The term Antarctic, drawn from Greek and literally meaning the opposite to the north (Arctic), (Hince, 2000), directs us to the differences between

the regions. For example, compared with the Arctic and Subarctic regions, the Antarctic and Subantarctic tend to be characterised by far flung island groups, and, with a few exceptions, human inhabitation tends to be restricted to those attached to research and conservation sites. While both the northern and southern regions include remote, inhospitable, and uninhabitable environments, the southern areas (generally), do not support permanent populations and the associated community contexts that sustain these. Hence, part of the intrigue for southerners such as us relates to the ways in which communities in the Circumpolar North have developed and been maintained over time, as well as efforts to sustain these into the future. Educational provision and strategies to promote equity and inclusion are key elements of these efforts.

While much of the Circumpolar North region is unfamiliar and intriguing, several of the concepts explored in these chapters have some similarities with experiences in other parts of the world. These include experiences of remoteness, colonisation, the loss of Indigenous languages as well as efforts to revitalise these, and important connections between identity, language, and culture. Hence, the issues and approaches described in the chapters of this book present possibilities for reflection and action from educators across many parts of the world.

The chapters in this book provide some insights into the lived experiences of people across the Circumpolar North, with a specific focus on educational equity and inclusion. In their descriptions of what it is like to live, work, and *be* in *this* place within the Circumpolar North, the authors explore learning, teaching, educational provision, and connections between culture, identity, and language. The chapters provide points of connection, enabling readers to highlight both the similarities and differences between their own contexts and those described. One of the great values in promoting such connections lies in the generation of opportunities for reflexivity, as we each consider our own context, question what we take for granted, and why that might be so.

At the same time as recognising the uniqueness of the region, the chapters in this book draw us away from romanticised tourist images of the Circumpolar North that focus on snow-covered wonderlands, pristine landscapes, and thriving Indigenous communities living in harmony with nature (Joona, 2018; Müller et al., 2020). While acknowledging the challenges associated with remoteness, they also steer us away from stereotypes of disadvantage that automatically equate remoteness with deficit. Rather, the chapters describe contexts across the Circumpolar North that are both similar and different – from each other as well as from those of readers living and working outside the region. The rich culture and history of each context is noted, providing a base for addressing the complex challenges associated with promoting educational equity and inclusion.

16.2 In this Place

In describing the experiences of those living and working in the Circumpolar North, the chapters reiterate the importance of social contexts and relationships and the impact these have not only on the experiences of the individual, but on the broader

social fabric. These descriptions are a reminder that place is more than a geographical classification, and that living *in this place* is much more complex than imagined or stereotypical narratives of the Circumpolar North might suggest.

Several theoretical conceptualisations have emphasised the relational nature of space and place: Lefebvre (1991) argued for conceptualising space as a social entity, with each society producing social space; Massey (1994) described places as relational, consisting of networks of social relations; and Soja (1989) outlined the concept of third space – lived space – which transcended the binaries of measurable and mappable space (first space) and subjective space (second space). In these conceptualisations, space is created and re-created through social interaction and relationships. As such, what it means to be *in this place* is constantly under construction. From this, we can draw comparisons about different places, noting their similarities and differences, but also must acknowledge that each place “is differently ‘practised’ into complete realisation through integration of its economy, geography, and demography realised as effects of its history and the overlay of governance and policy” (Reid, 2017, p. 94). In other words, despite some apparent similarities among educational communities in the Circumpolar North, it is important also to note their diversity and to recognise the complexity and multiplicity of experiences and the impact of these on efforts to promote educational equity and inclusion. Each of the chapters in this book recognises the multiplicity of lived experiences and the social interactions in specific contexts. They achieve this by positioning educational equity and inclusion as an interplay of events that encompass the elements identified by Reid (2017): economy, geography, demography, history, governance, and policy. The social contexts created by the interplay of these elements sets the scene for responsive and innovative curriculum, pedagogy, and practice.

Several chapter authors note the intertwined influence of geography, demography, and educational policy. In her description of a small rural community in Norway, Bjøru describes how policies to close small schools in remote locations have contributed to demographic changes, with the lack of a school making it difficult for communities to attract families to the area, resulting in other families leaving the area to move to larger population areas so that children can access education. In some northern areas of Finland, Joonas (2018) reports that “young families with many children start to be a rare sight. The population is getting older, and many want to move nearer to the cities and closer to services”. Lakkala, Turunen, Laitinen, Norvapalo, and Thessler report a similar pattern, as young people seeking access to vocational education are required to move to regional centres. Changing demographic patterns also impact local economies: the closure of a school often means that teachers leave the community, as do their families and others involved in educational provision and support. Decreasing populations often also present further economic challenges, including limited opportunities for employment, investment, and access to services (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2018a, b).

Two of the chapters exploring education in Greenland emphasise the role of geography in the recruitment of teachers. With many communities located in isolated

areas, attracting and retaining teachers with appropriate qualifications presents challenges (Demant-Poort and Andersen). While the historical link with Denmark has provided an avenue for recruiting teachers in Greenland, Brincker describes the motivation attracting some teachers to remote areas as neo-paternalism, where teachers from “the former colonial power, Denmark – take up positions in the former colony. They are attracted by adventure . . . and are apparently willing to self-sacrifice in pursuit of their endeavour ‘out in the wilderness’ of the former colony”.

Often those living in rural and remote locations have close connections with other residents. For some, knowing almost everyone in the community provides a sense of belonging and connection. This, as well as a close connection to their homeland and heritage, makes it attractive for many young people to stay in their local community. For others, the closeness of community can seem overwhelming. For still others seeking to enter the community, a sense of acceptance and belonging can take some time to develop. The contrasting movement – away from the community – involves considerable change as people balance connections in local contexts with knowledge that they must leave them to access a range of services, resources, and opportunities. As one example, Lakkala et al. outline some of the challenges managed by young people who access vocational education in regional areas, noting their move “from an environment where everybody knows one another to a much larger place where they comprise a small group, and their challenges during the transition may go unnoticed”.

Movement away from communities can have both long-term and short-term consequences. Some young people move away from their home communities to access education and then return. Others make the move permanent. One of the challenges of education in rural and remote setting is described by Bjøru as the tension between promoting education that enables children and young people to remain in their home community, while at the same time providing an education that has the potential to draw “the young away from rural areas. . . [and] the notion that rural youth should be allowed to have the same aspirations and be given the same opportunities as the young in urban areas”. Each outcome has implications for educational equity and inclusion: How can broad educational provision be maintained in small communities? How can connection to culture and community be maintained as young people move to larger areas to fulfil their aspirations?

These tensions are noted by Beaton, Keskitalo, and Helander in their discussion of endangered Sámi languages. They report that in Finland, Sámi education is connected with the Sámi Homeland Area, but that approximately 75% of Sámi students live outside this area, and only 5% of those living outside the Sámi Homeland Area study Sámi languages. Efforts to revitalise Sámi languages have sought to address historical policies of colonisation and assimilation, as well as current trends involving diaspora and urbanisation. These strategies include recognition of Sámi as Indigenous peoples and provision for Sámi to become a language of instruction in primary schools. However, Beaton et al. note continued challenges related to a lack of resources – both human and economic – within Sámi education.

Out-migration is not the only changing demographic feature for many communities in the Circumpolar North. One of the rationales for the importance of

educational equity and inclusion noted by Vijayarathan and Óskarsdóttir refers to changes in immigration. Describing both Iceland and the Faroe Islands as historically monocultural and homogeneous, the increasing numbers of immigrants from diverse contexts means that migrants now comprise a substantial proportion of the population of both countries. One of the consequences is that educational provision needs to work positively with this diversity. Principles of educational equity and inclusion are at the heart of approaches to achieve this. However, at the same time, commitment to these principles can generate tensions, with Vijayarathan and Óskarsdóttir noting that both Icelandic and Faroese communities “perceive their languages as being under threat of extinction, because of the vulnerability of being a small group of speakers with heavy influence of English (Iceland and The Faroe Islands) and Danish (The Faroe Islands)”.

Balancing demands to retain the cultural and language identity of the Faroe Islands with recognition of, and support for, the ethnic cultural identity and heritage languages of immigrant children as they are included in the Faroese education system is a challenge explored further by Vijayarathan, who notes the dominance of both Danish and English as well as other languages of immigrants which have much larger international participation than Faroese. The dominance of the English language is also reported by Beaton et al. as a threat to the re-emergence of Scottish Gaelic, with the more dominant language having “the potential to undermine students’ language development and socialisation in the minority language outside the formal classroom”.

In several contexts of the Circumpolar North, promoting educational equity and inclusion involves both supporting languages introduced through experiences such as immigration and engagement in the global economy, and efforts to revitalise languages suppressed through colonisation, diaspora, and urbanisation. For example, the dominance of Danish in both the Faroe Islands and Greenland is attributed to their time as colonies of Denmark. In a similar vein, a long history of demographic dislocation and colonisation have contributed to Sámi languages and Scottish Gaelic being considered endangered. Beaton et al. outline historical factors contributing to the potential loss of these languages, as well as policy efforts to revitalise these. They argue that effective revitalisation efforts rely on education and that, despite moves in positive directions, there remains much to be done to ensure the everyday use of these languages and to recognise that Sámi languages and Scottish Gaelic are “inextricably linked the culture of the community” and that “this culture must be acknowledged within educational provision” for such efforts to provide equitable and inclusive education.

Educational policy is a key driver in promoting educational equity and inclusion. Both national and international policy have impacted on actions in the Circumpolar North. For example, reference to inclusion began to appear in national educational policy documentation soon after the *Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 1994) as international organisations adopted related commitments which were then reflected in national and local policy documents. Initial references to inclusive education focused on supporting the inclusion of children with special

education needs. Building on the base provided by the Salamanca Declaration, the Education 2030 Framework for Action outlined through the Incheon Declaration (UNESCO, 2015) moved away from the specific focus on children with special education needs to consider ways in which education policy and practice concerned the inclusion of all children (Meijer & Watkins, 2016). The Incheon framework emphasised educational equity and inclusion as key elements in the provision of quality education, with Ainscow (2020, p. 8) reporting the emphasis on “the need to address all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation, and learning processes and outcomes. In this way, it is made clear that the international EFA agenda really has to be about ‘all’”.

The policy environments outlined across the chapters indicate national approaches to promote the inclusion of ‘all’. For example, Óskarsdóttir and Wozniczka refer to the initial mention of inclusion in Icelandic education policy in 1995, with current laws extending this to ensure that “all learners have the right to quality education in an inclusive school in their neighbourhoods”. However, several chapter authors question the efficacy and extent of national inclusive education policies. For example, Lennert explores the potential for educational policy in Greenland to support innovation but cautions that attention to global commitments without recognition of “country-specific contexts, needs, capacity building” has the potential to trap educational systems in cycles that generate low-level outcomes. She cites as examples that international policies requiring resources such as a steady pool of skilled labour and that do not recognise high staff turnover or the resultant loss of capacity, are doomed to fail within the context of education in Greenland.

Similarly, Vijayarathan questions whether education policies in the Faroe Islands fulfil the purpose of acknowledging the diverse “ethnic cultural identity and heritage language (first language/mother tongue) of immigrant children” while at the same time promoting “their inclusion through education towards integration”. This question emphasises connections between language and identity and the importance of opportunities for immigrant children to retain their home language and identity, while at the same time, being welcomed into Faroese society. Vijayarathan attributes the omission of concepts of equity and social justice, as well as references to multilingualism and multiculturalism, within Faroese education policy documents to tensions emerging from the perceived vulnerability of the Faroese language. While privileging Faroese is regarded as a measure to protect the language, ignoring the connection between language and identity for immigrant children has the potential to undermine recognition and respect and limit efforts to promote social cohesion and educational outcomes.

The link between language and identity is also accentuated by Flotskaya, Bulanova, and Ponomareva, who outline provisions in the language policy for the Nenets Autonomous District of northern Russia. Within this policy, the Nenets language is considered “part of the culture and traditional way of life of the Nenets people”. While the official language of instruction is Russian, kindergartens and schools in this district use the Nenets language. However, the authors also note the presence of contradictory policies that seek both to integrate populations and preserve ethnic identities.

Policy is closely connected with governance – the processes of decision-making that guide organisational priorities, policies, and programs (OECD, 2019), as well as the mechanisms for management, compliance, and accountability. Lennert argues that embedding systematic and relevant “evaluative thinking and capacity building” within Greenland’s education system is critical to building relevant policies and practices that are responsive to changing contexts. Responsiveness as an issue is also raised in other chapters in the light of changing demographic trends. As the populations of rural and remote communities decline, the impetus for centralised governance tends to increase. However, centralised – metrocentric – policies and governance may not recognise the significance of place or the ways in which place informs and shapes learning and teaching in rural and remote areas, facing a continued tension between “pedagogies of belonging and pedagogies of mobile aspirations” (Corbett, 2020, p. 279). Across the chapters, specific instances of this tension are described by Bjøru in Norway and Lakkala et al. in Finland. The impact of metrocentric policies and practices is not only to be found for those accessing education, but also for those providing it, with Brincker describing differences between teacher recruitment and retention in Nuuk, the main centre of Greenland, and Tasiilaq, a community described as being on the periphery.

16.3 Spaces for Embedding and Enacting Educational Equity and Inclusion

Across the chapters, educational equity and inclusion is situated within spaces created through the interplay of the elements identified by Reid (2017): economy, geography, demography, history, governance, and policy. These elements combine and interact to construct and re-construct places, constituted by networks of social relations (Massey, 1994). It is in these spaces that curriculum, pedagogy, and practice have the potential to embed and enact equity and inclusion. Several approaches working towards achieving this potential are identified through the chapters: multi-grade teaching; using heritage languages in everyday interactions; engaging with multiliteracies; examining colonising legacies; and listening to students’ perspectives. Many of these elements come together in approaches situated under the umbrella of culturally responsive pedagogies. As well, the critical roles of initial teacher education programs and professional learning in both supporting and challenging teachers and their practices are highlighted.

Culturally responsive pedagogies recognise learners as individuals, connected to family, community, social, and cultural contexts (Rigney, 2019; Rigney & Hattam, 2018). These pedagogies regard the diversity of individuals as strengths, seek to utilise these strengths to create pathways for educational success for all (Souto-Manning et al., 2019), and regard the classroom and school as sites for promoting social justice and social change (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Culturally responsive pedagogies also acknowledge the role of place, regarding place as a dynamic

resource for learning and teaching. Culturally responsive pedagogies assume that place matters to people and that the elements of economy, geography, demography, history, governance, and policy – both positive and negative – connect people to place. In this way, place is constructed and re-constructed as heterogeneous: and, as a consequence, is often contested (Corbett, 2020).

The enactment of culturally responsive pedagogies and achievement of positive educational outcomes both require that learning and teaching are responsive to the life-worlds and experiences of learners. Enacting this requires curriculum, pedagogy, and practice to recognise and create space for diverse world views, particularly Indigenous world views (Martin, 2009). To achieve this, Jannok Nutti argues for the importance of a strong and informed teacher base, where teachers have the knowledges and capabilities required to promote education that combines cultural relevance with national standards. In her Norwegian context, these knowledges and capabilities pertain particularly to Sámi worldviews and cultural-based education. Contemporary responses to the assimilationist legacy of historical policies and governance related to Sámi peoples and education emphasise the importance of these being incorporated into teacher education programs for all prospective teachers.

Burke, Toope, and Boison also highlight the importance of integrating Indigenous ways of knowing and teaching in an elementary school context in Newfoundland (Canada). They note that even teachers with deep commitments to equity and social justice can struggle to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and being, as they confront challenging histories and policies and their own uncertainty about approaching disturbing content. In the situation reported in this chapter, engagement in collaborative practice utilising post-colonial children's literature, and support from external researchers contributed to the transformation of teacher practice for, and student understandings of, Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Focusing also on teacher practice, Windsor and Kers report efforts by one teacher to promote awareness of Sámi history and culture and to challenge stereotypical understandings of Sámi people, knowledges, experiences, and culture. Acknowledging historical oppression and displacement, as well as ongoing discrimination, the authors describe the development of a unit of work for secondary students that challenged them to confront colonizing legacies as well as contemporary efforts to redress these. The basis of this work was drawn from opportunities to build awareness and to seek to understand the impact of colonisation. These were integrated with students' consideration of their own positioning and contributions to a socially cohesive classroom. The studies outlined by Burke et al., and Windsor and Kers remind us that teachers play important roles in the construction of places where they and their students can build the confidence and competence to challenge stereotypes, confront legacies of exclusion and inequity, and promote learning and teaching that is responsive to the life-worlds and experiences of learners. These are the spaces created by culturally responsive pedagogies.

Teacher education has an important role to play in promoting culturally responsive pedagogies: so too does ongoing professional learning, such as that demonstrated by teachers in the chapters described above. Óskarsdóttir and Wozniczka

describe their planning and delivery of a distance-mode professional learning course that sought to use and encourage inclusive approaches. Engaging in distance learning and teaching is a reality for many and can generate challenges for those advocating for the importance of building understandings of place and context into any course. Recognising this challenge, Óskarsdóttir and Wozniczka focused on creating a learning community among course participants. Reflections on the design and delivery of the course acknowledge challenges in responding to diversity among participants and the influence of peer pressure and leadership on building a community of practice.

Valuing and responding to language diversity as a basis for equity and inclusion is a thread uniting several chapters. In their analysis of culturally responsive pedagogies in Faroese and Icelandic education policies, Vijayarathan and Óskarsdóttir concluded that “educational policy in both countries appears ill-equipped to support schools to work systematically with students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds”. Rather than drawing on students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds as strengths, and utilising these as resources to guide learning and teaching, the authors report some apparent contradictions, particularly around the use of language. With both Faroese and Icelandic languages considered vulnerable in a global context of immigration and commerce, policies emphasised these as the languages of instruction and were unclear about how teachers might respond to or incorporate the ‘other’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds of learners.

Ensuring recognition of heritage or minority languages within dominant majority linguistic contexts is also addressed by Beaton et al., who argue that language revitalisation depends not only on opportunities to study these languages as a subject, but also opportunities to use them in social and informal settings. They conclude that language “must be used in everyday communication in the community for it to survive”. This approach highlights connections between language and cultural identity as outlined by Vijayarathan and Flotskaya et al.

Culturally responsive pedagogies integrate respect for diversity with recognition of the importance of place. An example of this is provided by Bjøru in her description of multi-grade teaching in a rural school. The essence of multi-grade teaching is recognising and responding to diversity, since every class group incorporates learners with diverse experiences, understandings, knowledges, skills, and expectations.

Engaging with culturally responsive pedagogies requires recognition that positive educational outcomes encompass personal and social, as well as academic outcomes. However, Demant-Poort and Andersen observe that academic outcomes tend to be those reported and valued by many. In their investigations of student perspectives of their school experiences, the social environment – particularly the dispositions and interactions of teachers and students – was emphasised as important. This study serves as a reminder that culturally responsive pedagogies acknowledge the value of multiple perspectives and utilise these to recognise learners as individuals, albeit with connections to family, community, social, and cultural contexts.

16.4 Conclusion

While the chapters in this volume examine educational equity and inclusion in the Circumpolar North, they provide much food for thought for those of us who live and work outside this region. They encourage us to consider what it is like to live, work, and be in *this* place within the Circumpolar North and, in doing so, provide a platform for us to recognise the ways in which economy, geography, demography, history, governance, and policy interact in the construction and reconstruction of our own places. Such considerations serve as prompts for us to reflect on the social relations that constitute each place and the ways in which they inform learning and teaching.

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