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## Developing an understanding of intercultural music education in a Nordic setting

**Felicity Burbridge Rinde & Catharina Christophersen**

Affiliation: Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

Contact corresponding author: [Felicity.Katharine.Burbridge.Rinde@hvl.no](mailto:Felicity.Katharine.Burbridge.Rinde@hvl.no)

### Abstract

The purpose of this article is to achieve greater clarification of the meaning of the word 'intercultural' when used in Nordic music education research, by means of a literature review. The findings suggest that 'intercultural' is used in different ways, sometimes without definition. A central theme that emerges is developing student teachers' intercultural competence through disturbance. There is little research into pupils' intercultural competence, or intercultural music education at primary level. The findings are merged with international scholarship to envisage how different understandings of 'intercultural' might affect music in schools. We suggest placing intercultural music education along a continuum from *intercultural approaches to music education* to *intercultural education through inclusive music pedagogy*.

**Keywords:** *intercultural music education, cultural diversity*

### Introduction and background

The need to engage with cultural diversity in music education has produced many responses around the world in the past few decades: the connections between music, education and society are a key focus area in music education research, and approaches to meeting diversity in music education have employed a wide mix of labels (Ellefsen & Karlsen, 2020; Schippers & Campbell, 2012). We live in an age of increasing social complexity, in which globalisation, advances in information technology, migration flows and almost limitless potential for contact between what were once considered discrete cultures have each contributed to increased cultural diversity in societies around the globe. Widespread migration and greater mobility have created new challenges for education systems. Such challenges

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are particularly found in areas marked by what Vertovec (2007) terms super-diversity, that is, wide-ranging cultural diversity marked not only by ethnicity, but also by differing immigration statuses, labour market experiences and gender and age profiles.

Super-diversity has only arisen in certain urban areas in recent years in the Nordic region, see for instance Huttunen and Juntunen's (2018) ethnographic study of the urban neighbourhood Varissuo in Finland where 80% of school starters in 2015 had a mother tongue other than Finnish. Even given the presence of indigenous Sami peoples in northern Scandinavia, school systems have tended to be monolingual and monocultural (Horst & Pihl, 2010). It is not that the Nordic countries have been monocultural *per se* (for an overview of immigration to the Nordic region, see Karlsdóttir et al., 2018). Indeed, a recent anthology edited by Keskinen, Skaptadóttir and Toivanen (2019) calls into question the widespread discourse of ethnic homogeneity in the Nordic region. However, as Räsänen (2010) pointed out ten years ago, school systems have only recently taken on board the need to address the changing demographic context and to take cultural diversity into account in educational planning.

Music and arts education is a commonly espoused vehicle for engaging with diversity in schools. Popular discourses abound on the potential of music as a tool for building community, a sense of belonging and social cohesion irrespective of participants' cultural background or lack of common language (for instance Hauge et al., 2016; Pearce et al., 2015). At the same time, it is important to be aware that popular belief in the transformative power of music may sometimes overshadow potential negative effects of music practices in culturally diverse pupil populations, related to power (Bradley, 2006); exoticism (Abdallah-Preteille, 2006; Carson & Westvall, 2016; Sæther, 2010); assigned identity and cultural labelling (Folkestad, 2002; Knudsen, 2010); exclusionary paradigms in music education (Bowman, 2007; Kindall-Smith et al., 2011; Vaugeois, 2007); and musical nationalism (Bohlman, 2003; Hebert & Kertz-Welzel, 2016).

Notwithstanding these potential pitfalls, music educators around the globe have sought ways of moving away from monocultural practices, adopting a range of perspectives with the aim of meeting cultural diversity in the classroom. These perspectives have been named variously: multicultural music education, global music education, international education and intercultural music education (Schippers & Campbell, 2012, p. 87). Approaches have included embracing the value of diverse musical practices, emphasising the music teacher's role as a social change agent, teaching in culturally responsive ways, and seeing music education as an arena for social justice (Miettinen et al., 2020, p. 178). From the perspective of intercultural education, Portera (2020) has pinpointed an urgent need for terminological clarification in educational responses to increasing cultural diversity, hand in hand with reflection on suitable forms of intervention to meet such diversity. This article takes up that challenge by exploring how 'interculturality' has featured in recent music education research in a Nordic context.

The literature review in this article is used as a stepping stone to a more general exploration of how different understandings of intercultural music education might play out in the classroom. We start with a brief presentation of interculturality in education in a European tradition, since European intercultural education is the backdrop against which the Nordic texts will be read. This tradition represents part of our pre-understanding and is particularly drawn on in the second stage of our analysis of Nordic texts. Our three-stage analysis consists of (a) a general overview of interculturality in the text sample at the lexical level, (b) contextual reading of these occurrences, and (c) closer reading of texts within the sample that engage specifically with the concept of interculturality as a central concept. International perspectives on interculturality form part of the basis for the discussion in the latter part of this article.

## **Framing the study from the perspective of intercultural education**

In order to establish a baseline of intercultural education for use in our analysis and discussion, it is important to frame the literature review with an understanding of intercultural education in a wider perspective. Holm & Zilliacus (2009) point out that problems of conceptual clarity are exacerbated by the fact that in the literature, it is often unclear what the concepts ‘multicultural’ and ‘intercultural’ mean and whether they refer to the same things. They note that differences in use are often geographical, and that a clear geographical divide in conceptual use exists between US and European usage of ‘multicultural’ versus ‘intercultural’ education. Kertz-Welzel (2008) notes that although music education terms may appear similar across countries, comparative research shows that seemingly tacitly agreed-upon content can vary. This is the case when it comes to ‘multicultural/intercultural’ in the US and Europe.<sup>1</sup>

In the European supranational organisation the Council of Europe, there is strong official promotion of intercultural education, and a clear distinction is upheld between intercultural and multicultural approaches in education. UNESCO’s (2006) guidelines on intercultural education set out the distinction. UNESCO defines ‘multicultural’ as the culturally diverse nature of human society, where each group maintains its distinct cultural identity. ‘Intercultural’ is defined as a dynamic concept referring to evolving relations between cultural groups. The main focus in interculturality is on commonalities between

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1 At the same time, there is not just one intercultural or multicultural approach, but each stands for a complex set of approaches, marked by the history of the setting. Holm & Zilliacus (2009) point out, for instance, that while in the US racial segregation has been a major issue in multicultural education, in Europe religious diversity and migration have been predominant issues.

groups, with synthesis of original groups to create something new, and emphasis on relational aspects. Interculturality is said to presuppose multiculturalism and result from intercultural exchange and dialogue at local, regional, national or international level (UNESCO, 2006, p. 17).

In a European understanding, multicultural education aims to use learning about other cultures to produce acceptance or tolerance of these cultures, recognising diversity and respecting it “as it is” without claiming to modify it, while intercultural education aims to go beyond passive co-existence to something more transformational (Portera, 2010). The aim is to achieve “a developing and sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies through the creation of understanding of, respect for and dialogue between the different cultural groups” (UNESCO, 2006, p. 18). Holm and Zilliacus (2009) argue that assuming that the goal of multicultural education is merely passive co-existence does not do justice to multicultural education practices in numerous countries. A different way of distinguishing between mere co-existence and potentially more transformational processes can be found in Mikander et al. (2018), who claim that both ‘multicultural’ and ‘intercultural’ are polysemic floating signifiers in educational discourse (p. 41), i.e. words with no single, clearly agreed upon meaning. In their literature review of intercultural education in the Nordic countries, Mikander et al. (2018) point to signs of reconceptualisation of ‘intercultural education’ in the Nordic region towards more critically oriented intercultural education that aims “to support cultural diversity and social justice as well as to counter marginalisation and discrimination in education and society” (p. 40).

Solbue (2014) notes that an important factor in intercultural education is the opportunity for individuals to define themselves without being assigned labels or stereotypes by others. According to Portera (2010) there is an inherent danger in multicultural education of appointing foreign pupils as ambassadors of their countries and forcing them to represent a culture they have no knowledge of. For Abdallah-Preteille (2006) intercultural education is about self-reflexivity and avoiding excessive focus on the characteristics of others that leads to exoticism and “cultural dead-ends” (p. 476) by overemphasising cultural differences, thereby enhancing stereotypes and prejudices. Abdallah-Preteille (2006) suggests replacing the categorising concept of ‘culture’ with the more fluid concept of ‘culturality’, which reflects the constantly changing nature of cultures and the idea of culture as a place of expression and interaction between oneself and the Other.

Intercultural education is seen by Grant and Portera (2010), among others, as a dialogic response to contemporary life in *all* its complexity, relating not only to migrant pupils, but considering all kinds of diversity in the classroom. Similarly, Räsänen (2010) writes that the aim of intercultural education is “not merely co-existence, but rather, fruitful and equal cooperation and learning between cultures” (p. 12). This might involve cultural interaction between countries and/or within nation states, writes Räsänen. Such cultural interaction might be between mainstream cultures, old ethnic minorities, newly immigrated

minorities, religious minorities, and cultures of social classes and youth cultures. There is a strong tradition within intercultural education of emphasising the resources that stem from diversity, rather than focusing on the deficits of minority groups. Portera (2008) states that intercultural education strategies offer an alternative to more compensatory approaches in which migration and growing up in a multicultural space are seen only as risk factors. Such strategies allow children of immigrants to be regarded not as a problem or risk through a deficit discourse (Dyson, 2015), but as resources.

To sum up, intercultural education in a broadly European understanding is concerned with dialogic, relational aspects between groups, a fluid understanding of culture, cultural identities free of cultural labels and stereotypes, self-reflexivity and resource-oriented pedagogies. The above perspective on ‘intercultural education’ is used as a baseline in this article and may be assumed to colour our reading and analysis. With this perspective established, we move on to our review of how the concept of ‘interculturality’ is used in Nordic music education research.

## Method

To examine the use of ‘interculturality’ by Nordic music education researchers, a three-stage literature review was used as a methodological tool to canvas the literature and to catalogue different understandings of ‘interculturality’. This review is what Machi & McEvoy (2016) term a simple literature review, i.e. one that documents, analyses and draws conclusions about what is known about an issue. The review was designed to be integrative (Snyder, 2019) rather than systematic. That is, rather than an exhaustive inventory of all music education texts mentioning ‘intercultural’, selection was geared towards identifying texts relevant to the conceptualisation of ‘intercultural music education’, an emerging sub-field in the Nordic region. It should be noted that a consequence of the focus on a single concept as a search criterion may have led to certain key Nordic texts on music education and diversity being missed.

Searches were carried out in Google Scholar and ERIC in English, Norwegian, Swedish and Danish to identify music education texts that engaged explicitly with the term ‘intercultural’.<sup>2</sup> The initial database search spanned 2010–2020. It was noted that the number of texts containing ‘intercultural’ showed a notable increase from 2015. In the second round, the search was consequently limited to the period 2014–2020. After removing duplicates, this produced 49 hits, roughly two thirds in English, the rest in Swedish and

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2 These two search engines were deemed suited to gain an overview of the field, including double-checking against literature lists in texts in the sample for potential omissions. No texts were found in Icelandic. Only texts by Finnish scholars that were published in English were included.

Norwegian. After manual full-text mapping of the texts for the main inclusion criterion, namely that authors used ‘intercultural’ other than in citations and references, the number was reduced to 35 texts, which formed the text sample in the analysis (n = 35), labelled from A to Z, and further from A2 to I2.

**Table 1:** Search parameters and inclusion criteria

Databases	Google Scholar, ERIC
Time frame	Year of publication 2014–2020
Publication type	Included: peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, doctoral theses Excluded: grey literature, <sup>3</sup> masters theses
Language	Included: English, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish Excluded: Icelandic, Finnish
Keyword searches	intercultural music education + Norway; intercultural music education + Sweden; intercultural music education + Denmark; intercultural music education + Finland; intercultural music education + Iceland; intercultural music teacher education + Norway; intercultural music teacher education + Sweden; intercultural music teacher education + Denmark; intercultural music teacher education + Finland; intercultural music teacher education + Iceland
Inclusion criterion	Use of ‘intercultural’ in other than citations and references

The texts were imported to NVivo12 for three discrete, interlinked stages of analysis that moved from tracking the word ‘intercultural’ by identifying word combinations (collocations) with ‘intercultural’ in the texts, through reading of texts to understand how the term is used in context, to closer reading of qualitatively selected texts in the sample that explicitly engage with the concept of ‘interculturality’ at a theoretical level.

In the first stage, collocations with ‘intercultural’ were identified and viewed at the lexical level to form an overview of how Nordic scholars use the term. In the second stage, the results of the first stage were contextualised through reading the 35 texts in full. A content analysis was undertaken of the use of ‘intercultural’ through a process of coding and categorisation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Units of data were coded, then grouped into the broader categories *intercultural skills and competences*, *dialogic processes of intercultural engagement/exchange*, *intercultural sites and settings* and *reflection and reflexivity* that illustrated different perceived meanings and usages. These categories were arrived at both inductively from themes emerging from the data through a form of constant comparative method, and deductively through the lens of intercultural education as presented above. In the third stage, a qualitative selection was made from the same body of texts for close reading. The selection criterion for these texts was that interculturality should be central to the text and that the author(s) explicitly engage with the concept with reference to theoretical positions on interculturality. As such, these texts represent a selection of key Nordic contributions to the emerging subfield of intercultural music (teacher) education.

3 Information produced by government agencies, academic institutions and the for-profit sector not made available by commercial publishers.

Through the three stages the analysis process swung between a mapping function in the first stage, an abductive function drawing on understandings of ‘interculturality’ in the second stage, and greater presence of the authors’ voice in more inductive reading and interpretation in the third stage. Together the three approaches were deemed to contribute to breadth and depth in the review, aiding terminological clarification.

**Table 2:** Framework for literature review aimed at conceptual clarification

Stage	Description	Purpose	Analytical tool	Findings
1	Exploring usage at the lexical level (collocations)	Track usage	Identifying frequent collocations and one-off usages	Collocations, reported through lists of frequent and infrequent collocations in text sample
2	Exploring usage in context	Show breadth of usage	a. Inductive coding and categorisation, including definitions and explanations b. Deductive coding and categorisation using lens of intercultural education	How the term is defined and used in text sample, reported through anonymised examples
3	Close reading of selected texts in sample with focus on theory	Show depth of usage and contribute towards a conceptual framework	Identification of theoretical foundation and development of the term under investigation in the texts	Inventory of the theoretical bases in selected texts in text sample, reported through short summaries

Our analysis pinpointed use of the term ‘intercultural’. As such, the texts were read for that specific purpose. This purposeful reading may not have been in keeping with the authors’ original main focus of the texts. Therefore, the texts used in stages 1 and 2 of the analysis are reported anonymously, whereas texts in stage 3 are cited with full publication details. The anonymisation of texts in the first two stages of analysis was felt to be ethically advisable since the focus is on the use of the term ‘intercultural’ as part of the general discourse on interculturality in the region, and not on specific authors or texts.

## Findings

### ‘Intercultural’ at the lexical level

Our explorative reading of the literature, fuelled by Portera’s (2020) challenge for conceptual clarification and Mikander et al.’s (2018) idea of floating signifiers, made us query whether there is a shared understanding of ‘interculturality’ in Nordic music education research. The initial stage of the analysis therefore consisted of tracking occurrences of ‘intercultural’ at a lexical level, looking at what nouns ‘intercultural’ was used together with (collocations), in order to establish apparent commonalities or discrepancies in usage by different researchers. Lexical analysis identified more than fifty collocations (our translation here into English):

Collocations that recur most frequently (across eight or more texts in the sample):

intercultural collaboration; intercultural competence; intercultural dialogue; intercultural education; intercultural learning, intercultural music teacher education, intercultural perspectives; intercultural projects

Other usages that recurred across three or more texts:

intercultural approaches; intercultural aspects; intercultural communication; intercultural contexts; intercultural cooperation; intercultural encounter; intercultural exchange; intercultural identity; intercultural knowledge; intercultural negotiation; intercultural networks; intercultural relations; intercultural sensitivity; intercultural settings and situations; intercultural skills; intercultural tools; intercultural training; intercultural understanding; intercultural work

One-off usages: intercultural challenges; intercultural music

Preliminary analysis concentrated on pinpointing the most common collocations and one-off collocations. Frequently recurring collocations probably reflect common understandings, while one-off collocations might point to breadth in usage, potentially highlighting understandings different from the common consensus, emerging usages, or factors that are not generally paid much attention. For instance, 'intercultural challenges' occurred only once, which might suggest a tendency to downplay or overlook difficult aspects of intercultural projects. While not definitive, these findings served as useful pointers in the further analysis. In the next stage we looked at these collocations in context in larger text segments.

### **'Intercultural' in context**

Well over half the texts in the sample offer no definition, explanation or theoretical grounding for 'intercultural', while several switch without explanation between 'intercultural' and 'multicultural'. Of those texts that discuss the use of the term, one (text V) problematises that 'polycultural' and 'multicultural' are often used without distinction, noting that different theorists define terms differently, while another (text X) notes that 'intercultural' was widely replaced in Swedish educational policy in the 1990s by 'internationalisation'.

Initial analysis showed that *intercultural competence* was a common collocation. Many texts discuss the competenc(i)es, skills and knowledge music teachers need to acquire through formal education for working in societies characterised by diversity (texts P, Q and X), including empirical studies of teachers' or teacher educators' perception of their own intercultural competence (texts T and U). In many of the texts such competence is linked to immersion experiences in teacher education, while only one text links intercultural competence to educational policy (text M). Text S takes a different view, stating that intercultural competence is acquired not through formal schooling, but through



experiences of living with diversity, and suggests that music making in a specific genre (hiphop) could result in intercultural competence.

Particular note was taken of usages with potential ambiguity. It became clear that ‘intercultural’ can be ambiguous when not defined, particularly in the category *intercultural sites and settings*. For instance, an intercultural music workshop could refer to a process that is dialogical, or it could simply describe a workshop with participants from diverse backgrounds without any dialogic component envisaged. In the latter case, ‘intercultural’ may be a near-synonym for ‘multicultural’ or ‘transcultural’, referring to things transcending the limitations or crossing the boundaries of cultures, rather than a dialogic, relational process. Both usages can appear in the same text – for instance, text R uses ‘intercultural’ both descriptively about ‘intercultural music ensembles’ with participant groups from different cultural backgrounds, and with reference to music as an ‘intercultural tool’ for creating new hybrid musical expressions in dialogic processes.

References to *intercultural engagement and exchange* are grouped around three main foci in the texts. The first is international collaboration for scholarship, exchange of knowledge and joint research efforts (texts J, P, and Q). The second relates to intercultural immersion projects with the aim of challenging participants’ ways of thinking through *in situ* intercultural experiences, requiring the participant to unlearn previous conceptions (texts C and A2), using world music as a framework for intercultural understanding (texts L and M), and challenging norms and widening repertoire in the classroom in more than mere musical tourism (text K). The third is meetings points for music making projects with participants from different cultural groups, internationally (text B) or locally (text E) aimed, for instance, at integrating children from segregated areas into mainstream society.

Several texts flag the need for intercultural approaches to be marked by *critical reflection* on didactic choices and *reflexivity* about music teachers’/teacher educators’ norms, values and preconceptions (texts C, W and A2), reflective understanding of privilege and power and taken-for-granted hierarchies (texts T and G2), and how advantaging certain musical practices, repertoire and knowledges may exclude some student groups (texts I, K and F2).

*Other issues* are also highlighted in the texts. Text B2, for example, brings in a resource focus stating that through transnational research exchange, interculturally oriented music teacher education may help position diversity and difference as opportunities, rather than as problems to be overcome. Text A uses ‘intercultural transmission’, defined in the text as the teaching and learning of a foreign tradition, to describe how music from one tradition is taken up and develops monoculturally in another culture. Distinct from conscious efforts at dialogic exchange between cultures, this may be more on a line with cross-cultural transmission or educational transfer. Text F2 refers to pupils with ‘an intercultural background’, which may be being used as a synonym for ‘multicultural’ in a purely descriptive way. This usage could indicate a hesitancy to use loaded alternative terms such as ‘multicultural’

(Mikander et al., 2018, p. 44), exemplify the fashionableness of ‘intercultural’ referred to by Portera (2012, p. 24), or simply be an attempt at political correctness.

The findings in the second stage show that Nordic researchers engage with ‘intercultural’ in different ways, at times as a synonym for ‘multicultural’ or ‘transcultural’, and often without definition. ‘Intercultural’ would thus seem to be a floating signifier (Mikander et al., 2018) in Nordic music education texts. In stage three we look at texts in the sample that have a firm grounding in theoretical perspectives on interculturality.

### **Theoretical basis in a selection of the texts that engage with interculturality**

The findings in stage three take the form of a snapshot of theoretical understandings of interculturality in a selection of texts from the sample. These texts were picked out since they engage theoretically with interculturality and as such represent Nordic contributions towards a conceptual framework for intercultural music education. The findings are organised thematically, starting with a brief inventory of theoretical stances on intercultural competence.

### **Theoretical stances on intercultural competence**

Miettinen et al. (2018) and Kallio & Westerlund (2020) draw on Deardorff’s definitions of intercultural competence (2006, 2009) and cultural humility (2015). According to Deardorff (2006), intercultural competence is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations. It comprises five interrelated elements: attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal outcomes and external outcomes (Deardorff, 2009).<sup>4</sup> Sæther (2020) adopts Lorentz’ (2016) three components of intercultural pedagogic competence: communicative competence, social competence and civic competence, developed through five phases of deconstruction, understanding intercultural communication through hands-on experiences, ethno-relative understanding of pluralism, cultural awareness, and reflexivity. Miettinen et al. (2018) develop a framework for intercultural teaching competences based on MacPherson’s (2010) five competence aspects: attitudes, cultural responsiveness, curriculum and instruction, communication and language, and critical perspectives. Kallio & Westerlund (2020) adopt Gesche & Makeham’s (2010) notion of intercultural competence developing through a stress–adaptation–growth process in which people manoeuvre in and out of challenging situations.

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4 Deardorff’s (2009) five intercultural competence skills: (1) mindfulness of how communication and interaction with others is developed, (2) cognitive flexibility in creating new categories of information and the ability to take more than one perspective, (3) tolerance for ambiguity, (4) behavioural flexibility to adapt and accommodate behaviours to a different culture, and (5) cross-cultural empathy.

### **Responding to social diversity through musical diversity**

Strøm (2016) refers to Schippers' (2010) four realms of approaches to cultural diversity in world music, namely issues of context, modes of transmission, and dimensions of interaction to cultural diversity in world music, placed along a continuum from monocultural at one end, where the dominant culture is exclusively present, to transcultural at the other, the site of in-depth exchange between different musics and musical approaches. Carson & Westvall (2016) explore how music education can respond to social diversity through a focus on diversity in repertoire and curricula. In this "diversified normality", they suggest approaches that go beyond superficial contact with other musical cultures where the hierarchical structures of the centre/margin dichotomy are preserved and cultural differences are emphasised by bracketing off marginalised musics. They propose instead a deeper level of engagement with diverse repertoires, practices and aesthetics in more interactive and intercultural processes.

### **From multicultural omnivorousness to intercultural project**

Westerlund (2017) moves beyond the polycultural musical omnivorousness of multicultural music education to what she calls "intercultural project identity" as something that breaks with canonised repertoires and fixed practices. She envisages intercultural music teachers as creators of twenty-first century "imagined communities" in times of superdiversity. Intercultural project identity work, Westerlund suggests, could develop a reflexive orientation and professional attitude towards ambivalence, social struggle, politics and change as an alternative to the aesthetic tradition where musical knowledge and skills are still considered to be neutral. Westerlund and Karlsen (2017) build on Keuchel's (2015) distinction between polyculturality, interculturality and transculturality, as well as Bauman's (2010) art of living with difference. While recognising the contributions of multicultural music education, they share Vaugeois' (2007) view that the discourse of multiculturalism creates definitional exclusion, and they argue that the notion of diversity itself prevents music educators from seeing their biases. Simplistic notions of diversity are incapable of describing hybrid, super-diverse cultures, they say, proposing that diversity be approached from the perspectives of cross-cultural dialogue, intermingling and interaction, rather than cultural categorisation.

### **Intercultural experiences, habitus dislocation and reflexivity**

The theme of getting experiences "beyond the home port" (Hebert & Sæther, 2014, p. 426) has long been a subject in Nordic music education research, not least under the auspices of Global Visions through Mobilizing Networks.<sup>5</sup> Global Visions is a cross-national research project (2015–2020) whose aim is to envision music teacher education programmes that will equip students with the necessary skills and understandings to work

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5 [www.sites.uniarts.fi/web/globalvisions/home](http://www.sites.uniarts.fi/web/globalvisions/home)

within increasingly diverse environments. Out of this research environment came the anthology *Visions for Intercultural Music Teacher Education* (Westerlund et al., 2020), including several Nordic chapters. An overarching theme in the anthology is how intercultural collaboration can spark continuing professional development in music education in times of cultural diversity.

Several contributors to the anthology, including Sæther (2020) and Kallio & Westerlund (2020), draw on disruptive experiences in cross-cultural exchange in teacher education, such as Pöllmann's (2016) "habitus dislocation". Such experiences can spark awareness of how the culturally bound majority standpoint of most teachers needs to be disturbed to make way for developing intercultural competence. Nordic contributors point out, however, that there is no guarantee that disruption necessarily leads to development. Brøske (2020) focusses on how complexity and contradictions in intercultural encounters in music teacher education can function as potential sources for development and expansive learning, though she notes that disturbance is not enough on its own but must be enhanced by reflection and dialogue. Kallio and Westerlund (2020) point out that there is no inevitability of developing intercultural competence merely through immersion and reflexivity, while Sæther (2020) writes that a habitus crisis is not always experienced as a positive stimulant for students' intercultural reflexivity, but can actually spark a desire to disengage if too intense.

### **Critical interculturalism**

The editors of the anthology, Westerlund, Karlsen and Partti (2020), draw on critical interculturalism with its commitment to questioning one's own identity and developing ethical relations with the Other. As such, they offer a vision of intercultural music teacher education as an opportunity for educating student teachers to become change agents in times of increasing social complexity. They describe how intercultural encounters between fluid cultural entities, combined with critical self-reflexivity, can serve to spark transformation at the individual level, as well as driving institutional change in educational establishments.

The findings in the third stage of the analysis show that these Nordic researchers build on established understandings of intercultural competence. In addition to the idea of responding to social diversity in schools through deep intercultural engagement with repertoires, practices and aesthetics, there is a strong focus on interculturality in music teacher education through disruptive intercultural experiences. Several of the texts tend towards a more critically oriented, transformational intercultural education.

### *Summary of findings*

In our review we sought to track the term 'intercultural' in recently published Nordic music education research texts, and to cover both breadth and depth in usage. The main finding in the first two stages of analysis is that several Nordic texts use 'intercultural' with

no clear definition and with a range of usages that may sometimes be synonymous with ‘multicultural’ or ‘transcultural’. The main finding in the third stage of analysis is that in Nordic music education research that explicitly engages with interculturality, there is a clear emphasis on (a) developing intercultural competences at the individual (teacher/student teacher/teacher educator) and systemic level, and (b) intercultural collaboration and exchange in music teacher education to cause a habitus disturbance through stepping outside the dominant cultural hegemony and experiencing being an Other. Such disturbance is intended to better equip music teachers to meet cultural and social diversity in the classroom in their own setting, though some authors challenge this assumption.

Another finding stemming from all three stages relates to what we did *not* find – for instance, there are almost no texts that examine intercultural music education as a concept in compulsory music education, or what different intercultural approaches to music education might mean in the classroom in practice, nor research into pupils’ intercultural competence. The various understandings of interculturality have different implications for music teaching and music teacher education. Drawing on the findings in the literature review and perspectives from international intercultural scholarship, in the next section we look at what different understandings of intercultural music education might mean in the classroom.

## **Different understandings of interculturality and music in schools**

The above findings show that, whereas the term ‘intercultural’ is reserved by Portera (2020) and others for processes that are dialogic or relational, it is used more broadly by Nordic scholars to describe anything from contexts and learning environments to curriculum content and identity. If we exclude those usages of ‘intercultural’ that appear to be synonymous with ‘multicultural’ or ‘transcultural’, we argue that ‘intercultural music education’ could have at least four usages. Drawing on all three stages of the literature review and international literature, we observe that these four perspectives could lead to quite different emphases in the classroom.

The first usage refers to a pluralistic music education derived from greater perspective consciousness (cf. Burton, 2011). For instance, exchange programmes that bring together music teacher students from different countries for intercultural encounters may help students confront previously held attitudes about music education and develop flexible cultural competency and greater openness to curricular innovation. An early example of this approach is Schippers’ (2000) work on teaching music from a global perspective, to challenge a narrow Eurocentric curriculum. The purpose is to ensure that ‘intercultural music’ replaces hegemonic subject content, be it Western classical music, pop/rock or other genres. This approach builds on ideas in multicultural music education such as broader

representation and tolerance. This kind of approach is discussed critically in the text by Karlsen (2014) included in stage three of our literature review.

The second usage is concerned with cross-cultural diversity in music education (cf. O’Flynn, 2005). This approach builds on a widening of repertoire, but extends to engaging with multiple music practices and living music traditions from around the world, exploring local understandings of different traditions and what music means to the population it derives from, rather than simply including repertoire from around the world. The aim is to produce intercultural perceptions of musicality, what O’Flynn (2005) calls intermusicality, rather than assuming that music is a kind of universal language with identical uses, functions and affordances everywhere. Bartleet et al.’s (2020) study of intercultural global mobility programmes suggests that such programmes can help student teachers reflect on their own cultural subjectivities as musicians, with lasting effects throughout their careers. Discussion of this kind of approach can be found in the text by Carson and Westvall (2016).

The third usage relates to admitting pupils’ own musical cultures and ways of interacting with music outside school into the classroom and is linked to discourses of culturally responsive music teaching (cf. Abril & Robinson, 2019). One of the main ideas behind culturally responsive music teaching is teacher reflexivity, remembering that teachers are “cultural workers”, not “neutral professionals using skills on a culturally-detached playing field” (Blanchett et al., 2005, p. 306). The focus is on relating positively to cultural diversity in the classroom, aiming to include groups of pupils at risk of exclusion in music teaching, and focussing on the inherent resources of all pupils. This presupposes teachers possessing intercultural competence, as described in many of the texts in our review of Nordic literature (see for instance Westerlund & Karlsen, 2017).

The fourth usage considers music education as a vehicle for developing teachers’ and pupils’ intercultural skills and competence through collaborative creative activities with a transformative agenda. Based on a foundation of respect, tolerance and acceptance for difference as in multicultural music education, this approach goes further in seeking to create dialogic spaces in the classroom (cf. Marsh, 2019) through approaches to music making that are more about collaborative creative processes than existing musics. Music in schools is viewed as an intercultural tool, furthering the broader aims of education. This includes seeking out possibilities inherent in music education for improved interpersonal and social relationships, and pupils’ empowerment. Cabedo-Mas and Diaz-Gomez’ (2013) research on music as a social praxis concluded that fostering participatory musical activity and positive musical experiences in school helped pupils extend their musical lives beyond the classroom by recognising different musical identities, thereby promoting improved co-existence. This approach lies close to a concept of critical interculturality and social justice in music education, as expressed in the literature review by Miettinen et al., 2020, among others.

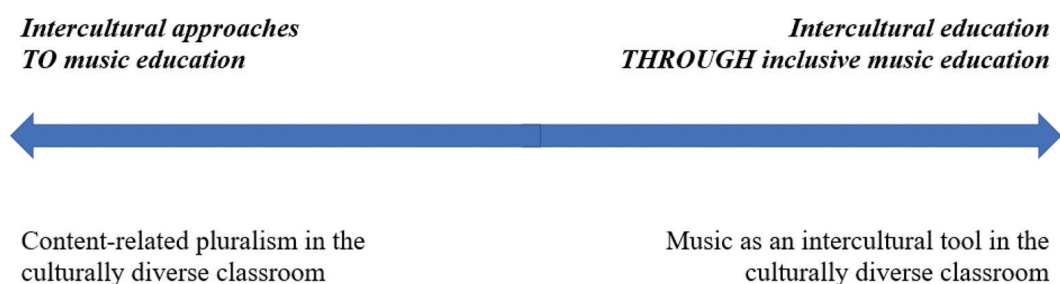
At the start of this article we suggested a distinction between (a) intercultural approaches *to* music education and (b) intercultural education *through* inclusive music

pedagogy. This distinction may be useful in trying to develop a clearer understanding of 'intercultural music education', which as we have seen has several different uses in the Nordic region.

If we look closely at the four main usages identified above, we see that while they all have elements in common, there are more commonalities between the first two approaches and the latter two. It appears that, while all the approaches aim to respond to cultural diversity, in the first two approaches the main emphasis is on the *content* of music education, widening what music to teach in schools, and how. These approaches build on a pluralistic understanding of music/intermusicality and a pluralistic attitude to repertoire, working methods and the function of music in different settings. This is what we term the dimension of intercultural approaches *to* music education.

In the latter two approaches the main emphasis is on *people*, in terms of engaging pupils of all backgrounds and creating a favourable environment for intercultural dialogue between groups, and fostering intercultural competence. This works at the micro level among teachers and pupils in classrooms marked by diversity of all kinds, at the meso level in overall school culture, and at the macro level in curriculum and educational policy. These approaches, which involve dialogic processes and bridge building between cultural groups, are dependent on teachers having intercultural competence and aiming to foster intercultural competence among pupils. There is a sense in which these approaches use music education instrumentally. We call these approaches the dimension of intercultural education *through* inclusive music pedagogy.

Classroom practice is unlikely to fall neatly into one dimension or the other and the various approaches are by no means mutually exclusive. It may therefore be helpful to visualise the two broad dimensions along a continuum, as illustrated in Figure 1. Approaches right across the continuum seek to acknowledge cultural diversity, and intercultural encounters may be central in both broad dimensions. However, the emphasis and main focus along the continuum vary.



**Figure 1:** Intercultural music education in the classroom

To illustrate this distinction, we return to the example identified in the analysis as a point of ambiguity when it comes to *intercultural sites and settings*. A workshop that brings together participants from different cultures to work together on rehearsal and performance of

classical music, would exemplify an intercultural approach *to* music education. If the aim of the workshop is to create a musical synthesis of cultural contributions in a new musical expression through dialogic methods, it would be an example of intercultural education *through* inclusive music pedagogy.

A key element in intercultural education *through* inclusive music pedagogy is musical participation and engagement that has paramusical aims (Stige, 2012) hand in hand with the musical aims. There are a number of international studies of musical participation in culturally diverse pupil populations which might arguably be classified as intercultural education *through* inclusive music pedagogy. Although only the first two of these studies mentioned below make explicit use of the concept of ‘interculturality’, each has pupils’ meaningful musical engagement and relational aspects at its centre. Kvaal (2018) studied interplay in *Fargespill* in Norway, an intercultural music workshop for youth hailing from all over the world, while Côrte-Real (2011) investigated music and intercultural dialogue as a medium for rehearsing life performance at schools in Portugal. Kenny (2018) researched how children in asylum seeker accommodation in Ireland make music, project musical identities and form communities of musical practice; Karlsen (2014) studied music teachers’ approaches to developing immigrant pupils’ musical agency in Finland, Sweden and Norway; Marsh (2012) investigated the role of a secondary school music program in supporting the adjustment of young refugees and newly arrived immigrants in Australia; Burnard et al. (2008) researched ways in which teachers achieve ‘inclusion’ in music classrooms across schools in Spain, Australia, Sweden and the UK, initiating students into musical discourses where the focus is on meaningful music-making and reinforcing the pupils’ place within their communities and affirming their sense of belonging; while Almau (2005) researched music making to combat absenteeism and behavioural problems among Gypsy [sic] pupils in Spain.

When talking about intercultural education *through* inclusive music pedagogy, the focus is on developing intercultural competence, i.e. relational competences accepting of diversity and difference and reflexivity over one’s own cultural position, through musical activities as meaningful engagement and social interplay in schools. Another way of expressing this might be to say that music is used as an intercultural tool in the culturally diverse classroom through the fostering of intercultural competence among teachers, pupils and the entire school culture. Emmanuel (2003) describes intercultural competence required by music teachers as coming to “an understanding of their place within their own culture, their beliefs and attitudes, and the origins of those attitudes”, without which they will be unable to come to an understanding of the cultures of their diverse students (p. 39–40).

In short, we suggest that it may be useful to distinguish between two broad understandings of intercultural music education. The first is pluralistic music education where the main focus is on diversifying content, repertoire and teachings methods to ensure that



music in schools reflects the wide variety of musics that exist in the world. The second is music as an intercultural “tool” in the culturally diverse classroom. This latter understanding is dependent on teachers having intercultural competence, often developed through intercultural exchange to heighten perspective consciousness, and helping pupils develop intercultural competence through the creation of dialogic spaces in the music classroom, in which imagined future communities are more important than musical heritage.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this article is to contribute to terminological clarification in a field that aims to respond to the increasing social complexity and global interconnectedness, filled with possibilities and challenges that music educators meet every day. Clearly defined concepts are essential in a field in which, as Portera (2020) says, teachers and educationalists are tempted to define any situation regarding foreigners as intercultural, giving it “fashionable” overtones (p. 24). Through a literature review of Nordic research and with reference to a broadly European understanding of interculturality, we have sought to develop a clearer understanding of how Nordic music education researchers engage with interculturality and what different understandings of interculturality might mean for music teaching in schools.

On the basis of the understandings of ‘interculturality’ in music education in Nordic research, we identified four discrete approaches to music education in the classroom that, while they share many characteristics, differ in emphasis. By conceptualising these approaches along a continuum between two dimensions labelled *approaches to intercultural music education* and *intercultural approaches through music education*, we hope to contribute to a discussion of music education practices suitable for meeting cultural diversity in the classroom.

A central question is what kind of education policy and pedagogy is most appropriate to meet the challenges of social complexity and cultural diversity (Portera, 2020). One of the findings in this study is that while Nordic music education research has embraced the notion of interculturality in music teacher education, little research has yet been carried out in the region on what intercultural music education approaches might look like in primary education characterised by increasing diversity of various sorts in the classroom. In addition, while the intercultural competence needed by teachers has been the subject of much Nordic research over the past decade, we believe there is a need to look at what intercultural competences *pupils* already have, what they need and what they are given the opportunity to develop through music education. This applies both to pupils from majority populations and those from minority groups, such as newly arrived migrants entering Nordic schools. The concepts of intercultural music educational practices, intercultural competence and intercultural reflexivity on the part of teachers and pupils alike might open up new paths in what Bauman (2010) calls the art of living with difference.

## Author biographies

**Felicity Burbridge Rinde** is a research fellow in music education at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. Her research interests include intercultural music education, music in schools and community music.

**Catharina Christophersen** (PhD) is professor of music education at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences. Her research interests include music in schools, music teacher education, creative partnerships, popular music education, music education policy, social justice, and educational change.

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