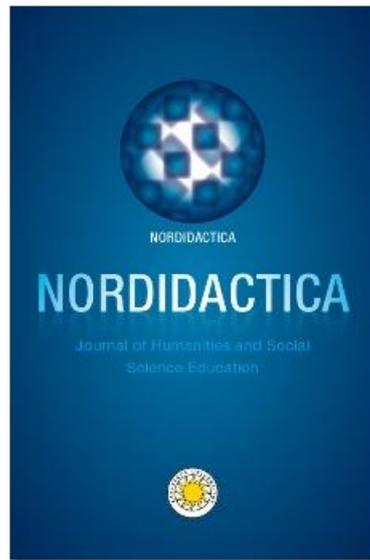


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Nordidactica

- Journal of Humanities and Social Science Education

2024:1

Nordidactica – Journal of Humanities and Social Science Education

Nordidactica 2024:1

ISSN 2000-9879

The online version of this paper can be found at: www.kau.se/nordidactica

Instrumentalist theory for the sake of coherence: Norwegian students' views on campus lectures in social studies teacher education

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Abstract: Norwegian five-year integrated social studies teacher education programmes include comprehensive training in disciplines such as geography, history, sociology and political science. In this article, we report on a study of students' views on the specific subject of social studies in the teacher education programmes. We conducted focus group interviews with students and asked for their reflections on their preferences for the theoretical campus training in social studies. In our case study comprising 23 student teachers in their third year of training, most of the participants thought their campus training should focus less on core subjects such as geography, history, sociology and political science and more on instrumental skills such as lesson planning in social studies. Many of the participants held the view that the social studies competence they brought with them from secondary school should be considered sufficient and that further training in social studies during campus lectures should be considered redundant. Moreover, some participants suggested that acquiring knowledge in geography, history, sociology and political science, which are the core subjects of social studies, should be the responsibility of the students themselves rather than of the teacher training programme.

KEYWORDS: TEACHER EDUCATION, SOCIAL STUDIES, INSTRUMENTALISM

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Introduction

Challenges of ensuring coherence between theory and practice in teacher education have been recognised for a long time (Buchmann & Floden, 1991; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Goh et al., 2020; Grossman et al., 2008; Hammerness & Klette, 2015; Richmond et al., 2019). In this article, we report from a study of the views of student teachers of social studies on campus training. We were motivated by anecdotally expressed student concerns. We had received feedback from third-year students during practical training that suggested that students were dissatisfied with the campus training. Some students told us that their dissatisfaction was due to a perceived lack of coherence between the theoretical campus lectures and the practical training.

Norwegian students who want to teach in primary and lower secondary schools can choose between two five-year integrated master's degree programmes (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2016a, 2016b). One programme specialises in teaching grades 1–7 (ages 6–13) while the other prepares students for teaching grades 5–10 (ages 11–16). In each of these integrated master's programmes, the students take courses in a subject entitled 'pedagogy and student knowledge' where they learn general teacher skills such as theories of learning and theories of class management. In addition, they choose from elective subjects such as mathematics, Norwegian, English, natural sciences, social studies, etc. In essence, the training objective in these elective subjects is twofold: to provide the student teachers with sufficient content knowledge and to give them the ability to reflect on how to teach these subjects to their future pupils. One of the elective subjects is social studies, which emanates from various social science disciplines (Solhaug et al., 2019). Any graduate with one of the integrated master's degrees mentioned above is certified to teach social studies in grades 1–7, irrespective of which elective subjects they have taken, while teaching social studies in grades 8–10 requires at least 30 ECTS in social studies. Our study comprised third-year student teachers in initial teacher education who had elected social studies as one of their majors in the integrated master's degree programme for teaching grades 5–10.

The themes currently viewed as essential to teaching social studies in teacher education and defined as the five core elements in the current curriculum for primary and lower secondary schools are as follows (presented here in their official English translations): 'sense of wonder and exploration', 'deliberating on society and interconnections', 'understanding and participation in democracy', 'sustainable societies' and 'development of identity and belonging' (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). In addition to these themes, which describe what pupils in primary and lower secondary should learn in social studies, the courses that student teachers take also include subject didactics. This follows from the 2016 national curriculum regulations governing teacher education, which states that candidates should have advanced knowledge of an elected subject and its associated didactics (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2016b, section 2)

The current core elements that pupils are required to learn about in social studies ('sense of wonder and exploration', 'deliberating on society and interconnections', 'understanding and participation in democracy', 'sustainable societies' and

'development of identity and belonging') clearly do not fit neatly into established disciplines such as geography, history, sociology and political science. Instead, these core elements are, by intention, interdisciplinary topics. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to argue that the Norwegian curriculum for social studies builds mainly on knowledge from geography, history, sociology and political science. Academic staff in social studies are usually recruited from these disciplines. In addition, some might argue that it is also reasonable to include perspectives from subjects that are typically treated in disciplines such as social anthropology, psychology, law and economics.

Instrumentalism in social studies teacher education

In Weber's definition of instrumentally rational forms of action (*zweckrational*), the instrumental agent is concerned with 'rationally pursued and calculated ends' (Weber, 1978, p. 24). When applied to our case of Norwegian teacher education, the instrumental social studies teacher defines an objective (for example, maximum pupil learning within a defined topic) and organises the learning activities accordingly. However, although all teacher education programmes will have instrumental elements, the instrumental element in other academic professions is more prominent. For example, schools of medicine and law are highly instrumentalist. Doctors and lawyers are trained in the instrumental procedures of how to solve professional problems. Exclusive instrumental knowledge has historically ensured high salaries in these professions. The opposite of the instrumental approach is a what we can call a *Bildung* approach (Bruford, 1975; Horlacher, 2016; Stojanov, 2018), referring to Hegel (2019) and other classical German thinkers. A *Bildung* approach to teacher education requires greater distance between the campus training and the instrumental benefits of the campus training. For example, with a *Bildung* approach, a teacher educator could take a class on an excursion without expecting the student teachers to use the excursion as a model for their own future school excursions. The excursion does not have any immediate instrumental value in the form of the student teachers' ability to maximise their future pupils' learning outcomes, but the teacher educator might expect an excursion to provide the student teachers with *Bildung* that will indirectly benefit the student teachers' future pupils.

The advantages of an instrumentalist approach are obvious. The doctor demonstrates the value of instrumental knowledge when she performs the proper diagnostic tests to determine the patient's diagnosis. Similarly, the teacher who knows which instructional methods will maximise pupil learning in specific topics has acquired the valuable instrumental skill of planning lessons for maximum pupil learning. A problem with the instrumentalist approach, however, is the instrumentalist risk involved in complex decision-making processes. The problem with instrumentalism is that, as Elster puts it, some desired states are 'essentially by-products' (Elster, 1983, p. 43). Paradoxically, these states can only be achieved by lack of intention to the instrumental goals. In Elster's words, 'in many cases the lack of instrumental calculation is a condition for instrumentally defined success' (Elster, 1983, p. 69). Applied to the social studies teacher, this might entail that the instrumentally calculated teaching of a complex

subject such as democracy might be self-defeating in that the teacher's instrumental calculation weakens the pupils' overall understanding of democracy instead of strengthening it. This is because learning democracy may arguably involve a complex set of the learner's cognitive, emotional and even bodily aspects that are too multidimensional to calculate instrumentally. Conversely, a potential challenge of a *Bildung* approach to teacher education is that it is prone to paternalism (Schouten, 2018), where student teachers do things in their training without understanding why. They do them because the paternalistic teacher educator believes that she knows what is best for the student teachers without having to explain the instrumental benefits.

Regardless of the professional identity of teacher educators and their students, *Bildung*-oriented models of education can be rather complex in terms of the overall organisation of programmes and of the courses within those programmes. Shulman has famously called for a highly complex model of teacher competence where the following categories of knowledge would be included:

content knowledge; general pedagogical knowledge, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter; curriculum knowledge, with particular grasp of the materials and programs that serve as "tools of the trade" for teachers; pedagogical content knowledge, that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding; knowledge of learners and their characteristics; knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of school districts, to the character of communities and cultures; and knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds. (Shulman, 1987, p. 8)

As we can see from this list, which, according to Shulman, is 'at minimum', the number of categories of knowledge for teacher educators is extensive. Shulman is best known for coining the term 'pedagogical content knowledge', which, according to Shulman, is a unique knowledge that characterises teachers as professionals. Shulman's ideas have had a paradigmatic impact on both social studies teacher education and teachers (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987; Powell, 2018; Silva & Mason, 2003; Thacker et al., 2018). A significant point for Shulman has been to emphasise that content knowledge is crucial to the professional growth of teachers. In other words, in Shulman's view, it is not enough for teachers to have a solid grasp of instrumental skills in development psychology, learning theories and classroom management skills. When applied to social studies, his perspective entails that teachers also need a solid grasp of disciplines such as geography, history, sociology and political science. It is a holistic perspective of teacher education where *Bildung* is at the forefront.

If teacher educators want to try to achieve the goals in Shulman's list, instrumental skills such as designing and planning lessons may receive relatively little attention. Many other categories on Shulman's list require time and focus. As Swinkels et al. (2013) suggest, one of the reasons why a core teaching topic such as pupil learning (referring to the learning of the student teacher's future pupils) receives little attention in teacher education may be the way in which teacher education is designed:

Another reason that student teachers do not focus on student learning during teacher education may be found in the way teacher education is designed, with a curriculum that often stands apart from teaching practice itself, and with an emphasis on acquiring subject and general pedagogical knowledge and skills [...]. Linking theory and practice with a specific concern for student learning is thus often left to student teachers themselves. (Swinkels et al., 2013, pp. 26–27)

In other words, the variety of competence requirements in teacher education may supersede training in the skills connected explicitly to the instrumental actions of the profession. In the eyes of some researchers, complexity in the overall design of teacher education means that less attention is paid to learning-focused teaching in teacher training (Schelfhout et al., 2006). In that sense, students may become concerned that social studies teacher education programmes become similar to programmes within the disciplines from which teacher educators are recruited.

Another requirement that may supersede attention from instrumental professional competence is that future social studies teachers may be expected to find a political-normative purpose (Hawley & Crowe, 2016) that makes teacher education less instrumental than professional education programmes in comparable fields such as law or medicine. However, we did not touch on this potential political-normative dimension of teacher education in our study, although some might argue that this dimension is also an element of *Bildung*.

Research design

We conducted focus group interviews (Bloor, 2001; Morgan, 1997; Vaughn et al., 1996) with three groups comprising nine, eight and six students. At the start of each session, which lasted around one hour, we used an individual questionnaire to stimulate discussion during the subsequent focus group interviews. One of the reasons we decided to conduct focus group interviews was that, as relatively young people, the participants might find it easier to express themselves by following up on views expressed by their peers rather than by giving responses in an individual interview situation. As Vaughn et al. (1996) point out, 'the group format promotes candor and participation' and the group format has a 'loosening effect' (p. 19). This loosening effect might be particularly important in cases where there is a considerable degree of power asymmetry between the interviewer and the participants, as in our case.

We should note that although students are relevant stakeholders in the continuous critical assessment of professional educational programmes, researchers might reasonably treat the relevance of students' views on their educational programmes with a degree of scepticism. Researchers have investigated students' views on a variety of issues (Brew et al., 2009; Doikou & Diamandidou, 2011; Essex et al., 2021; Rolim & Isaias, 2019; Sjöblom et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2022). Nevertheless, one might ask: if the lecturers are more knowledgeable than the students, how can the students be an interesting stakeholder group for evaluating the professional relevance of what they are taught? If students by definition have not acquired expertise in their study areas, why

should we even bother to investigate their views on their study programme? One possible answer to this question is that in the Norwegian case, the difference between teacher educators and student teachers is not just a matter of level of expertise, but is also a matter of professional identity. Many teacher educators in social studies teacher education in Norway are not themselves teachers (Jegstad et al., 2022, p. 10). Thus, in the Norwegian case, teacher education is not an example of a classical profession (Carr-Saunders & Wilson, 1933) where the novice learns from the master, and the agendas and interests of student teachers may differ from those of the teacher educators in ways that cannot be easily dismissed as functions of differences in level of expertise. Accordingly, the argument can be made that the perspectives of the social studies student teachers are relevant in social studies as a subject in schools and teacher education programmes.

During the focus group interviews, the students gave feedback and recommendations based on their general teacher training experiences. We transcribed the focus group interviews and analysed them according to the principles of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2022). This analytical method entails familiarising with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing, and defining and naming themes. Using this procedure, we identified four themes in the students' views on the relationship between instrumentalism and *Bildung* in social studies teacher education. The four themes are presented below.

Findings

The thematic analysis resulted in four themes relating to students' wishes for campus lectures: examine and discuss expected pupil learning outcomes; use teacher resources as the impetus for campus lectures; approach lesson design as a collective form of practice; and show respect for the students by referring to content knowledge only when it is necessary for lesson planning purposes. As we will discuss below, a common denominator for these themes is a call for a more instrumental social studies teacher education model, which entails a meta-level model where teaching how to teach social studies lies at the core. In the Nordic literature on social studies didactics, however, the dichotomy between instrumentalist and non-instrumentalist strategies has received surprisingly little attention from researchers. Our material suggests that social studies teacher educators should be more aware of this dichotomy. In our interpretation, this is a dichotomy between two different approaches to theoretical subject didactics in social studies, and should not be conflated with the better-known dichotomy between theory and practice.

Theme 1: Examine and discuss expected pupil learning outcomes during campus lectures

One of the participants, 'Heidi', stated:

There's a lack of focus on how to teach social studies, and it's actually very sad that the first lectures we get on teaching social studies are given in the

third year [of teacher education], because that means we've already had six practice periods where we could have tried working on planning lessons in the way we're now learning about in the third year.

As we see, according to 'Heidi', the first lectures these third-year students had on *teaching* social studies were given during their third year. She was referring to instrumental third-year campus lectures designed to train social studies teachers in the planning of lectures to maximise pupil learning. 'Heidi' also followed up with the following comments:

If this had been covered at the start [of the teacher education programme], we could have tested it in practice and tried a few different approaches and become a bit more like teachers in our own right instead of just kind of following a template. It's like if I have to take a fifth grade class and teach them something [in social studies], it's not the world's most advanced level.

Here, 'Heidi' called for what Weber referred to as planning for 'rationally pursued and calculated ends' (Weber, 1978, p. 24). By saying that the level in the fifth grade was not high, she was implying that the social studies professor in her campus training should be less concerned with teaching *her* social studies and more concerned with *teaching her how to teach* social studies to her future pupils. By focusing on this instrumental perspective, she emphasised the value of a social studies didactics in teacher education that is on the meta level and less on her own learning of social studies. The practical execution of this instrumentalism is difficult to achieve in campus training due to the lack of a classroom setting, but in principle it is possible to achieve through lectures that are simultaneously instrumental and theoretical. In other words, we cannot conflate the desire 'Heidi' expressed for more instrumentalism with a desire for more practice, which is an entirely different matter. The teacher educator could, to comply with 'Heidi's' suggestions, walk students through the calculated planning for maximum pupil learning in social studies. 'Heidi' had a sense of having lost something in her practical training. What she had lost was the meta-level reflections on designing lessons to maximise pupil learning, which are the teacher's 'rationally pursued and calculated ends' and, subsequently, the opportunity of checking during practical training whether the calculated social studies lesson plans produced the desired ends in terms of pupil learning.

Another issue illustrated by the quote is how little knowledge of geography, history, sociology and political science the students felt they needed to function as teachers in social studies. Remarkably, only one out of 23 third-year students in our sample stated that they currently had insufficient knowledge of social studies to do an acceptable job as a social studies teacher in the Norwegian compulsory school system. This is remarkable because at this point the students still had two full years of study left. As one male student, 'Thomas', put it during the focus group interviews:

I feel this semester has been more relevant because we have worked more on, like, concrete lesson designs than we did before Christmas. At that time, I didn't really understand what we were doing. I didn't think it was very relevant. So I feel that now that we're working on lesson design, I feel it's more relevant to my future profession.

'Thomas' was one of the students who felt that, even before he started his teacher education, he possessed sufficient content knowledge in geography, history, sociology and political science to teach in primary and lower secondary schools. It was therefore not surprising that he found the instrumental campus lectures during the third year more relevant to his future work as a teacher than the previous social studies campus lectures had been. We interpret the phrase 'I didn't really understand what we were doing' to mean that although he received training in geography, history, sociology and political science during the first half of his teacher education, he did not understand why he was supposed to learn these subjects at an *advanced* level instead of learning how to teach *elementary* social studies to his future pupils. The quote exemplifies how, within a teacher education paradigm of *Bildung*, the instrumental student teacher may feel they lack *control* of their own situation as a student. The views of 'Thomas' illustrate that the *Bildung* approach will almost inevitably have a paternalistic or authoritarian element built into it. In a culturally egalitarian country such as Norway, it is to be expected that any signs of paternalism or authoritarianism will be met with scepticism from young adults.

In our interpretation, 'Thomas' did not call for *less* schoolwork. He was not a lazy student. Instead, he called for a campus training strategy that was more instrumentally focused on the calculations and deliberations needed to design social studies lessons that maximise pupil learning. 'Thomas' seemed to be a dedicated student, but he also seemed hesitant to accept the alienation that might develop when the student does not see an instrumental connection between the campus training and the student's future work in the profession.

Theme 2: Use teacher resources as the impetus for campus lectures

'Sara' recommended that rather than lecturing about what scholars have found out about a specific social studies subject, teacher educators should present resources that might be valuable for teaching about the subject of the lecture:

It's useful to learn which tools we can use in school to teach different topics to the pupils because, yes we do practical training, but we only get a brief glimpse [of what is going on in schools], so we don't get to master the different tools. Then there's the content knowledge. Of course, we learn a lot, but we use so little of it in practice that when we work in the schools we still have to read up on it. Because we can't disseminate the topics in the same way you do it to us; we have to go out and teach it at a much lower level.

'Sara' conceded that some geography, history, sociology and political science is relevant to include in campus lectures in social studies teacher education. However, she was convinced that lectures about specific disciplinary topics had relatively low value for her as a future social studies teacher. She pointed out that, as a future teacher of social studies, she cannot use a campus lecture in geography, history, sociology or political science as a model for how she should teach in the compulsory school system. She would need to reorganise the information to make it comprehensible for her future pupils. In her view, this entailed that, for example a geography lesson aimed to increase

her knowledge of geography was by and large a waste of time. In her view, she would in any case have to start from scratch and gather the content she needed from textbooks and online resources. Like 'Thomas', 'Sara' did not call for less schoolwork during her studies, but rather for instrumentalism. Her view was that instead of teaching her about geography or history, the teacher educators should train her in becoming excellent at choosing optimal training material for her future pupils, for maximum learning. Again, this view is not motivated by laziness but rather by desire for a more instrumental approach.

Correspondingly, 'Julie' noted that in the schools, teachers use a variety of online resources and that it was crucial for future teachers to learn about these resources at campus lectures. As she put it:

In the schools, they use resources such as TV2 Skole, they use CDU, they use a lot of different things like that, and Salaby. So it's like, we don't really know what's available to us when we start out as teachers. So we kind of have to start from scratch. In today's schools it's not simply a matter of, like, taking a book and using it to teach with. [Note: TV2 Skole, CDU and Salaby are online pedagogical resources from some of the major Norwegian media and publishing houses].

Again, the main view is that teacher educators should embed topics in geography, history, sociology and political science in an overall instrumental campus training strategy. One way in which teacher educators could approach student teachers might be to think of them as critical curators (Sawyer et al., 2020) of ready-made lesson plans. A critical point for 'Sara' and 'Julie', however, was that teacher educators should use the various online resources as their impetus for teaching geography or history on campus rather than start with a lecture in geography or history and subsequently add discussions about technical didactical skills.

Theme 3: Approach lesson design as a collective form of practice during campus lectures

'Sara' also emphasised that working *in groups* during campus training should be considered vital to providing student teachers with opportunities to discuss which activities they should use in their planned lessons. During her practical training sessions, 'Sara' had observed that teachers in some schools viewed lesson design as a collaborative professional form of practice. In her view, the professional identity of the teachers in the placement schools seemed to be inextricably linked to collective efforts to enhance pupil learning. As 'Sara' put it:

What we also see in the schools is that they often have planning groups consisting of multiple members who sit down and design the lessons together. So it's not really relevant for us to always have to design our lessons individually.

In other words, when student teachers arrive in the schools for their practical training periods, they encounter teaching staff whose members use each other as resources when planning lessons. By contrast, several of the participants in our study expressed a feeling

of too often being expected to perform tasks individually. This concern has also been raised in classical contributions to the study of the teacher profession. For example, Lortie argues: 'Teaching techniques are developed and used by thousands of individuals in restricted contact with one another' (Lortie, 1969, pp. 28–29). Lortie contrasts this lack of collective and cumulative knowledge with the medicine and law professions, where instrumental technical knowledge has long traditions in being collectively accumulated over time (p. 29). To some extent, it seems unavoidable that student teachers must perform individual work in the teacher education programme, in the same way as testing individual medicine and law students is necessary. This is because during practical training tutors must ensure that each student is sufficiently qualified to plan their lessons individually when needed. This also has consequences for the campus training and examinations, in that the teacher-training exams have a role in grading and evaluating students' skills. Still, it seems reasonable, as 'Sara' noted, that being allowed to collaborate with their peers on designing lessons to develop a sense of 'critical friendship' (Logan & Butler, 2013) during lectures on subjects such as social studies and to discuss potential learning outcomes in groups or plenary sessions would have more substantial professional relevance for the students.

We should emphasise that the participants typically referred to *instrumental* efforts related to planning lessons, and not collaborative efforts in gaining knowledge in social studies disciplines such as geography, history, sociology or political science. Thus, in our interpretation, although the collective and collaborative student preference can, in principle, be applied to the learning of any topic in geography, history, sociology or political science, the participants' call for collective professional practice during campus training should be understood as another variant of instrumentalism. This is because, as illustrated by the quote from 'Sara', the students expressed particular motivation for student collaboration in dealing with issues related to instrumental actions within the teaching profession, such as lesson planning.

Theme 4: Show respect for the students by referring to content knowledge in campus lectures only when it is necessary for lesson planning purposes

Another theme in our case study was the participants' recommendation that teacher educators should refer to content knowledge *only* when it is necessary to illustrate how to *teach* social studies. A premise for this recommendation was that the participants generally felt they already possessed sufficient knowledge about geography, history, sociology and political science to teach social studies at the various levels in the compulsory school system *before* they commenced the programme. As 'Martin' stated:

We already know most of it, I mean the academic content. But in the social studies lectures it would be better to start off by saying that we have to teach something and then tell us to work in groups to develop a lesson design for that topic. And then we should discuss in the final part of the lecture, look at the lesson designs we made and discuss any problems with the design or things like that.

The issue of what should be the required knowledge level for geography, history, sociology and political science among social studies teachers was contentious. Several students found that the content knowledge presented in campus lectures repeated knowledge they had already acquired in upper secondary school. Some participants in the study seemed to feel that a social studies teacher educator who emphasised instrumentalist elements in their campus lectures demonstrated, *ipso facto*, their respect for the students as future professionals. Conversely, a heavy focus in the campus lectures on content knowledge from the various disciplines (geography, history, sociology, political science) seemed to be perceived as sign of disrespect for the students as future professionals. Accordingly, the participants' preferences for instrumentalist campus lectures could be interpreted as a reflection of professional pride. Several participants considered the traditional lectures on topics from the social sciences to be superfluous. They felt they already knew enough about the different subjects to be able to teach them in the compulsory school system. Thus, being taught topics from geography, history, sociology and political science which they felt they already knew was a source of irritation. Since pupils in primary and lower secondary schools have much lower skills in the various subjects than most student teachers, some participants felt that traditional campus lectures on these subjects were not only a waste of time but that they also implied a condescending attitude towards them as future professional social studies teachers.

The sense of disrespect generated by non-instrumental lectures cannot easily be conveyed in examples from the interview transcripts, but irritation could easily be identified in the tone of voice of some of the participants during the interviews, for example in the following comment from 'Emma':

After all, we covered the same topics we're going to teach in lower and upper secondary school, didn't we? And then when we arrive at the university college we're spoon-fed the same stuff over again. I would much rather be taught how to teach, in a way, because that's what I'm going to do. And if I'm unsure about something minor, like a date or whatever, it's possible to google it or look it up in the textbook. We don't remember all the usual information we learn, either, in the first, second and now halfway through the third [year]. So more focus on how to teach, like it has been now. That's good.

A crucial point for 'Emma', as for other participants in our case study, was that when they enrol in teacher education programmes for the compulsory school level, student teachers *already* have a higher level of knowledge in the various subjects than what their future pupils will have when they graduate from the compulsory school system. Thus, 'Emma' and several others believed that in campus lectures, knowledge from geography, history, sociology and political science should be *embedded* in the training of how to plan lessons. Conversely, a campus training session should not be organised as an introductory lecture about a specific topic within the social sciences, followed by a didactical add-on about how to teach future pupils about this topic. This also means that instrumentalist preferences implied a preference for 'doing' (lesson planning) rather than attending traditional lectures on the core disciplines in social studies. As 'Daniel' expressed it:

The fact that we had the French Revolution this autumn, for example, and that that was something we covered in lower and upper secondary school is one thing. But at university college it can be more important to link it to the curriculum and the stated learning objectives. So for example, if you see a learning outcome, you might think that it might be relevant to think about the French Revolution. Then we can work on that as a learning outcome instead of just hearing about the storming of the Bastille and the execution of Louis XVI and all that. In other words, the context. Then it's much easier for us to work on lesson design where the intention is to get pupils to explore, wonder, argue and all that.

The terms 'explore' and 'wonder' in this quote are paraphrases of the current Norwegian social studies curriculum for primary and lower secondary schools, where those words are used repeatedly (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). We can interpret Daniel's statement as a call for respect for the student teachers and for a more instrumentalist social studies teacher education. As we have seen, several participants in this study believed they already had sufficient understanding of the social studies content before enrolling in the teacher education programme. Thus, having to repeat the same content was viewed as disrespectful and a waste of time. Correspondingly, a prominent view among the participants was that teaching them geography, history, sociology and political science should be subordinate to the main goal, namely that of teaching them how to plan and design how to teach social studies to their future pupils.

Discussion

How can the social studies teacher educator strike a balance between teaching topics in geography, history, sociology and political science on the one hand and teaching *how to teach* social studies on the other? The 23 social studies student teachers in our case study seemed to accept that they would have to endure lectures in geography, history, sociology and political science in order to earn their teaching certification. However, most of them wished that the programme took a different approach to the content components of the curriculum. The students' dissatisfaction seemed to suggest that that social studies lectures focused too much on content knowledge. Moreover, what was important from the perspective of this paper was not just the view that content was receiving too much attention during campus lectures; even more important were the participants' views on how content topics should be approached in the campus training. The overall view seemed to be that most material from the disciplines, such as history, sociology or geography, should be taught from the overall perspective of method. In other words, content knowledge should be regarded as an add-on that might be added to the campus training wherever it was needed to exemplify how student teachers could design lesson plans or use teaching resources. In the students' view, content knowledge should serve as add-on components in lectures on teaching social studies, not vice versa. How do these views relate to theory on social studies teacher education? In our interpretation, it means that most of the students in effect disagreed with Gudmundsdottir and Shulman's (1987) ambitious approach to teacher education, and

agreed more with the explicitly instrumentalist approach supported by Swinkels et al. (2013), which are important and contradicting perspectives. Thus, although the themes were generated through an inductive process whereby the themes describe different topics that the participants found to be important, it is also clear that instrumentalism emerged as a common theoretical denominator for the views expressed by the participants in our study.

Do our findings apply exclusively to social studies in teacher education, or do they apply to teacher education more generally? It is important to emphasise that our study focused exclusively and explicitly on the subject didactics of social studies in the teacher education programme, and our sample of participants were therefore not asked to have their overall teacher education programme in mind during the interviews. Thus, our findings do not apply to teacher education overall. It was specified during our study that our questions to the participants should relate exclusively to social studies. This is also mirrored in the final quotation above, where 'Daniel' refers to the French revolution, which is a topic within the social studies curriculum for the participants in our study. As we have seen, in Weber's definition of *instrumentally rational forms of action* (*zweckrational*), the instrumental agent is concerned with 'rationally pursued and calculated ends' (Weber, 1978, p. 24). The 'calculated ends' approach entails that the future teacher in social studies approaches a topic such as the French Revolution from a meta level, where their *own* learning of the French Revolution becomes less important than the meta-level learning of how to teach their future pupils about the French Revolution. In our interpretation, then, a Weberian instrumentalist approach to social studies in teacher education implies that the teacher educator should allow the meta level guide the campus lectures.

To further illustrate what a potential meta-level and instrumentalist form of teacher education might entail, specifically within the subject of social studies in teacher education, a topic such as social inequality would have to be approached in a way that differs from the way in which it is usually presented in a university-level discipline such as sociology. An instrumentalist campus training session in the topic of social inequality would have to embed the topic of social inequality into various *instrumental acts*, such as designing a lesson plan or analysing an online social studies teaching resource. The teacher educators might, for example, start the lesson with one or a few learning objectives from the primary or lower secondary school curricula. Subsequently, as stated by some of the students in the sample, the teacher educator could share some reflections with the students on how teachers can use various specific resources to help pupils achieve the learning objective in the curriculum in the best possible way. The instrumentalist teacher educator in social studies might also discuss different teaching strategies related to the specific subject from the perspective of research-based expected learning outcomes of the activities (Hattie, 2008; Hattie et al., 2020). Only if content issues related to the learning objective seem unclear to the student teachers should the teacher educator delve into content issues during the lecture. Moreover, several students considered group work to be crucial to the campus training experience. This is unsurprising, and is consistent with previous findings in the realm of teacher education. As one paper states, 'learning about teaching requires an emphasis on those learning to

teach working closely with their peers' (Korthagen et al., 2006, p. 1032). Notably, in our study, group work was linked to instrumentalism. For example, when the participant 'Sara' during the interviews called for more 'working in groups' during teacher education, she referred to *multiple students who design the lessons together*. Thus, in her opinion, *the instrumental act* of planning social studies lessons could be performed more effectively in groups than by individuals.

Conclusion

In this article, we have reported from a study of students' views on campus lectures in social studies teacher education. Overall, our findings suggest that student teachers would like to see campus lectures that focus less on the subjects that *underpin* social studies and more on enhancing students' instrumental skills in planning their future social studies lessons. The participants in the study did not call for less theory and more practice during their social studies teacher education. The relationship between instrumentalism and *Bildung* should not be conflated with the well-known dichotomy between theory and practice in teacher education. Rather, several participants called for a more instrumental kind of theory. To some extent, the participants in our study expressed frustration with how campus lectures are currently arranged. For some students, the lack of instrumentalist campus training seems to imply a lack of respect for student teachers as future professionals. We interpret these findings in light of Weber's (1978) notion of instrumental action. Our data suggest that social studies teacher educators should be cognizant of the relationship between instrumentalist and non-instrumentalist forms of social studies teacher education, to ensure coherence between the training and the profession.

We should underline that our findings apply specifically to *social studies* in teacher education, which was the subject that we asked our participants about. These findings might not be as relevant for other subjects in teacher education.

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INSTRUMENTALIST THEORY FOR THE SAKE OF COHERENCE: NORWEGIAN STUDENTS' VIEWS ON CAMPUS LECTURES IN SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER EDUCATION

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