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17

Isolde Malmberg, Thade Buchborn, Lauren Steinmetz (Eds.)

Future-making, Mobility and Networking in Europe

Impulses for Music Education in School, Teacher Education and Professional Development

TEACHER EDUCATION ACADEMY FOR MUSIC

Future-Making, Mobility and Networking in Europe

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Isolde Malmberg, Angeliki Triantafyllaki &
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Mentoring in Collaboration

Co-constructing Music Education Competencies in School Internships Abroad

Abstract

This article examines how mentoring practices in School Internships Abroad (SIAs) for music education students are shifting from traditional, hierarchical models toward collaborative and co-constructive forms of professional learning. Drawing on findings from the *Erasmus+* project *TEAM – Teacher Education Academy for Music*, we analyse seven design-based research cycles involving student teachers, mentor teachers, and teacher educators across several international placements. Qualitative data from orientation meetings, in-situ voice memos of student teachers, and post-internship interviews reveal that SIAs create immersive, highly participatory learning environments in which STs engage deeply with school life, take on collegial roles, and stimulate intercultural reflection among staff. Differences between educational contexts often foster reciprocal mentoring, while increased time on site promotes shared inquiry and collaborative teaching practices. Based on these insights, we outline key characteristics of effective mentoring in SIAs and present a practical *Mentor Teacher Checklist* to support co-constructive learning in international music education internships.

Keywords: School internship abroad, music teacher education, mentoring, collaboration, co-construction

Introduction

Europe is growing ever closer together, due not least to our increased mobility (Delhey, 2022). Young people in particular use the independence afforded them during their studies to spend time learning or working in another European country. In this text, we take a closer look at a particular form of learning and working internationally: teaching internships that music education students complete in a school abroad – either during or after the completion of their studies in their home country. Our findings are based on the experiences and research results from the large-scale *Erasmus+* co-funded project *TEAM – Teacher Education Academy for Music: Future-Making, Mobility and Networking in Europe*.[1] Within the *TEAM* project, we formed the work package *School Internships Abroad and Mentoring*, focusing on increasing the mobility of music education students by enabling them to complete school internships abroad (SIAs) as well as to receive support through high-quality mentoring. Mentoring – the induction of student music teachers (STs) into school by an experienced music teacher – is considered one of the key factors in achieving sustainable learning gains during school internships (Hascher & Kittinger, 2014; Malmberg, 2023).

In this chapter we will show that mentoring is increasingly perceived less as a top-down activity, with an experienced mentor teacher (MT) instructing a novice teacher, than as a participatory activity in which learning gains are co-constructed, a tendency highlighted both in recent literature and in our data. This may be particularly true for school internships abroad, where collaboration between two people with very different backgrounds takes place; such a model of co-construction could be implemented as a deliberate strategy in the future. In this text, we first review existing literature on mentoring, including existing findings on SIAs. We then provide insights into our research methodology, followed by a presentation of relevant data on mentoring in SIAs. We conclude our text with insights into a practical tool arising from this research investigation and collaborative work – the *Mentor Checklist* – and provide an outlook on the emerging school-university network *TEAM-IN*, which is intended to enable universities, music students and schools to jointly benefit from the possibility of SIAs in the future.

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[1] *TEAM*, the *Teacher Education Academy for Future-Making, Mobility and Networking in Europe* aims to provide mappings of European music educational systems, foster mobility (*Erasmus* semesters as well as Internships Abroad), and offer future-making OERs and a set of European-wide Learning Outcomes for Music Teacher Education. https://teacher-academy-music.eu/
TEAM is funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Mentoring in School Internships

This section presents some of the literature on mentoring in school internships drawing on both generalist education and music education literature specifically. It aims to portray the mentoring roles that schoolteachers take on and refers, in particular, to questions of collaboration and cooperation.

Roles and Responsibilities of Mentors

What is the role and what are the responsibilities of mentor teachers during school internships? Wittek et al. distinguish three forms of mentoring: professional, personal, and social support (Wittek et al., 2017). The Swiss educationalist Alois Niggli draws a very similar distinctions. He structures the mentoring process in his *Standard-Based 3-Level Mentoring in Teacher Education* (Niggli, 2003; 2005) into three content areas, all of which should be present in mentoring, but which differ in objective and conversation style: (1) optimising skills, (2) differentiating professional background knowledge (including subject-specific knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge), and (3) clarifying self-knowledge. Research on mentoring dialogues describes the ways in which MTs fulfil the roles of model, facilitator, evaluator and co-musician, and also how classroom and ensemble activities influence these roles (Munroe, 2021).

Yet, the approach to mentoring appears far from standardised. Despite these classifications, mentors' understanding of their role varies considerably. One important reason for the lack of consistent understanding – as well as a lack of comprehensive descriptions and research findings on mentoring – is that the length, content and requirements, and the timing of mentoring placements within teacher training vary considerably between institutions (Reintjes et al., 2018) and countries (Kuhn et al., 2024). Furthermore, the structure of the mentoring relationship also differs: specifically, whether it involves primarily the mentor teacher (MT) and student teacher (ST) dyad, or whether a university-based subject specialist – a teacher educator (TE) – is equally involved, possibly acting as a mentor on behalf of the university. When universities co-construct student internship formats together with schools/mentors and the student teacher in a triad, collaboration and relationships can be enhanced and reflective dialogue deepened (Hagen, 2022). Another factor that makes mentoring a difficult field to research is that there are few training programmes or professional learning groups for mentors. At least in German-speaking countries, systematic training for mentors only began in the past ten years – nevertheless, many teachers continue to act as mentors in whatever way they believe might be helpful. An examination of existing mentoring programmes, understood here as training formats and mentoring groups which may function as professional learning groups, for example, reveals a tension between the desire to provide individualised support to mentor teachers on the one hand, and the need to uphold increasingly stringent quality standards on the other (e. g., Košinár, 2018, p. 67;

Malmberg, et al., 2018; Dressler et al. 2018; Schnebel, 2018). All these questions already apply to domestic school internships. The limited experience with and research and publications on school internships abroad suggest that the concept of what mentoring can and should achieve is even less clear in an international context. This is where our study comes in.

The Concept of Mentoring Transforms towards Participatory Approaches

Mentoring has consistently been conceptualised through a more traditional lens, which the following quote from Ziegler (2009) exemplifies:

> Mentoring is a relatively stable dyadic relationship over time between an experienced mentor and their less experienced mentee. […] [The mentoring relationship] is characterized by mutual trust and goodwill; its goal is to promote the learning and development as well as the progress of the mentee (Ziegler, 2009, p. 5).[2]

As stated in the introduction, the concept of mentoring in educational and internship settings has been evolving toward more collaborative understandings over the last two decades (Braun et al. 2022). Current mentoring concepts place greater emphasis on learning and development on both sides, known as reciprocal mentoring (Ellis et al. 2020). These approaches also emphasise peer mentoring and co-constructive learning, positioning mentors and mentees as partners in many respects, engaged in shared inquiry and mutual learning. In internship contexts, student teachers are increasingly seen as co-constructors of learning who actively contribute to developing professional knowledge and practice. Through our own literature review, three themes were identified that in recent years have been seen as key to fostering successful teaching internships: (1) partnership ecology: collaboration and dialogue within the triad (ST, MT, TE); (2) mutual support: mentorship models focused on inclusive voices in internships; and (3) culturally responsive and responsible music education: music teaching as a mutual agenda contributing to shaping identity and efficacy.

(1) Partnership Ecology (ST, MT, TE): Reenvisioning the student teaching experience: Dorfmann reports that MTs recommend more alignment between university courses and school practice (Dorfman, 2018). Further research demonstrates that the success of student internships largely depends on the quality and effectiveness of the collaboration within the ST, MT, and TE triad; recent calls for equal partnerships between universities and schools hosting internships can be viewed as a kind of paradigm shift or reconfiguration of the relationship between universities and the school sector (Ellis & McNicholl, 2015). This is particularly evident in cases where cooperation between MT and the university is poor: MTs communicate both commitment and frustration regarding student teaching placements. They appreciate the mentoring process and value giving back to the education system of

[2] Translation by author 1.

the future, but also note disparate levels of communication, little recognition for their work, or unclear expectations from universities (Russell, 2019; Baugh & Conway, 2024). Several studies examine the mixed roles of STs, MTs, and TEs, and the discrepancies between what each stakeholder interprets as good teaching and feedback (Pellegrino, 2015). Together, the triad of STs, MTs, and TEs can form a partnership ecology that necessitates common tools such as observation rubrics, mentoring protocols, frequent two- and three-way communication and explicit role expectations. the development of high self-efficacy in STs is based on gaining positive experiences and receiving constructive feedback from their MTs and TEs, highlighting the importance of differentiated mentoring (Sander, 2020).

(2) Mutual Support: Mentorship Models focused on Inclusive Voices: Sustained confidence, continued musical activity and reciprocal learning for generalist teachers, mentors and students are possible outcomes from engaging and effective student teaching experiences in schools (Barrett & Zhukov, 2024). Student teaching experiences that broaden participation of the respective parties involved (STs, MTs, TEs, students, and other colleagues) can also be transformative. Paired student teaching placements can facilitate peer planning and reflection, although this type of placement may create certain tensions with teaching practices if roles and responsibilities are not co-constructed across the ST-MT-TE triad (Do & Hascher, 2023). Viewing classroom pupils as active participants in ST learning experiences shifts the praxis into a circle of reciprocity, not a hierarchy (Pattison-Meek, 2024). Within the broader theme of mutual support, these studies demonstrate the importance of conceptualising the ST-MT-TE partnership as one which prioritises the creation of an engaging and scaffolded set of learning experiences.

(3) Cultural Responsiveness and Responsibility as a Shared Goal: Culturally responsive education, introduced by Bond (2017), is an educational concept that specifically addresses the fact that our school classes increasingly include children from diverse backgrounds. This concept, with its intercultural foundation, may also include aspects relevant to SIAs. Culturally responsive education comprises five major areas: (a) identity and achievement, (b) equity and excellence, (c) developmental appropriateness, (d) teaching the whole child, and (e) student-teacher relationship (Bond, 2017). A significant body of research asserts that culturally responsive music learning and teaching in internships will better develop through the triadic relationship of ST, MT, and TE. Multiple studies have set forth various principles and frameworks that connect repertoire and pedagogy to learners' identities and communities (Abril, 2013; Palmer et al., 2022; Bennett, 2023). For example, Abril (2013) argued for shifting pedagogical focus from content to learners' socio-musical identities shaped by ethnicity, race, and language; Palmer et al. (2022) proposed a four-quadrant framework – teacher competencies, informed choices, authenticity, and holistic/comparative lessons – offering K-16 teachers actionable methods for inclusive music instruction; and Bennett (2023) identified thirteen facets of culturally responsible teaching, finding that teachers' methods, aims, and beliefs determine the degree to which their pedagogy

is culturally responsive. In non-Western cultures, the role of ethnic identity is important, requiring the triad of ST, MT, and TE to draw on local cultural connections when planning and making decisions about student teaching experiences (Guan et al., 2023). Culturally responsive music learning and teaching can connect well to classroom management: Robison even introduces an extended format for settings in which family partnerships are also involved alongside the ST, MT, and TE triad (Robison, 2020). Questions of repertoire, content, culturally shaped musical practices and the ways in which music education traditions relate to each other naturally arise in a very particular form in a school internship abroad, which is an inherently intercultural encounter.

Mentoring in School Internships Abroad

SIAs have been discussed in generalist teacher education literature since the early 1990s (Major & Santoro, 2016; Mahan & Stachowski, 1990; Pence, 2008; di Pietro, 2022), but knowledge about the special requirements for mentoring in SIAs is still relatively scarce. Some studies point to the element of reciprocity: the further away a school is from the university of the ST (for example in transcontinental SIAs), the more likely it appears that the school will ask from the outset what it stands to gain from the arrangement – an interesting dynamic that may lay the foundation for a reciprocal attitude (Aamaas et al. 2020). Yet, intercultural professional learning communities (PLCs) demonstrate how cross-institutional partnerships (in the case of school internships, university and host school) might co-construct knowledge and negotiate power and context (Timonen, 2021). If the triad of STs, MTs, and TEs is a PLC built upon trust, reciprocity and local responsiveness, there is an improved chance for greater depth of learning; however, this PLC must be designed with intentional practices to be successful. Especially in SIAs, the partnership ecology between ST, MT and TE is even more challenging to achieve than in domestic school placements.

Research Question

The question we seek to answer in this text is therefore: In what ways, and in what moments has the shift towards collaborative learning been evident in our school internships abroad? Furthermore, which aspects facilitate this, and which aspects tend to hinder it? Or, to reformulate the title of our chapter: When and how does mentoring happen in collaboration? How are music teaching competencies co-constructed in SIAs?

Methodology

In this chapter we refer primarily to data and findings on mentoring from the larger research process of *TEAM Work Package 5, School Internships Abroad and Mentoring* (for further details, see Steinmetz et al. (2026, in this volume).

Design-based Research Setting

We employed a design-based research approach (DBR) (Bakker, 2019; Design-Based Research Collective, 2003). DBR combines the systematic, empirically supported development of practical tools on the one hand with contributions to theoretical knowledge in the field through data analysis on the other. McKenney and Reeves (2019) call this the "dual focus" (p. 86), as researchers at the same time are advancing the "maturing intervention" (p. 83) as well as "theoretical understanding" (p. 43).

As is typical of DBR approaches, we worked in iterative cycles. One cycle comprised the planning and preparation, implementation, and post-processing of our design: a school internship abroad for a music education student – meaning that a ST from one country completed a school internship in another country – supported throughout by mentoring tools we developed. Furthermore, the cycles included data collection throughout, as well as data analysis at the end of each cycle in order to inform re-design for the next cycle. Data were collected using instruments we developed (see Steinmetz et al., 2026, in this volume); data analysis served as the basis for evaluation, decisions regarding the re-design, and the acquisition of theoretical knowledge. A total of seven cycles took place. We collected our data using three instruments: transcripts of the (1) orientation meetings between MT and ST entering the internship, which were conducted using our Introductory Conversation guide (Appendix B); (2) voice memo prompts (Appendix D) and the STs' (N = 10) recorded voice memos, made during their placement (between 7 and 20 brief voice recordings per student), and transcripts of (3) a debrief interview after completion of the SIA, which were conducted using our Debrief Interview Guide (Appendix F). In addition, we conducted semi-structured interviews with the MTs (N = 3) towards the end of our study, as well as with the TEs (N = 2) involved.

All data were evaluated qualitatively by building three different coding systems: one system for the seven cycles described above, which includes ST voice memos, introductory conversations with the MT and debrief conversations with the teacher education and research team; one for MT interviews; and one for TE interviews. Each of the three coding systems was used by two members of the research group to independently code the data. The two members met afterwards to discuss discrepancies and collaboratively reach consensus regarding the final codes (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019). The data were analysed using qualitative content analysis (Kuckartz, 2019). For this text, we reread the data with a particular focus on the collaborative, dyadic, or triadic design of our SIAs, working with all codes and coded segments from the main categories Mentoring, Mentee Experiences, Teacher Educator, and Mentor-Mentee Dyad, as well as drawing on all memos created both during individual initial coding and in the subsequent exchange between the two co-coders. The findings were incorporated into the revision of the design principles (see below) and into the refinement of our tool (*Mentor Checklist*, see Table 2).

Design Principles: Guidelines between Maturing Design and Growing Theoretical Knowledge

At four points throughout data collection, we supported the refinement of the design as well as the clarification of our theoretical findings through the development of design principles (Euler, 2017). Here, we demonstrate the gradual development of one design principle which illustrates the shift described above. The following design principle has shifted from an open initial question to a more MT-centred formulation, then to one oriented toward the ST's competence, to an explicitly co-constructive version in the end (Table 1). Design principles are used to guide the creation of the practical tools: they "provide guidance and direction, but do not give 'certainties'" (Plomp, 2007, p. 22) and are refined step by step according to data analysis, acting as a link between design development and growing theoretical understanding. The design principles were refined across four points: Before the start of our first cycle we defined design principles based on existing literature, our own mentoring experiences and experience as teachers and teacher educators, as well as a pilot study on domestic school internships throughout Europe (Steinmetz et al., in review). After the second cycle, the design principles were discussed and adapted according to the knowledge acquired to that point; the same occurred upon conclusion of the sixth cycle. At the end of the study a final fine-tuning took place based on the completed data analysis and our joint discussions and interpretations within the research group; we also made decisions regarding their format for their final publication (see APPENDIX A):

Version	Design Principle (DP)	Methodological commentary
Initial version	How and to what extent can students get involved in all levels of school life/*'teachering'*?	We formulated this aspect as a question of the STs perspective, not yet as a principle, using the expression *'teachering'* (= all activities of STs alongside teaching) which had been an in-vivo quote from our pilot survey.
After 2nd cycle	**Play your local strengths** • Raise awareness for your music educational specialities, school culture and National requirements, e. g. technology, choir singing **Teachering as holistic endeavour** • Involve the students in all levels of school life (cf. *'Teachering'*)	Cycle 1 and 2 were carried out in an international school with a MT who is a strong networker, so the DP seemed valuable. At this point, the DP was divided it into two areas, both with more explicit content and foregrounding, the perspective of the MT. We also noted that this could become more problematic in the next cycle with potential language issues in a national school.

After 6th cycle	**Foster developing collaborative working skills in school settings** • Involve STs in collaborative work such as curricular planning, school events, bigger projects, field trips, etc. • Discuss how effective teams work: allow everyone's voice to be heard, listening skills, feedback policy, … • Give insight into faculty peer-learning and collaboration structures between teachers at school.	Due to sufficient data from the students' perspectives and their comments on learning paths, this DP now focuses on the competence development of the STs in its title (collaborative working skills). The core of this DP – the reason why it is central – has become clear, and it has become more differentiated – taking into account the many layers of STs' experiences. The immersiveness of SIAs opened a lot of *'teachering'* possibilities. The foreign language issue continues to be absent.
Final version	**ACT AS A TEAM PLAYER: Develop collaborative learning and working skills in school settings** • Involve student teachers in collaborative work such as school curriculum design, planning school events, projects, field trips, etc. • Discuss how effective teams work: ensuring all voices are heard, developing listening skills, establishing clear feedback policies. • Give insight into faculty peer-learning and collaboration between teachers at your school.	The final version shows how the entire set of DPs has evolved more towards co-constructive learning. The bold title of the design principle is no longer solely attributable to the mentor, but could largely be interpreted from various perspectives (MT, ST, TE, or even school leader). The DP also reflects the common format of the final DPs decided upon by the research group: affirmative opening title, explanatory sentence and further sub-points that describe details of the addressed topic.

Table 1: Gradual development of one design principle

Findings

In the following, we primarily present results relating to aspects of collaboration – the interactions and relationships between participants – or their (joint) learning.

The SIA as an unusual construct with few familiar structures: The often extensive negotiation of conditions that a SIA requires from the outset can strengthen collaborative, but it can also lead to more uncertainty than in familiar and domestic internships. In our SIAs, this departure from familiar structures almost always had a positive impact on collaboration, a fact that we also attribute to the structured introductory discussions (APPENDIX B, Introductory Conversation Guide).

The SIA as an immersive endeavour for STs: An important factor that distinguishes SIAs from domestic internships is the STs' more holistic involvement. SIAs can almost be described as immersive: All ten STs participating in our study spent significantly more time at the school in comparison to what is typical during domestic school internships,

and gradually became more and more involved in school life, sometimes very intensively. This may be because they were abroad and wanted to get as much as possible out of their SIA, and also because there are fewer rigid performance assessments than in their home institution. It may also be due to the lack of a supportive home environment, meaning there is essentially no reason to go home, as one ST describes in a voice memo:

> *'Yeah, and then at the end of this day there was this thing called TGIF. Thank God it's Friday and that's a thing the teachers do at the start of the school year where on Friday they just meet after the last [00:05:12] period and have some drinks, have some snacks. That was really cool. I got to chat with some of the, like, other colleagues I haven't met or met on that day or met before, whatever.* […], *I already got, like, some fear of missing out of, like, the weeks that come after I leave because it's really nice here and I hardly imagined leaving.'* (ST5_VM5, Pos. 6)

Spending more time at school in SIAs positions STs as colleagues: The mere time spent in school seems to have contributed to a more collegial atmosphere, sometimes leading, for example, to extended discussions about teacher beliefs, as one STs describes:

> *'Yes, in the morning we didn't have class, first period, but the teachers of the music department were going to have a meeting to discuss various things and* [MT1] *told us to go and attend. And in the end it was interesting because we discussed what everyone's philosophy is on teaching music. And obviously it was very interesting to see the, while there are only four people, I know, there were all four, let's say, sides, let's say, they all had different opinions on the subject, which is very interesting,* […].' (ST5a_VM15, Pos. 6)

In the following situation, this even led to the ST independently deciding to take on upcoming tasks for the music teaching team and to acquire skills that will be useful to them:

> *'And, yeah, then* […] *I unpacked some packages which came and there was some live music production, like, there were some production tools, like, where you can, like, produce music live and I tried that out and I think that was, like, the highlight of my day because I got to experiment with that also and I did it, like, by myself.* […].' (ST2_VM5, Pos. 5)

In SIAs the differences can become thought-provoking for all actors: The fact that STs and MTs come from different countries and contexts seems to have promoted openness to different viewpoints and reciprocal mentoring. It can encourage all parties to question what they take for granted. The following MT describes how STs' viewpoints helped her to rethink her own teaching goals:

> *'And it was very nice. It's, it's also,* […] *an enriching experience to see that* [..] *I might have different goals, uh, of music education and, uh, imagine a successful music lesson differently. And it's just as valuable. Uh, so, uh, for, for me, you know, especially in our school where we are so eager to impress most of the time.* […]*, it was for me. It was very, very nice just to step back from that mindset of ours and to look at the music education differently.'* (MT3_DI, Pos. 210)

SIAs as places of intercultural learning for the teaching staff: Another consequence of the strong involvement of STs in school life is that in SIAs, the student teacher seems to belong to the whole school more than in domestic internships. One MT describes how the student teachers' mere presence and the mutual dialogues in the teachers' meeting room prompted him and his colleagues to reflect on similarities, on differences, and on intercultural learning as such.

SIAs empower students in school in terms of language skills: SIAs can also shed new light on students and their abilities. Both mentors from the national schools (where English is not the standard language of instruction) reported how surprised they were by their pupils' ability to navigate the new language situation.

Conversely, SIAs necessitate that MTs require linguistic precision in critical moments: The mentors also reported instances in the classroom in which the STs had formulated tasks that were unclear both linguistically and in terms of content, which significantly reduced the success of the learning sequence for the students.

In SIAs collaborative mentoring support from TEs can foster STs Learning: More examples of collaboration between the ST-MT-TE triad are needed than those found in the *TEAM* project; nevertheless, we refer here to some positive examples of collaborative and supportive assistance additionally provided by university teachers from sending institutions in *TEAM*. The respective TE describes this in their interview:

> *'*[…] *because at some point I talk to them the most, uh,* [… the MT] *put them on a call with me. Um, and we had a very quick conversation, and then he took his laptop and he showed me the students as they were teaching in the next room. Oh, which was great.* […] *Different kinds of communication channels I think.* […] *you know, I, I really kind of encourage them. I say, oh, you know, you look like professionals. You're not, you know, student teachers, you know, like professionals and so forth, you know, and really just providing a lot of encouragement to them.'* (TE2_I, Pos. 31–33)

SIAs foster non- and paraverbal music leading: Finally, we take a look at mentoring in relation to specifically musical activities – music-making in the classroom, for example. Our results show no major differences from the typical role of a mentor as found in domestic internships, such as that of a role model. There is one difference, however, which points anew to reciprocal mentoring: Due to language difficulties present among STs, there is a constant search for ways to of guide music-making either nonverbally or with minimal language use. Increasing the capability to, as one student put it, *'Do*

more, talk less!' (ST3b, 2024) is not only a goal in SIAs, but also a methodological area of exploration for teachers in many countries who teach classes with a large number of migrant children.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight that school internships abroad (SIAs) in music education constitute a unique pedagogical space in which traditional assumptions about mentoring, teaching, and professional learning are productively unsettled. SIAs are characterised by intensified immersion, unfamiliar structures, and heightened intercultural encounters. These conditions can accelerate the shift from hierarchical mentoring models toward collaborative and reciprocal forms of professional development. In this sense, and in keeping with Timonen (2021), SIAs serve as laboratories for revisiting fundamental questions about the nature of mentoring: Who holds expertise? How is professional knowledge constructed? And what forms of collaborative support encourage student teachers' growth most effectively?

Central to our discussion is the observation that SIAs often dissolve rigid roles. Student teachers were not only learners but also contributors to school life, artistic partners, and catalysts for intercultural reflection among mentors and the wider teaching staff. The mere presence of an ST from a different educational background sometimes triggered school-wide discussions about music teaching, cultural assumptions, and varying approaches to student engagement. This reciprocity – where mentors and colleagues learn from the student teacher – challenges persistent narratives of unidirectional expertise transmission. It also underscores the importance of situating mentoring within dynamic, participatory professional communities rather than within a dyadic expert-novice frame.

Another key finding is the central role of time and immersion in shaping collaborative learning. STs in SIAs spent far more time at school than during typical domestic placements, resulting in deeper involvement in school routines, informal learning moments, and shared responsibilities. This extended presence facilitated a collegial atmosphere in which professional dialogues emerged naturally and spontaneously. At the same time, the immersive character of SIAs brings challenges: mentors must be attentive to emotional strain, potential overextension, and the linguistic demands placed on STs. Clear communication, structured reflection, and scaffolded independence become essential elements of effective mentoring. More than usual, mentors should support STs through difficult situations or setbacks and should be mindful of potential overexposure. One could say that the three support levels (professional, personal, and social support; Wittek et al., 2017) need to be rebalanced. At the same time, MTs can assume that STs in SIAs are generally very open to all kinds of involvement, which can lead to positive and dynamic collaborations.

Our results finally point to the importance of the triadic relationship between ST, MT, and TE. Although SIAs pose logistical challenges for triadic collaboration, even occasional moments of joint communication – such as shared feedback sessions or video-based observations – proved highly supportive for ST learning. Strengthening these triadic structures could further enhance the co-constructive potential of SIAs.

The Practical Tool: *Mentor Teacher Checklist*

Based on the data analysis conducted over seven cycles in our project, we developed the *mentor teacher checklist*, one of the empirically supported practical tools resulting from our DBR approach. The checklist contains twelve guidelines that can help (music) mentors who want to host a student teacher from another country during preparation and implementation of a school internship abroad. In this chapter, this tool serves as a concise and practice-oriented summary of our findings on mentoring music STs in SIAs.

	Practical Guidelines for Mentor Teachers. A Checklist	✓
1	**Lay the groundwork for the internship: Connect and prepare** Take enough time for an introductory conversation in which the MT explains the school context and daily life; the role and content of music lessons; and very specific things (e. g. a typical day, list of instruments, etc.). Take your time to answer all questions and ideas that the ST may have. Clarify and agree on responsibilities and requirements of both the MT and sending institution (TE). Be aware of the ST's learning in an unfamiliar international setting (away from home, typical immersiveness of internships abroad, lack of peer network or personal support system) and think about offering local cultural orientation and support.	
2	**Discuss the why: Music teaching beliefs and philosophies** Share examples of diverse music teaching philosophies. Encourage STs to create and reflect on their general teaching philosophy and values regarding ME, and what their overarching aims and objectives when teaching music are.	
3	**Reflect on different levels: Similarities and differences** Address and discuss ST's experiences regarding the intercultural (school, professional settings, and beyond). Provide reflection tools for intercultural learning experiences like the *intercultural reflection tree*. Explore the role that music plays and how music is taught in a different context.	
4	**Facilitate peer mentoring among STs** Support peer learning among STs through group reflection and facilitate interdisciplinary networking.	

5	**Embrace different forms of musical communication** Encourage STs to take advantage of the SIA to communicate through music and nonverbal means. Keep in mind: Do more, talk less.	
6	**Support adaptation of teaching in a foreign language** Offer teaching materials in English (or the language of instruction that is used) so that songs, further material and subject-specific terms can be used well right from the start. Encourage clear and concise communication during key moments in the lesson (e. g. by written preparation). Language adaptation needs time; trust that the mentee will learn quickly.	
7	**Learn from each other, share learning opportunities (reciprocal mentoring)** Benefit from what the STs can offer from their home institutions (universities and schools), from personal skills or from experiences with different musical styles. Raise awareness for your music educational specialities, school culture and national requirements. From time to time, ask for and benefit from feedback for yourself as MT.	
8	**Progress gradually from observation to independent teaching** Offer observation of your teaching to clarify questions, norms, atmosphere and the ability of pupils. Offer opportunities for 1-to-1, small group, co-teaching, and full-class teaching responsibilities. Facilitate observation of colleagues' teaching as well.	
9	**Provide constructive feedback on and encourage discussion of music-didactic principles** Create space for regular conversation and reflection on teaching via a medium that is best for everyone. When mentees observe your teaching or teach themselves, clarify and explain the patterns behind your teaching actions, as this strengthens teaching practice.	
10	**Feature the student teacher as an artist** Provide opportunities for ST to share and implement their musical/artistic personalities, interests, skills and competences in the school.	
11	**State the importance of and model reflective practice** Demonstrate your own self-reflection methods and tools, highlighting their benefits. Encourage, support and participate in (as needed) ST's self-reflective, self-assessment activities. Support the ST in systematic documentation (e. g., of lesson planning, feedback, personal learning).	
12	**Enable the development of collaborative working skills in the school setting** Involve STs in collaborative work such as curricular planning, school events, larger projects, field trips, etc. Discuss how effective teams work: ensuring all voices are heard, developing listening skills, establishing clear feedback policies. Give insight into faculty peer-learning and collaboration structures between teachers at your school.	

Table 2: The *TEAM* tool *Mentor Teacher Checklist*.

Acknowledgement and Afterlife

In the *TEAM* project, ten young people, three schools, and five universities were given the opportunity to collaborate productively in SIAs. We expressly thank them for their courage, their willingness to break new ground, and for making their data available to us. Their contribution is important for the future of music teacher education. We are currently working towards the school-university network *TEAM-IN*,[3] a partner-finding tool that shall continue to contribute to international mobility and meaningful education of STs even after the *TEAM* project's end.

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