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Reframing Teacher Education: Towards the Integration of Phenomenon-Based Curriculum Reform and Organizational Culture

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Abstract
In this article, we report a case study of our experiences of a curriculum reform process based on the principles of phenomenon-based learning in higher education in the context of Finnish teacher education. We explore how democracy and participation were present in the decision-making process, highlighting the challenges of promoting the phenomenon-based approach and collaboration. First, we describe the reform's rationale, then the theoretical framework, methodology and the reform process. Next, we reflect on our experiences through documentary and interview data. The change process included representative and participative democracy approaches as well as an aristocratic approach. An individualistic culture became more collaborative, while the content-based curriculum evolved into a more phenomenon-based approach. Using an autoethnographic approach, we discuss our understanding of how the local teacher education community's response to the curriculum changes and the organizational culture overall became more positive. We conclude that organizational power structures, the autonomy of teacher educators, and collegial trust and support were crucial to the reform process.

Key Words: Curriculum reform, teacher education, micropolitics, autoethnographic approach

Introduction

In this article we report a case study of curriculum reform in the context of teacher education in Finland. We explore how democracy and participation were manifested in the process with respect to the use of power in decision-making, highlighting the challenges in promoting both a collaborative organizational culture and a phenomenon-based collaborative curriculum within a theoretical framework of reframing, micropolitics, and organizational culture.

In educational institutions, leadership of curriculum change is complex and often unpredictable (Fasso, Knight, & Purnell, 2016). Higher education institutions can be viewed as loosely coupled (e.g., Weick, 1976) and characterized by multiple and con-

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flicting sub-cultures (Dee & Heineman, 2016). Curriculum change is context-specific with unique processes. What works in one institution might not work in another (Dee & Heineman, 2016). Thus, power and micropolitics are important concepts for understanding curriculum change in these institutions. Personnel build coalitions, use strategies to prevent or enhance curriculum change and influence colleagues, and use their knowledge to persuade colleagues (Flessa, 2009).

Higher education cultures also tend to be individualistic rather than collaborative and teachers value autonomy (Sahlberg, 2011). This may present a problem for deep curriculum change. The argumentation in curriculum change is likely to be subjective and political. The values and interests of different staff members may conflict, and they may interpret realities differently (Dee & Heineman, 2016). When curriculum change becomes a matter of personal and professional identity, defensive routines (Argyris & Schön, 1996) may guide the action of individuals and prohibit organizational learning, which is a precondition for deep curriculum change.

Studies (Kezar, 2012) show that a top-down approach does not work in curriculum change. Broad changes can provoke resistance if the staff does not influence the process (Dee & Heineman, 2016). Therefore, there is a call for more democratic participation and collaboration among educational professionals (Law, Galton, & Wan, 2010). However, democratic participation can sometimes hinder curriculum change (see Ylimäki & Bruner, 2011). Moreover, a bottom-up approach to curriculum development can be problematic as its success depends on the existing power structure and the benevolence of official leaders (Kezar, 2012).

One type of deep curriculum change is the abandonment of disciplinary or content-based curricula that typically dominate in universities. These curricula are based on the theories, concepts and thinking models of separate disciplines. Thus, cross-disciplinary studies seem to hold a minor position. Some attempts have been made to challenge traditional discipline-oriented thinking and change the pedagogy. In these cases, the study of separate disciplines may be based on certain interesting problems or phenomena. Students do not study the contents and methods of science per se; rather, they use them to try to solve an ill-structured problem (problem-based learning) or understand a complicated phenomenon (phenomenon-based learning) (e.g., Østergaard, Lieblein, Bredland, & Francis, 2010).

In the field of medicine several universities have built problem-based curricula, but phenomenon-based curricula seem to be rare (see Bolander, Josephson, Mann, & Lonka, 2006). In the phenomenon-based teacher education curriculum, studies are organized around often complicated and ill-structured phenomena that are considered central to school realities. Therefore, studying involves the use of concepts and theories from several disciplines in order to deeply understand the phenomena (e.g., Moilanen, 2015).

This study aims to shed light on democratic leadership and how to lead demo-

cratic curriculum development in a productive way. We also aim to describe and interpret how phenomenon-based curriculum reform has challenged traditional discipline-oriented curriculum thinking.

As curriculum change is context-specific, we approach the research topic ethnographically as ethnographic research is suited to studying the phenomena of power and conflict in curriculum development (see Ylimäki & Brunner, 2011). We first describe the research context, theoretical framework, and methodology of our study, as well as the rationale and origins of the reform. Then, we reflect on the curriculum process through documentary and interview data from the Department of Teacher Education (hereafter DTE) of the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Finally, we discuss our understanding of the ways power plays out in decision making in curriculum reform, draw conclusions, and discuss the limitations of the study. We highlight the challenges in promoting both a collaborative organizational culture and phenomenon-based collaborative curriculum and in enhancing understanding of the significance of integrating them.

The research questions are:

1. How were micropolitical strategies used in the organizational culture reform of the department of teacher education?
2. How were micropolitical strategies used in the teacher education curriculum reform?

Theoretical Framework

Our central concepts are reframing, micropolitics, and organizational culture. Our shared interest in cultural research and organizational reasoning explains the choice of our theoretical framework and the research task, which emphasizes the integration of culture and curriculum.

According to Thomas and Thomas (1932, p. 572), '[i]f men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences'. The socially constructed nature of an organization depends on communication among the people involved; thus, it mainly occurs through language (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Reframing is a vehicle for profoundly changing organizations. According to Wazlawick, Weakland, and Fisch (1979, p. 123), the conceptual or emotional frames of a situation are altered and placed in new frames that correspond to the 'facts' of that concrete situation as well as or even better than before, thereby altering the whole meaning of the situation.

The promotion of the phenomenon-based approach was partly dependent on the nature of the Faculty of Education (hereafter FE) micropolitics. Micropolitics include the strategies and tactics used by individuals and groups in an organization (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002, p. 756). Blase (1991, p. 11) defines micropolitics as the use of formal and informal political power to protect or further one's interests; any conscious

action, whether collaborative or conflictual, can be politically significant. The interaction between micro- and macropolitical factors is common, e.g., the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (National Board of Education, 2014) emphasizes phenomenon-based learning.

We took micropolitical steps in the form of reframing in order to invite different viewpoints by negotiating meanings among staff, and we used political power and tactics to further the interest of integrating and developing the DTE (see Achinstein, 2002; Blase, 1991; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). We belonged to the DTE coordination team that strove for integrating organizational culture change and curriculum change (see Naukkarinen, 2004, 2010; Naukkarinen & Rautiainen 2020; Tarnanen & Kostiainen 2020), which during the reform process became the rationale and vision for the curriculum reform (Figure 1).

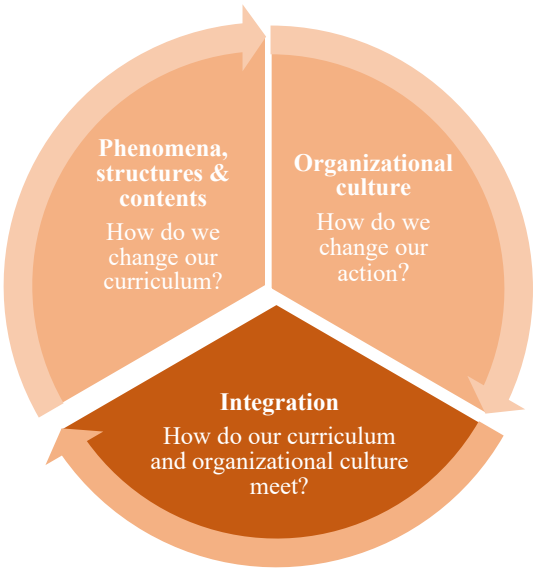

Figure 1. Rationale for the curriculum reform

We argue that university teaching is committed to social transformation, although marketization and other neoliberal trends tend to disturb that commitment (see González-Calvo & Arias-Carballal, 2017). Our theoretical framework is the vehicle for social transformation in organizational culture and curriculum design, helping us understand 'how social and cultural contexts shape and are shaped' by actions of the DTE and the FE staff (see Hughes & Noblit, 2017, p. 212). Regarding social transformation, we emphasize a central characteristic of Finnish education, the culture of trust that has played a supportive role throughout educational policy and practice (see Sahlberg, 2011). This culture of trust is evident also in our study.

Research Approach and Context, Data and Methods

This study takes an autoethnographic approach, making use of participant observation triangulated with interviews and ordinary informal conversations. Information is also gained from other documentary sources. Aligned with the autoethnographic approach, we do not try to provide undisputed truths or objective facts (see Ellis & Bochner, 2000). As Ellis (2007, p. 14) states, 'doing autoethnography involves a back-and-forth movement between experiencing and examining a vulnerable self and observing and revealing the broader context of that experience'. In our study, we understand autoethnography as providing a critical engagement of the self when it has been socially constructed, reconstructed, and deconstructed (Hickey & Austin, 2007). As the primary participants in the process of writing a personal narrative of the reform, we aim to gain a deeper understanding by systematically analysing our personal experience (Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2005) to illuminate the organizational culture processes at play in curriculum reform (see Boyle & Parry, 2007); together, the three elements of this approach – self (auto), culture (ethnos) and process (graphy) – are stronger than their individual parts (Ellis, 2004).

Our approach is more analytic than evocative. We write traditionally in the first person, but we do not strive for artistic expressions. We aim at presenting a truthful description in the realist tradition (see Anderson, 2006). Our ethnographic approach can be characterized as analytic-interpretive: we want to make sense of the data by building a coherent picture of the culture we are part of. We also draw from hermeneutics to gain a deeper understanding of the hidden meanings in organizational culture (see Farrell, Bourgeois-Law, Regehr, & Ajjawi, 2015).

The study was conducted in the DTE of the University of Jyväskylä. DTEs at Finnish universities have a high degree of autonomy in designing their curricula (however, universities follow some general outlines, e.g., pedagogical (60 ECTS), academic discipline and research studies, information and communication technology (ICT), and language studies). The University of Jyväskylä, located in Central Finland, was established in 1863 as Finland's first Finnish-speaking teacher seminary. It is ranked as the fourth largest university in Finland according to the number of master's degrees conferred. It has six faculties, four independent institutes, 14,500 students, of which about 1,000 are international students with over 100 nationalities, and 2,500 employees, of which 800 are researchers and 700 are teachers (University of Jyväskylä, 2021). At the time of conducting this research, the DTE had around 100 staff and the FE 200 staff. In Shanghai Ranking's Global Ranking of Academic Subjects 2020, the University of Jyväskylä was ranked 40th in education (http://www.shanghairanking.com/institution/university-of-jyvaskyla).

The task of the coordinating team was to coordinate the timetables, meetings, working groups and contents. We brainstormed, disseminated information, and received and provided feedback (Figure 2).

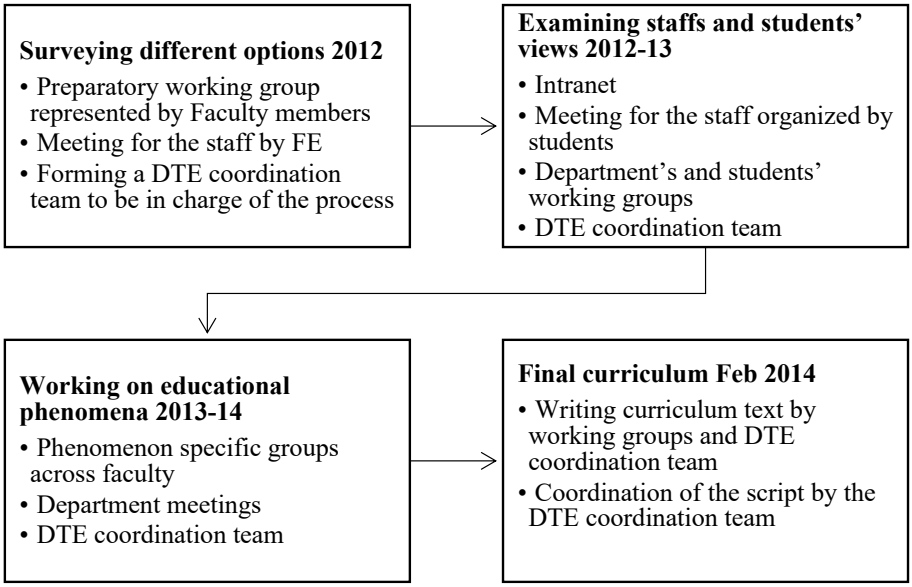

Figure 2. Timeline for the curriculum reform process

Team members had a twofold role as researchers and staff members. It was challenging to balance the roles of a trusted colleague and a critical researcher. As insiders/outsiders, we did not need acceptance from the researched community; however, as full members of that community, we did have wide access to it. When conducting interviews, analysing data, and co-constructing the study, we increased our sensitivity to relationships of power, community language and discourses (see also Parker-Jenkins, 2018). During interviewing we played an active role in remembering and telling stories about past experiences. Thus, the interview narratives were co-constructed (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011).

The main data are documentary data. Data (Table 1) include qualitative staff and student survey responses about the expectations and challenges related to the reform, group work outcomes, meeting memos, programmes, materials for and outcomes of staff development days and curriculum planning, field notes, and ethnographic interviews with key people at the DTE and the FE.

Table 1.
Data collected for the study and its use

Data source	Data analysis	Main purpose of data
Qualitative survey for staff Groupwork outcomes by staff Meeting memos Materials for staff development and curriculum planning	Describing, classifying, interpreting, comparing, reflecting and writing as a cyclical process	Identifying, describing, interpreting, and reflecting the case and the context
Fieldnotes	See above	Describing and reflecting our experiences and observations
Ethnographic interviews (n=4)	Qualitative content analysis	Meanings given and negotiated on the curriculum reform process and experiences of it

We used content analysis to analyse the interview data and part of the survey data, searching for recurrent themes, and then discussed these themes. Next, we selected the most interesting, related themes, partially guided by our experiences of previous DTE curriculum construction processes. We searched for concepts that would make sense of our findings. The aim was to establish the kind of practical value that a theory can provide when constructed through personal experience (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Kohlbacher, 2005; Starr, 2010). Throughout this process, we used both inductive and adductive reasoning (Lipscomb, 2012).

To fulfil trustworthiness criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), we ascertained credibility and dependability with researcher and data triangulation (Denzin, 1978) and rigorous analyses, transferability with thick description (Geertz, 1973), and confirmability with researcher triangulation, careful documentation of analysis, and colleague feedback.

Findings

We first present micropolitical strategies that we found in the DTE organizational culture reform (research question 1) and then we go through micropolitical strategies used in the DTE curriculum reform (research question 2).

Micropolitical strategies in the organizational culture reform of the DTE

The curriculum reform process began in 2012 as a routine procedure undertaken every fourth year (Figure 2). In 2012, the FE decided that the curricula of all FE units would be phenomenon-based.

The FE council and the dean had the main responsibility for curriculum development in the FE. Both FE departments had their own curricula, but now the FE council

demanded more curricular cooperation than before from them. Therefore, the departments coordinated the curriculum reform process. While in charge of the reform, the head of the DTE authorized the coordination team to organize and lead the DTE curriculum reform. The head's support was important for the coordination team, which got a lot of authority in the curriculum process despite its vague position in the bureaucracy of the FE and the DTE.

Filling the power vacuum

Loose organizational structures can encourage political activity by producing 'space' (Blase, 1991, p. 3). In our reform, space meant the power vacuum in both the FE and the DTE:

> *As we don't really have anyone in the faculty to be responsible for this kind of issue, it means that whoever takes the responsibility and sort of demagogically carries on his or her agenda will be strong in his or her case.* (DTE staff member)

Because neither organization had a strong enough will to acquire power in the process, the proponents of phenomenon-based curricula in the DTE, led by our team, filled the power vacuum, and directed the process for both the FE and the DTE.

At the DTE level, the process resembled Aristotelian aristocracy; a few staff guided the curriculum process, making decisions in the best interests of all (Cherry, 2009). Because the will to acquire power was weak, micropolitical struggles and ideological conflicts (see Achinstein, 2002) were not evident at the beginning. They emerged later in the reform process.

From representative democracy to interdisciplinary working groups

In the context of reform's power dynamic, we began to organize how to further our views. We used formal and informal power to promote our interests through conscious action (see Blase, 1991), with the goal of replacing representative democracy with more flexible democracy forms when needed. In the DTE, the representative democracy approach gave way to promoting voluntary interdisciplinary working groups, which reduced the power of the cliques of traditional teacher education disciplines. Working group leaders were chosen on a voluntary basis, and staff members could choose which groups they attended.

Traditionally, in the DTE, curricular reforms had not entailed the amount of negotiation found in the reform described here, but representative democracy led every expert group to inform the coordinators what it thought was essential for the curriculum. The 2005–2014 curriculum was based on four sub-fields of educational science (see Naukkarinen, 2010), a solution that guided the staff to select the planning area they felt best fits their expertise. Expert groups could work smoothly simply by tolerating each

other's differences. Previous ways of working were neither collaborative nor conflictual, i.e., the political significance of tolerating differences was most likely aimed at preserving the status quo (see Blase, 1991).

Phenomenon-based planning aroused feelings of ignorance and uncertainty, leading to the need to negotiate meanings collaboratively. For instance, the concept of phenomenon-based learning was unclear, even to the coordination team members. It was universally considered, including by the rest of the FE, as learning by doing:

> *[…] tolerating the incomplete and correcting mistakes I guess are the important points. […] people have learned to discuss better and to tolerate discordant kinds of voices, too.* (DTE staff member)

At the FE level, a representative democracy approach prevailed early in the reform. Towards the end of the process, interdisciplinary working groups emerged, indicating a participatory democracy approach. It was possible to both empower oneself in the curriculum process and learn more about phenomenon-based learning by taking an active role in the working groups, even for employees in lower hierarchical positions.

Border politics

Three concepts are crucial for understanding teacher communities: conflict resolution, border politics, and ideology (Achinstein, 2002). In our reform efforts, conflict resolution and a participatory approach were essential in order to share a phenomenon-based ideology. Borders that existed within the DTE were based mainly on power rivalries or pedagogical disagreements between expertise areas, and less so on disagreements over phenomenon-based ideology. We also encountered problems with borders within the FE, which led to situations where other FE units did not share the DTE's interest in a phenomenon-based approach. There were also borders set around the DTE defining it as the home of phenomenon-based ideology, while other units were more or less outsiders:

> *[…] there was kind of a tension, which made it difficult to produce content and share the thinking, because we in the DTE kept thinking about what this means from the organizational culture point of view; what does it mean in our daily work, cooperation, practice, […], etc. It wasn't just about re-writing the curriculum. Whereas the others kept thinking that there's already a structure [for the curriculum] and there's no point in changing it, [because] there are the staff, their duties, working hours, etc. [already in place].* (FE staff member)

To cross borders and overcome the ideological conflicts that cause micropolitical struggles (Achinstein, 2002), we sent meeting invitations to interdisciplinary parties hoping to create an open atmosphere. People gathered to discuss ideas, and they

discovered that their colleagues' opposing views were mostly reasonable. We were among those who wanted to change the border politics to discourage fragmentation into sub-cultures, and we were prepared to face ideological conflicts that might arise (see Achinstein, 2002).

Threat, embarrassment, and organizational learning

Before the reform, there had been discussions in the DTE about the need to change the department's organizational culture. According to Schein (2010, p. 18), organizational culture is:

> The pattern of basic assumptions that the group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.

The DTE is a typical professional bureaucracy (Skrtic, 1995): through specialization and professionalization, jobs are differentiated and there is little collaboration between staff. This is apparent in the DTE curriculum area sub-cultures of (1) educational science, (2) multidisciplinary school-subject studies and cross-curricular thematic modules (MSTs) and (3) the teaching practice school, as well as in the DTE teaching programme sub-cultures of (1) primary school teacher education, (2) subject teacher education, and (3) guidance and counselling education.

Our department was loosely coupled (Weick, 1976), with insufficient communication between staff, a distorted and slow flow of information, and prolonged problem solving. This was also evident in the survey responses collected before the reform started. DTE staff (n=70) were asked to list the three most important reform challenges. Their answers were: (1) community: interaction and communality, (2) content: integration and the phenomenon-based approach, and (3) action: risk-taking and courage. The same question was asked of DTE students, with similar answers: (1) community: communality and participation, (2) content: research with a connection between theory and practice and (3) action: courage, willingness to change, and forerunning.

According to Collinson, Cook, and Conley (2006, p. 110), organizational learning consists of prioritizing everyone's learning, promoting the sharing of knowledge, taking care of human relationships, fostering inquiry, enhancing democracy, and promoting self-fulfilment. Within the DTE organizational culture we had a history of sharing with colleagues, intentionally or unintentionally, some basic assumptions. By having an individualistic working culture with enough mutual tolerance as well as a tightly structured content-based curriculum and representative democracy, we would legitimize the roles of teacher educators and the DTE (see Naukkarinen & Rautiainen 2020). In the latest reform, with other staff, the coordinating team strived for organi-

zational learning by reframing those assumptions in order to promote collaboration, inquiry-orientation, workplace democracy and opportunities to enrich professional development.

Defensive routines (Argyris & Schön, 1996) can inhibit one's ability to handle feeling threatened or embarrassed. When individuals experience such feelings, their interaction with the workplace community can become a negative self-feeding process that restricts on-the-job learning. To enable organizational learning, this process has to be interrupted by changing the individual theories-in-use. In curricular execution of power, defensive routines are often accompanied by cynicism, which leads to ignoring or ridiculing positive workplace development. It can also lead to individuals blaming their colleagues for problems. This discourages or prohibits workplace development discussions and negotiations on workplace development.

Some DTE staff members were keeping to their 'own' area of the curriculum, avoiding feelings of threat and embarrassment, and optimizing their power relations inside and outside their own sphere (See Naukkarinen & Rautiainen 2020). However, we encountered much less cynicism and colleague-blaming than we expected. Perhaps this was partly because of the Finnish culture of trust (see Sahlberg, 2011). Trust was evident in the way the DTE staff let the coordination team lead the process with an aristocratic approach and in the participatory approach used by the DTE and the FE.

Micropolitical strategies used in the teacher education curriculum reform

Multifaceted pressures for change

During the initial stages of the process, the task of renewing the curriculum proved multifaceted. There were discussions on whether the task would merely involve technical updating and content changes, or whether the process would aim for a single shared curriculum for all FE subjects. To examine these options, the FE dean nominated a preparatory group with a temporary project manager.

The pressure to renew the curriculum primarily came from students and teacher educators, and less from national authorities. In staff meetings, people commented about the desire for more collaboration across the curriculum and the enhancement of research-based collaboration (Fullan, 2007; Hinde, 2004; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009). In a student-organized FE meeting, students expressed their dissatisfaction with the current curriculum in terms of the student voice, curriculum change, and the societal orientation of their studies. These students and teacher educators called for more than simply a reform of the curriculum as an educational document.

The major struggles concerned the structure of the curriculum. One party of colleagues in the FE demanded that studies in research methodology should have an independent part in the curriculum and the other party of colleagues in the FE, including us, demanded that these studies should be included in the studies of educational phenomena. This conflict was resolved when, in the spirit of bargaining and compromising,

the latter party renounced its demands to endorse the phenomenon-based curriculum.

The second major struggle concerned the curriculum for the study of academic disciplines. One party of MST teachers wanted disciplines to be studied separately; the other wanted the study of these disciplines to be integrated. The dispute was intense and highly emotional. Staff voted, but the voting did not produce a resolution. Finally, due to process schedule constraints, the head of department decided on the integrated model. Thus, Aristotelian aristocracy (Cherry 2009) was executed also by the department head, aiming at deciding in the best interest of all staff, since a decision could not be reached. One adherent of the separated model appealed that the FE council should prevent the change, but this appeal did not bear fruit.

The nature of phenomenon-based learning

Lived experience precedes our conceptual understanding, and our relationship with phenomena is experiential rather than intellectual (Østergaard, Lieblein, Bredland, & Francis, 2010, p. 28). In phenomenon-based learning, students study real-life educational phenomena through their own experiences in practical settings. To grasp these complex phenomena students study them from several viewpoints with the aid of various theories (Østergaard et al., 2010). Interdisciplinary and cross-curricular learning is crucial.

A phenomenon-based curriculum offers an effective means of linking theory and practice in teacher education. Teachers work in the complex realities of schools, confronting ill-structured phenomena. In this regard, the traditional content-based curriculum notion of the application of theoretical knowledge to practical problems is too simple and unrealistic (Moilanen, 2015).

> *[…] if you think about what kind of stuff our students will encounter in their future career, it is surely those phenomena that they will encounter. […] phenomenon-based approach sort of offers more possibilities to combine different kinds of expertise. It is because there are complex phenomena out there.* (DTE staff member)

Efforts to change the curriculum to consist of more extensive courses were included in the 2004–2005 curriculum reform (Naukkarinen, 2010). However, this proved difficult; the curriculum remained content-based and fragmented, and students faced the challenge of building coherent understanding from it. Moreover, the tradition of solitary working has been a factor in sustaining a fragmented curriculum with small courses and clear-cut territories of expertise:

> *Well, the feedback over the years from ourselves and especially from the students has been that it is […] hard to grasp the big picture of what is being studied here. Fragmentation, I guess, is a little bit of a swear word already. I guess we wanted to oppose fragmentation in order to reform the*

> *studies to be sufficiently sensible and integrated entities. […] Students near graduation didn't have a clear understanding of what their studies were aiming at.* (DTE staff member)

The phenomenon-based concept held the promise of new ways of teaching and learning for DTE staff and students. The curriculum had to be open to students' interests, and the learning process had to be collaborative and research oriented. Because phenomenon-based learning is demanding, students need more learning time, with less courses. The curriculum must also allow for a multidisciplinary approach (Moilanen, 2015). Although the concept of phenomenon-based learning was new to most DTE staff, it helped that some staff had already used this kind of pedagogy on a small scale, with encouraging results. These earlier experiments functioned both as examples and encouragement:

> *[…] if the terrain isn't ready, and if there are no doers or people who want some actual lived experience of the [reform] agenda, it's totally pointless shouting around and sending e-mail messages like 'this is our new curriculum, let's start living it'.* (DTE staff member)

From a content-based to phenomenon-based curriculum

Contrary to a content-based curriculum, the change toward a phenomenon-based curriculum meant both encouraging student autonomy in planning the aims and contents of a course and discouraging the inclusion of long lists of aims and contents in written curricula. There were critical voices among staff, doubting whether important content areas would be studied and whether a teacher educator was competent enough to master the content chosen by students. The negotiations of responsibilities and power relations between the staff and students seemed to echo not only resistance but also uncertainty, as real-world problems and student-centredness seemed to challenge beliefs and practices.

Negotiations regarding the content-based approach seemed to reflect the decisive micropolitical struggle that occurred when changing the DTE's learning culture. Micropolitical struggles involved ideologies about the form of the curriculum, the pedagogy, and collegial professional relationships and teacher-student relationships (see Achinstein, 2002). This seemed to be obvious when the staff prepared for the new curricula's pedagogical requirements and the changing roles of teacher educators and teacher students. Students' responsibility for their own learning processes, negotiations with and between students, and assessment procedures would all change markedly (Naukkarinen & Rautiainen 2020).

Previously, the curriculum reform process aimed to produce documents that synthesized the requirements of teachers' work and the resources available among the DTE staff (see Naukkarinen & Rautiainen 2020). These processes were more top-down than participatory. The reform described here involved collaborative and phe-

nomenon-specific mixed groups, both in the FE and the DTE, consisting of staff from all units and student volunteers. The idea was to enable staff to interpret and negotiate their social reality of the DTE into the curriculum and to risk the possibility of encountering ideological conflicts.

Since the curriculum process described here, there have been two subsequent curriculum rewriting processes. These processes have involved discussions about the benefits and weaknesses of phenomenon-based learning, but changes to the teacher education curriculum have been minor. Phenomenon-based learning is, therefore, still the cornerstone of the curriculum (see Tarnanen & Kostiainen, 2020).

Discussion

Our aim was to explore how democracy and participation were present in the curriculum reform process with respect to the use of power in decision making, highlighting the challenges in promoting both a collaborative organizational culture and a phenomenon-based collaborative curriculum. The research questions explored the use of micropolitical strategies both in the organizational culture reform of the DTE and in the teacher education curriculum reform. We found that these two areas of micropolitical strategy use were intertwined.

Our study shows that three factors made change possible: long-term dissatisfaction with the old curriculum, unhappiness with the organizational culture, and the nature of the micropolitical strategies used in the reform process. The change was cultural, organizational, and individual. The micropolitical strategies of the coordination team were: (1) volunteering, (2) diminishing the power of the prevailing interest groups of content-based curriculum thinking, and (3) bargaining and compromising.

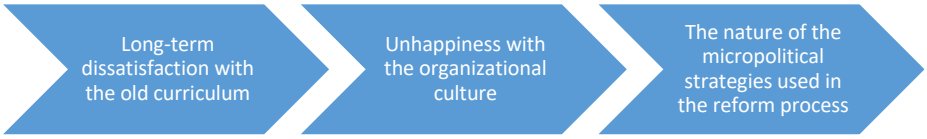

Figure 3. Factors that made the curriculum reform possible

An essential micropolitical move in the organizational culture of the FE and the DTE was the change from representative democracy to interdisciplinary working groups. Negotiating the curriculum model in working groups, participatory sharing, and contesting ideas across groups seemed to empower the staff (bottom-up approach). Grassroots leaders employed the possibility of using power by volunteering to coordinate the curriculum process and having leader positions legitimized by colleagues. These leaders were supported by FE and DTE leaders (see Kezar, 2012, p. 754).

In developing the organizational culture border politics (Achinstein, 2002) emerged, and handling of feelings of threat and embarrassment (Argyris & Schön,

1996) contributed to organizational learning (Collinson, Cook, & Conley, 2006). In reforming the DTE organizational culture, we used formal and informal power to further our interests (Blase, 1991), e.g., to lessen the power of teacher educator cliques. To achieve this, we used the more flexible forms of democracy (aristocracy, participatory democracy, voluntary working groups), which roused feelings of ignorance and uncertainty, even threat and embarrassment. This led to the need to negotiate meanings collaboratively, which included bargaining and compromising. DTE staff ownership of the process was weaker in the early stages because of Aristotelian aristocracy based micropolitical manoeuvres (cf. Cherry, 2009; Fullan, 2003). DTE ownership grew stronger towards the end of the process once it was supported by participatory democracy and the staff understood the rationale behind the process, even if the rationale was not necessarily coherent (cf. Fullan, 2003). Our study deepens the understanding of democratic curriculum development.

In striving for organizational learning (Collinson et al., 2006) through reframing (Watzlawick et al., 1979), social transformation is important. For us, when working toward transformation, it is essential to be aware of marketization and other neoliberal trends (see González-Calvo & Arias-Carballal, 2017). The reform process was an arena for fulfilling hopes for a better future. The lack of dominating authoritarian views, which partly characterizes the Finnish culture of trust, allowed a shared search for new solutions and might have reduced the number of defensive routines (Argyris & Schön, 1996). It was also important to achieve a cost-effective division of labour when planning the reform.

Micropolitically, in reforming the teacher education curriculum we came across multifaceted pressures for change, and the major struggles that were encountered had to do with the structure of the curriculum. Leading democratic curriculum development and challenging traditional discipline-centred thinking appeared to be connected with diminishing the old power positions of the adherents of a content-based curriculum, strengthening voluntary team working to coordinate the process, and setting up a coordination group (i.e., aristocratic, top-down approach). The aristocratic approach (Cherry, 2009) also showed in the department head's intervention in deciding on the MST dispute, which, in our view, was not a sign of distrust or undermining of collaboration. Rather, the intervention was negotiated with the MST staff after they were unable to resolve the problem among themselves; it was a question of replacing participatory democracy, since the process had to go on. Some hard feelings were caused as a result, but the FE-level schedule and the best interest of the staff as a whole were prioritized by the intervention.

The issue of the place of research methodology studies in the curriculum was resolved through compromise. It was difficult for some staff to let go of the content-based approach, causing a divisive micropolitical struggle. In the DTE, the understanding of phenomenon-based learning deepened through staff discussions leading,

finally, to what seemed to be a shared enterprise. Micropolitical struggles involving ideologies (see Achinstein, 2002) are not easy to overcome, but it seemed to be possible to do so by reframing the organizational culture and curriculum as above.

Phenomenon-based learning emphasizes openness to student-centeredness, student autonomy, collaboration, research-orientation, sufficient learning time, extensive courses, de-fragmentation, and a multidisciplinary approach. In addition, in the DTE assessment procedures and negotiations with and between students had to change (Moilanen, 2015; Naukkarinen & Rautiainen, 2020). The staff had a positive attitude toward the phenomenon-based approach and staff group work. We learned about phenomenon-based teacher education by doing it and by exercising the power to promote it. Time-consuming collaborative bargaining was essential micropolitically.

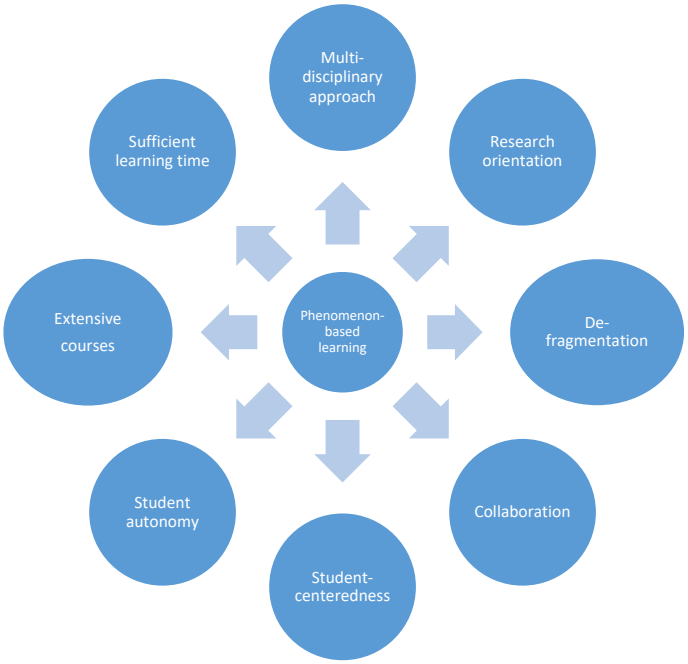

Figure 4. Factors that enable phenomenon-based learning

The link between theory and practice can be strengthened by implementing a phenomenon-based curriculum in which students study from several viewpoints with the aid of various theories (Østergaard et al., 2010). Our staff has been preparing for the changing roles of the new pedagogical approach. Strengthening the theory-practice link also supports the integrated relationship between organizational culture and curriculum (Figure 1). A collaborative organizational culture enables the multidisciplinary use of expertise. This, in turn, enables building a curriculum for competences in collaborative multidisciplinary expertise.

The limitations of our study relate to the authors' central roles, choosing pro-reframing interviewees, and the insider/outsider dilemma. Some bias is likely to have occurred because the authors played central roles in the curriculum reform process and the interviewees chosen considered the reframing to be indispensable. Thus, the authentic, oppositional voices of the staff could not be heard directly (e.g., tensions emerging regarding different understandings and implementation of the phenomenon-based approach, the identity of teachers, and the resources of teaching). This is an ethical question: who is allowed to tell his or her story? To some extent, the insider/outsider-dilemma (see Maydell, 2010) existed as we were both participants and researchers in the study; therefore, the boundary appeared to be porous. On the other hand, because of our central position, we could describe the central micropolitical elements that affected the process. The sharing of our experiences helped us analyse the experiences and the curriculum reform processes of the DTE and the FE.

In terms of flattening hierarchies throughout an organization, teacher students could have been involved more intensively in the latter part of the process and in the study. Another ethical question relates to our vulnerability as faculty members (Wall, 2016). In that respect, we consider that we did not share our experiences in ways that could harm us as, during the process, we did not hide our reform agenda from our colleagues.

Conclusions

Our main conclusions are as follows. Firstly, challenging content-based pedagogy presupposes challenging the organizational power structures that support it.

Secondly, the autonomy of teacher educators turned out to be essential for teacher education curriculum development because autonomy enabled them to promote their professional learning. The heads of the Finnish DTEs as well as Finnish school principals should support pedagogical initiatives that challenge content-based and conservative pedagogy and promote teachers' professional learning (see Butler & Naukkarinen, 2017; Hopkins & Tarnanen, 2017; Naukkarinen, 2018; Pyhältö, Pietarinen, & Soini, 2015; Rautiainen, Nikkola, Räihä, Saukkonen, & Moilanen, 2010; Saukkonen, Moilanen, Mathew, & Rapley, 2017; Tarnanen & Kostiainen 2020).

Thirdly, collegial trust and support seemed to be crucial for creating a social climate that helps individuals bear feelings of ignorance, uncertainty, threat, and embarrassment that are part of radical pedagogical innovations.

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