

# A Conceptualization of the Emotional Phase of Preservice Teachers' Experiences as a Pedagogical Phenomenon

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## Abstract

Even though being a teacher, in a broad sense involve emotions, emotions as a pedagogical concern are, to a limited extent, reflected in Norwegian teacher education. This also seems to be a tendency regarding international teacher education where the notion of the preservice teachers' emotions is rarely addressed and has even been ignored. To contrast this tendency, the emotional phase of preservice teachers' experiences during Norwegian teacher education is explored. The purpose of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of what this emotional phase consists of. Using a phenomenographic approach, dialogical informed in-depth interviews with preservice teachers have been conducted. Through an abductive analysis of the material, a conceptualization of the emotional phase of preservice teachers' experiences as a matter of sentimentalization emerged. This conceptualization is considered the most significant theoretical contribution of this study. The result also reveals how the emotional phase involves the preservice teachers' entire body, their thinking and reflection, closely related to the way they view themselves and the world around them. Based on the results implications for future teacher education will be discussed.

**Key Words:** Teacher education, experiences, emotions, sentimentalization, phenomenography

## Introduction

Even though, being a teacher in a broad sense involves emotional concerns and the emotional aspects of both teachers', students', and pupils' experiences are omnipresent in the educational system they have not taken the position of central concern in pedagogical research (Biesta, 2016; Brinkmann, 2019; Chen, 2019; Jacobsen, 2018; Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2011). Within the pedagogical discourse, emotions often are considered as something to discipline, regulate, suppress, or ignore. Boler (2019) claims that emotions are often theorized as a "private," "natural," and individual experience that is "essentially" located in the individual. Since the end of the 1990s, what we can call the emotional turn has developed within philosophy, neuropsychology, history, sociology, anthropology, and to some extent also within pedagogy (Jacobsen, 2018). Despite the increasing attention to emotions over the last two decades as "socially constructed," the view of emotion as an individual matter is still deeply embedded in our language and conceptual frameworks (Boler, 1999). Brinkmann (2019) points out, that emotions are in the pedagogical research field, mostly considered indi-

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individual experiences, referred to as either emotional difficulties, skills, or competencies. To contrast this tendency, this study aims to conceptualize the emotional phase of preservice students' experiences as a relational matter, rooted in sociality.

In the new Norwegian national curriculum for primary and secondary education (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020) the development of Norwegian pupils' emotional competence is thematized as a didactic content category. This responsibility requires a significant pedagogical challenge in future Norwegian teachers' life and therefore also a significant pedagogical challenge for future teacher education.

Despite this, emotions as a pedagogical phenomenon are, to a limited extent, reflected in Norwegian teacher education (Bjørkelo; Sunde; Fjeld; Lønningen, 2013). According to Akinbode (2013), Dolev & Leshemb (2016), and Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne (2011), this also seems to be a tendency regarding international teacher education where the notion of emotions is rarely addressed and has even been ignored or underplayed (Crawford, 2011; Day, 2011; Hargreaves, 1998; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). In other words, educational research does not dispute the importance of emotions. Yet, we have a limited and imprecise understanding of the significance of how teacher education can incorporate the emotional phase of the preservice teachers' experiences as part of their professional development (Bahia et al., 2013; Chen, 2016; Kelchtermans, 2005; Lee & Yin, 2011; Schutz & Zembylas, 2009).

The purpose of this study is to sharpen and gain a deeper understanding of what the emotional phase of preservice teachers' experiences consists of. Based on the results, implications for future teacher education will be discussed. Against this background, the following research question will be explored: What characterizes the emotional phase of preservice teachers' experiences during Norwegian teacher education, and how can it be conceptualized?

The results of this study underpin and confirm previous research (Chen, 2016; Kelchtermans, 2005; Lee & Yin, 2011; Meyer & Turner, 2007; Schutz & Zembylas, 2009) that argues for the importance of teacher education to take the responsibility of acknowledging and take care of the student teachers' emotions during teacher education.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework is based on the following overarching theoretical concepts: experience (Dewey, 1934/1980), bodily traces (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), intentionality (Goldie, 2000; Zahavi, 1997), intersubjectivity (Zahavi, 2003), and bodily feelings (Goldie, 2000). Before the theoretical concepts are defined more in detail, a conceptual distinction between the notion of feelings and emotions is described.

### **A distinction between feelings and emotions**

To refine the theoretical framework of this study, the distinction between feelings and emotions is described. In everyday language, feelings and emotions often appear as synonyms. In this study, however, with reference to the work of Goldie (2000), Nyeng (2006), and Prinz (2005) who claim that there is a conceptual and terminological distinction between the two concepts. This distinction refers to the understanding of feelings as the named part of an experience that touches the consciousness of the individual. Feelings are what we experience to move our consciousness (Nyeng, 2006), and some researchers, like Prinz (2005) describe feelings as conscious emotions. This means that we always feel our feelings; we would not have them if we did not feel them. As an example, we feel hungry because we are hungry, and we feel hot because we are warm. Whereas, when it comes to emotions, we can also feel our emotions, but without necessarily being aware of them. For instance, we might be in love, envious, jealous, or stressed without being consciously aware of it. Feelings are considered a part of an emotion, but the reverse is not necessarily always the case. This means that considering the concept of feelings and emotions as synonymous contribute to reducing the complexity of emotions. Feelings are narrower and, in a sense, a smaller concept than emotions. Emotions consist of more elements than feelings and therefore denote a broader and more complex concept than feelings.

### **The emotional phase of human experience**

John Dewey (1934/1980) understands the role of emotions as a dynamic, changeable, integral, and necessary phase of human experience (p. 61). According to this understanding human experience is considered as being both a physical, cognitive, emotional, and social matter. For Dewey (1934/1980), our emotions primarily belong to our actions, as something we share. Dewey (1934/1980) considers emotions being an integrated and necessary phase of any experience.

This means that in Dewey's point of view, the emotional phase of an experience is what connects the various parts of an experience so that it becomes a whole (Dewey, 1934/1980), at the same time as it helps to connect people in an outer and inner common world. According to Dewey (1934/1980), emotions are both a public and a cultural phenomenon (p. 61; see also Hohn, 2010, p. 31). In line with Dewey's understanding, emotions are something we share, in the sense that they all belong to the world of actions and not primarily to the world of private and individual mental matters.

### **Emotions as bodily traces**

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1962) consider the body as the core of all our actions and experiences, which we can never escape and therefore is present in all we do. He assumes that our understanding of the world is due to our bodily understanding and our intertwined connections with the people, surroundings, and situations we are part

of, in the sense that our perceptions and horizons depend on our position and cultural systems. According to Merleau-Ponty (1962), corporality is the first step to address emotions. It is through the expressive body that emotions appear. The bodily aspect of our emotions is manifested as the energy we share through our participation in the world. He emphasizes on this interconnectedness that leads to an understanding of the emotional phase of an experience as a bodily experience awakened by relational interconnection.

Thomas Fuchs (2016) considers emotions as bodily traces that include “all kinds of local or general bodily sensations: feelings of warmth or coldness, tickling or shivering, pain, tension or relaxation, constriction or expansion, sinking, tumbling, or lifting, etc.” (p. 196). This implies that our emotions have a direct connection to our body, bodily movements, and changes that affect our autonomous nervous system and regulate our heart, lungs, and muscles (Reeve, 2015). Our bodily movements and changes have a direct effect on our neural paths and our facial muscles and expressions, like the blushing of cheeks when embarrassment flows through us, or when anger beats in our throat, telling us that someone has challenged our boundaries.

### **Emotions as a matter of intentionality**

Peter Goldie’s (2000) refers to emotions as a matter of intentionality. The concept of intentionality refers to the understanding of our consciousness as being object-oriented (Husserl, 1970; Zahavi, 1997). In line with this understanding, Goldie (2000) claims that emotions always have a directedness towards an object. Emotions are always “towards” or “about” something or someone in a certain context. This approach brings forward the dialectical dependence between subjectivity and sociality in the manifestation of emotions as both intentionality and intersubjectivity. Goldie’s insistence on the directionality concerning emotions is useful in this study because it underpins the deeply relational qualities of emotions.

### **Emotions as bodily feelings**

When emotions are considered as bodily feelings, it is in terms of an understanding of the bodily feeling as a part of the emotion and not as a result of it. This perspective contributes to an understanding of the emotional phase of an experience as a meaning-making process and as an expression of being present in the world as a subject through the body. Bodily feelings involve consciousness about the condition of your body or the changes to it (Goldie, 2000).

### **Emotions as an intersubjective concern**

Both within phenomenology and psychological development theories, intersubjectivity is regarded as a meeting place where the individual ceases to be isolated, but a self that meets itself and the world through others. Intersubjectivity is about creating

relational contact, where experience, body, and emotionality are in focus. This assertion appears in the following quote: “We must be others if we are to be ourselves” (Mead, 1925, p. 276). This quote describes, how we in the intersubjective space are in contact with the sense of becoming an individual in the light of each other. Intersubjectivity is understood as an everlasting relationship between subjects, where subjectivity and intersubjectivity are explicitly conceived and therefore considered as a unit (Zahavi, 2003).

## **Methodology**

### **Contextual description and sample**

Norwegian General Teacher Education qualifies preservice teachers to teach pupils in primary and secondary schools between the ages of 6 and 16 years and culminates after five years with a master’s degree. The program consists of both compulsory courses and elective courses. The period of supervised professional training is a major and important part of education, and they take place in primary and lower secondary schools for grades 1–10. The research participants were conveniently recruited. Ten students replied to the information letter about the study sent via e-mail. The participants included three men and seven women from different terms in teacher education (four first-year students, three second-year students, and three third-year students), and they were between 19 and 32 years of age. All participants were Norwegian citizens and fluent Norwegian speakers. Each interview lasted approximately two hours, which resulted in 18 hours of interview material. The interviews took place in an office with no interruptions. To create a common understanding of the purpose of the interview, each session started by asking the participants about their perception of the information letter they had received in advance. The participants are anonymized and given fictive names. According to the dialogical approach to the interview, the preservice teachers are referred to as participants instead of informants.

### **A phenomenographic approach**

The study is anchored in a phenomenographic approach and tradition. Phenomenography aims to describe human experiences of the world (Bowden, Dall’Alba, Laurillard, Marton, Masters, Ramsden, Stephanou, & Walsh, 1992; Ornek, 2008) based on the descriptions of individual experiences, in line with the aims of this study. The purpose of this approach is to identify common patterns across the participants’ descriptions. Phenomenography is related to a field of knowledge that is defined by having descriptions or dissemination of experiences as the subject of the study. This study has revealed how a phenomenographic approach has led to a conceptualization of the emotional aspect of preservice teachers’ experiences based on individual descriptions.

### **The interview as a dialogical process**

Talking about the emotional phase of experiences demands a dialogical climate based on trust and mutual recognition. The research interviews in this project are in line with what Tanggaard (2009) considers a dialogical process for gathering personal narratives of social life. Accomplishing a dialogical approach requires that both parts of the interview attend and share experiences on equal terms. During the interviews, the dialogue itself decided the content. To focus on the emotional phase of the pre-service teachers' experiences, the participants were asked directly about when and in which situations they have been emotionally involved during their teacher education. This study is based on the participants' descriptions of their experiences, that is, those that the students are conscious of and able to put into words. This means that the study does not aim to explore the students' unconscious emotions, but their conceptualized descriptions. Each interview followed the same rhythm which consisted of four themes that formed the framework of the interview. First, we tried to form a common understanding of the topic of the interview. Thereafter, each interview began with a common clarification of the relationship between the concepts of feelings and emotions. From now on, the participants were invited to share experiences from the teacher education where they had felt emotionally affected. After the interviews, when the recorder was turned off, the participants talked together about the content of the interview and the process. Finally, the participants were reminded of the possibility to withdraw from the study at any time. None of them took advantage of this opportunity. On the contrary, all the participants talked casually, easily, and freely about their emotional experiences and they even expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the interviews.

### **Ethical considerations**

This study has required some ethical considerations due to the asymmetric relations between the participants as preservice teachers and the researcher and interviewer (i.e., the author) as a teacher educator. All research participants have been aware of this double role. To prevent a potentially dependent relationship between the students and researcher, all participants did not know each other in advance. All the students' answers and descriptions are considered as authentic, honest, and sincere. During the interviews, the students talked in a relaxed and free manner about their experiences. All interviews were conducted in Norwegian and recorded as sound files in accordance with the participants' written consent. The quotes presented in the result section are translated into English from the transcribed interviews. The Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) approved the study.

### **Analysis**

In line with an abductive approach (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Peirce, 1994, p. 164), the analysis of this material was developed through a formulation of hypotheses

and theoretical patterns that emerged through the interpretation and analysis of the transcribed interviews. Abduction is characterized by being an alternation between theory and an empirical material. The overall abductive understanding is based on Järvinen and Mik-Meyers' (2017) description of the term as a search for a theory that can explain empirical results. In the initial phase of the analysis, densification of meaning, with division into units of meaning and categorization of the material, closely linked to this article's research question was made. To do the participants justice and not to single out individual participants for the benefit of others, patterns and tendencies in the material have been focused to a greater extent than on single details. During the analysis, hypotheses and theoretical patterns were formulated to enable an understanding discovered during the interpretation of the interviews. Transcriptions were completed verbatim and were detailed and coherent. When engaging in a step-by-step process of uncovering the dominant themes, the material was coded, categorized, and condensed by asking questions such as: Which feelings are described? How are these feelings expressed? What is at stake for the student? In what situations has the emotional involvement occurred? What role did bodily aspects of the emotional aspect of the preservice teachers' experiences play?

The participants' experiences are explored through a second-order perspective, where the students' experiences remain at the descriptive level but are presented through the researcher's samples (i.e., the author), analyses, and interpretations of these descriptions. This means that in line with other qualitative research, this study does not intend to present an objective truth, but the participants' descriptions of their lived experiences, interpreted by the researcher.

### **Findings**

The results and answers to the research question reveal that *intentionality, intersubjectivity, bodily traces, and bodily feelings* are significant aspects of the participants' descriptions of their experiences during teacher education. At the same time, it appears that the theoretical framework did not sufficiently contribute to frame the part of the emotional phase of the participants' experiences that related to their thinking and reflections. The results also reveal how the emotional phase involves the entire body, closely related to the way the participants view and meet themselves and the world.

### **About the intersubjective meeting between preservice teachers, pupils, and teacher educators**

All the narratives referred to intersubjective meetings as a significant part of the participants' experiences. As an example, one participant described how his appearance and contribution to a relationship were of significance when it came to the possibility of gaining access to others' emotions. He explained that, first, it is about establishing a good relationship, positive relational intentions, and spending time and doing

things together. When it comes to spending time together, he described how it can be easy to spend time with some people but difficult to do so with others. He was concerned that when a teacher begins to think negative thoughts about a pupil and judges the pupil accordingly, it is important to reconsider the relationship. He said:

*Maybe they are the ones who need you the most. You need to find something to talk to them about, find something to do together with them. Be interested and expose that you have good intentions. You must express your willingness and reveal who you are. You will not get anything without giving some of yourself. (Marco- interview 3)*

In this quote Marco expresses how we will not get anything from each other without giving something of ourselves. He demonstrates that he is aware of both parts of a relationship. Through the intentional, intersubjective, and bodily meetings between people, he recognized that they, at the same time, are each other's subject and object. This quote exemplifies how intersubjectivity is about creating relational contact, where experience, body, and emotions are in focus.

All participants were somehow referring to the relationship between preservice teachers and the teacher educators and how this relation has influenced the students' participation in their educational process to a high degree. They all referred to the importance of the teacher educators' relational involvement with them as preservice teachers. They described that if the teacher educators do not recognize the preservice teachers as persons with valuable and relevant experiences and thoughts, they tend to withdraw by participating in a constructive sense. Even though, they know that this might negatively affect their learning process. All participants expressed that it had been a challenge for them to find a way to express themselves during lectures on campus and their periods of supervised professional training.

*You know that you are just one - a number in a row. You are a nobody. Last year I had the same teacher in social studies the hole year, but I don't think the teacher could point out saying that I was Anna. When you realize that you're just one - you're just a person on a list. You're just a face in the auditorium. (Anna- interview 2)*

Anna explains that the experience of not being acknowledged as a person had led to a kind of withdrawing regarding her involvement during teacher education. All of the participants recognized the emotion connected to holding themselves back from saying and meaning as much as they wanted to, as we will see an example of in the following quote:

*I also think about the importance of the teacher's ability to make you feel safe in the classroom from day one. That they communicate that you can feel free to say and think whatever you want and that every question*



*and answer is allowed. That it is okay to say something wrong too.* (Tobias - interview 4)

This quote refers to how intersubjective experiences are emphasized as a social and complex part of our existence.

### **When the intersubjective meeting between preservice teacher and pupils activates bodily traces**

Interaction with the pupils in the practice field was for all participants the most common situation where the participants' bodily traces were stimulated and activated. The participants demonstrated the connection between their emotional experiences and their bodily traces by either putting their hands on their stomach, throat, forehead, upper breast, neck, heart, legs, back, or face, to point out where they felt activity during the experiences. The following quote describes the preservice teacher's bodily traces before every practice period.

*Yes, it's chaos. My feelings appear in my stomach. When I am nervous, I am very much in my stomach. I become nauseous, yes and the heart goes - so I almost think I'm having a heart attack. It is completely awful.* (Mira- interview 2)

Here Mira describes how her nervousness appears in her stomach, in the centre of her body.

### **When being aware of yourself activates bodily feelings**

In the following quote, it becomes clear how one participant's bodily feelings of being very young compared with his fellow students became the object of his attention. In this quote, he started talking about his bodily feelings together with his fellow students.

*So, I came in and at once I felt very young. Because at the campus, together with my fellow students, the average age was quite high. I felt very like that, now I'm the youngest, and I felt it right away - I pulled myself back a bit and paid more attention to what others said. I felt very much like that... first school day feeling when everyone can and know more than me. Because they have experience, just having life experience. Just because of all that they have done - even if they have not studied anything, just that they have these years on their back.* (Marco – interview 3).

This quote is an example of how the preservice teacher's bodily feelings moved his consciousness and body at the same time.

**When the emotional phase of the participants' experiences is awakened by, dependent on, and affected by others.**

This study has clarified how the emotional phase of the preservice teachers' experiences is charged with meaningful states that are intimately directed at something and thus constitute a relational contract with reality. The emotional phase of the preservice teachers' experiences appeared as a phenomenon constituted by human activity. In the following quote, one participant talked about how she during several lessons had realized that she had been afraid of admitting that she needed help to understand and even tried to camouflage that she had not been able to understand what certain texts were about. She said that she had been afraid of being the only one who wasn't able to understand. She expressed it like this:

*Even though I have tried to get it, and read it many times, I decide to lie, claiming that I haven't read the text before, just to avoid admitting that I have not yet understood anything.*

*It feels like some kind of fear, even though I am not afraid of the teacher or my fellow students, it is just like it somehow costs me so much to admit to others that I don't get it. (Interview 5 - Rakel)*

This quote emphasizes the participants' experiences not only are considered a subjective matter, but also includes an experience of our consciousness being intersubjectively oriented.

**When the emotional phase of the participants' experiences leads to thinking and reflection.**

The analyses of the material reveal that the emotional phase of the students' experiences awakes the participants' thinking and reflections. In the following quote it appears that Marcos' experience of being too young compared to his fellow students has initiated a reflection of his situation:

*But because of this feeling of being the youngest, I decided to make an extra effort. I felt I had to read a little more, do a little more, and prepare myself a little more. I decided to work hard to reduce the "experience gap". So, I felt like okay, now I'm going to read more, go to the Opera, go to some art galleries, I must travel and things like that! (Marco – interview 3)*

In this quote, Marco showed how the emotional phase of his experiences leads to some important life-relevant decisions of him taking the responsibility for his personal development.

The next quote renders another example of how Julie during her period of supervised professional training changed her way of thinking about herself in a way that gave resonance to her understanding of her lifeworld. She said:

*Suddenly, I had to take care of someone else, I felt awakened, and that's the impact children have on me. Suddenly, I felt that I was coping, and I got a mental break away from myself. So, I think that the job saved me in every way, in addition to having wonderful colleagues, and I found out how much I enjoyed being in the classroom. (Julie, interview 6)*

In the following quote, Tobias explains an experience of trying to live up to his own and others' expectations. The quote shows how this experience awakes his reflection.

*You feel that you somehow have to tighten yourself up and then you can't sleep. It's the last thing on your mind when you go to bed and the first thing on your mind when you wake up. If you have fallen asleep at all. But there's a sense of, "Oh, I've got to do well. I have to do well." And you don't quite know why you have to do it well. You feel that you have certain expectations, which you must live up to. (Tobias - interview 4)*

He explains how these expectations come from both himself, his family, his group of friends and the student he was when he went to high school.

*...you get so many negative feelings about it. It's sad and it means that there are so many bad things to do with this, that you want to keep the longest possible distance. That you just think: "no, no, I can't take it." And if it's going to feel like that every year, then I can't bear to go to school and then I'll stay at home. That's what I think, that's where the danger lies in these emotions. (Tobias - interview 4)*

In this quote, we see how Tobias reflects on the emotional phase of an experience and the possible consequences this experience can lead to. This reflection helps Tobias be aware of the need to prepare himself for the fact, that he might choose to drop out of teacher education, while also knowing that this is not what he wants. On the other hand, he knows that he wants to cope with these negative experiences by not expecting himself to be perfect. He puts it like this:

*I'm starting to realize that no one does everything perfectly. And it's okay if you don't either. It is a process, sometimes you do just fine, sometimes you do badly, but you also learn from that. (Tobias - interview 4)*

## **Discussion**

This study has explored the research question: *What characterizes the emotional phase of preservice teachers' experiences during Norwegian teacher education, and how can it be conceptualized?*

The results have revealed that the emotional phase of the preservice teachers' experiences is complex, episodic, dynamic, and structured in the sense that they lead the participants to further reflections on whom they want to be and how they want to act. All participants have registered their bodily feelings, bodily changes, and the intentional and intersubjective parts of their experiences. The descriptions of the preservice teachers' experiences illustrate how they are aware of being each other's subject and object both mutually and simultaneously. In each description, the participants' experiences appear to be a relational matter, rooted in sociality.

### **The emotional phase of the preservice teachers' experiences as a matter of sentimentalization**

During the analysis of the empirical material, It appeared that the theoretical framework, which consisted of a description of emotions as, respectively: a phase of any experience (Dewey, 1934/1980), intentionality (Goldie, 2000; Zahavi, 1997), intersubjectivity (Zahavi, 2003), bodily feelings (Goldie, 2000), and bodily traces (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) did not sufficiently contribute to frame the part of the emotional phase of students' experiences that related to the students' thinking and reflections.

Against this background, the concept of mentalization was considered as being relevant. Mentalizing is regarded as a cognitive process and kind of emotional knowledge linked to a mainly unconscious and intuitive response to social interactions (Allen, 2006). Mentalizing is action, and much of mentalizing is something we do interactively. Ideally, while interacting, each person remains attentive to mental states, holding the other person's mind in mind as well as their own. Mentalizing helps us to regulate emotions by providing them with contexts to understand unwritten rules and to shape our understanding of others and ourselves. It is, therefore, crucial in communication and relationships. Mentalizing describes the ability to see oneself from the outside and to see others from within (Skårderud & Sommerfeldt, 2008). However, the concept of mentalization emphasizes cognitive processes that separate thinking and judgment from the body and the senses. As we have seen in the quotes above in the result section, the students' descriptions of their experiences referred to both bodily traces, bodily emotions, intentionality, intersubjectivity, and reflection as holistic bodily experiences, without distinguishing between body and thinking. This entails that the concept of mentalization also appears to be insufficient in this context.

During the analysis, the notion of sentimentality appears as a comprehensive and adequate concept to conceptualize the emotional phase of the students' experiences without distinguishing between body and thinking. In the following section, this claim will be elaborated on.

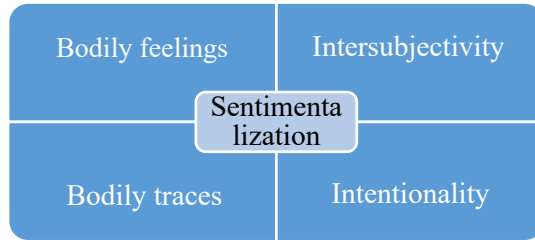
Concepts generally contain parts and content components from other concepts that are constantly moving between each other. On this background, the concept of sentimentality has moved to the concept of sentimentalization as a combination of the

three concepts: sentiment, sentimental, and mentalizing.

First, the notion of sentiment is defined as a subjective response to a person, thing, or situation. The term is related to words such as perception, sensation, sense, belief, and perspective. Secondly, being sentimental is often perceived with negative connotations and as an uncontrolled emotional outburst (Øye, 1998, p. 43) and will in some contexts be considered something negative and bloated. Hellesnes (1995) regards sentimentality as a form of external and non-committal empathy, a temperament-fixed and pseudo-intimate form of moral laziness, which draws privacy into all contexts (Hellesnes, 1995, p.2). But one can also choose to consider the term synonymous with sensibility and sensitivity (Øye, 1998, p.43). Here the notion of being sentimental is understood as the way our lives make sense through our senses and how we think and assess through our senses. Thirdly, when the notion of sentiment, sentimental, and mentalizing were combined, the notion of sentimentalization appeared.

Sentimentalization involves both a self-reflexive, intersubjective, intentional, and bodily aspect. At the same time, sentimentalization is about the sense of the other from the inside, about being aware of others' needs, desires, feelings, beliefs, goals, purposes, and reasons. Sentimentalization concerns both the sense of self and of the other at the same time. This means that sentimentalization is about being sensitive to both others and your own emotions simultaneously. Sentimentalization brings together how we, through the body, understand and recognize the emotional phase of an experience as a unit of bodily and cognitive processes that cannot be separated from one another. To sentimentalize requires the use of multiple functions, such as sustained bodily attention and awareness connected to thinking, memory, and self-reflexivity.

Based on the empirical material and the abductive analysis, the main result and theoretical contribution of this study is the appearance of the connection and interdependence between the four components of the emotional phase of the preservice teachers' experiences: intersubjectivity, bodily feelings, bodily traces, and intentionality as sentimentalization. To visualize how the emotional phase of the preservice teachers' experiences can be conceptualized as a common unit; the following model has been developed.



**Figure 1.** Theoretical model of the conceptualization of the emotional phase of preservice teachers' experiences as a matter of sentimentalization

The model is a relational model in the sense that the components influence and relates to one another and where sentimentalization is considered the core aspect of the emotional aspect of an experience. The model illustrates that sentimentalization gives resonance to the other four mentioned components. Thus, when a change occurs in one of the aspects, it will affect the others. As an example, the intensity and significance of the intersubjective relation will influence the level, value, flavour, and quality of both the bodily traces, the bodily feelings, and the intentional meeting. All together this will have an impact on the way each preservice teacher will sentimentalize. Another example could be that the student's bodily traces are so intensive that the student will not be able to direct any attention to either of the three other components which will reduce her/his ability to sentimentalize.

The model is not considered a single, central claim. Instead, it is considered as a contribution to getting a deeper and broader overall understanding of the conditions of possibilities regarding the emotional phase of preservice teachers' experiences as a pedagogical phenomenon.

### **A theoretical starting point for dialogue concerning the emotional phase of preservice teachers' experiences.**

In the following section, it will be discussed how Model 1 and the conceptualization of the emotional phase of preservice teachers' experiences can contribute as a starting point for acknowledging the preservice teachers' sentimentalization process in teacher education. Based on the results of the study, it is suggested that future teacher education might include the four components of sentimentalization as a part of the pedagogical conceptual framework and as a didactic content category. That is, to respectively discuss the conceptual content regarding intentionality, intersubjectivity, bodily feelings, and bodily traces as sentimentalization, and how these aspects can be experienced in the student's lifeworld. Here, it is argued that the students' understanding of the five components can contribute to increasing the students' emotional sensitivity, and their ability to go through the processes of sentimentalization and thereby create contact with the conditions of possibilities that are associated with the emo-

tional phase of their experiences.

### **Consequences regarding teacher education**

As future teachers, preservice teachers will one day be responsible for taking care of their pupils' emotional preconditions, strengthening the pupils' mental health, and preventing the development of emotional and social difficulties. To prepare the preservice teachers for these responsibilities, teacher education could highlight the emotional phase of the students' experiences as a relational and common matter where meaning is constructed and reconstructed when people meet in an intersubjective and intentional shared reality. Chen (2016) claims that:

*Initial teacher education must help future teachers see the professional relevance and value of their emotional experiences and support them in analyzing those feelings as reflecting their identity and as well as the conditions they have to work in. (Chen, 2016, p.74-75)*

To accommodate this need, it is suggested that the theoretical model (presented above) can function as an appropriate didactical starting point in teacher education to invite preservice teachers into a dialogue about the emotional aspect of their experiences. The model can be regarded as both a didactic content aspect and as an analysis tool for analyzing the students' experiences. As a didactic content category, the model can function as an opportunity to discuss the content of sentimentalization and the four components and by that expand the students' emotional vocabulary and emotional understanding. In addition, the model can work as a starting point for dialogue, where the four aspects can be questioned and thereby bring forward the students' experiences. Finally, the model can serve as a didactical tool that preservice teachers can bring with them into their future lives as newly educated teachers, to guide and support them in their responsibility of taking care of their future pupils' experiences and emotional development.

### **Challenges by including the emotional phase of preservice teachers' experiences as a pedagogical phenomenon in teacher education**

By drawing an emotional perspective into an educational context like teacher education, the risk of turning this context into a kind of therapy culture where the students' descriptions of their experiences appear as an expression of emotional vulnerability. There is also a risk of reducing the distance between students' personal lives and their lives within teacher education, which is part of public reality. This requires considering sentimentalization as a kind of sociality, where future teacher education ought to strive for thematizing the social and cultural conditions and factors that contribute to shape, support, and legitimize the emotional phase of preservice teachers' experiences.

### **Critical considerations regarding research limitations**

Regarding the limitations of this study, one concern relates to the limited sample and how new solid research results can be generated by combining and comparing relatively little interview data in a meaningful way. However, since all the participants shared many different experiences as easily and freely as they did, and since the purpose of the interviews was to recognize common features according to the emotional phase of the participants' experiences described in the material, the sample size became less important. Despite these limitations, the results are still considered relevant and transferable.

### **Conclusion**

Our emotions are closely linked to the way we see and meet the world. This means that our emotions have a meaning for us, not as an objective quantity, but in that they rest on an existential basis (Nyeng, 2006). The results of this study refer to how the emotional phase of the students' experiences are bodily rooted and at the same time, has a core part related to thinking, reflection, and assessment. This aspect opens the possibility of clarifying and articulating a part of an emotional experience as a narrative and thus of considering emotions as a pedagogical phenomenon. In this respect, the bodily aspects of the emotional aspect of the preservice teachers' experiences appear to be important agents of purpose. The emotional phase of an experience has a signal function in the sense that it has something to convey to us. Such an approach to the emotional phase of the preservice teachers' experiences shows a way to their commitment and involvement and is, therefore, an important aspect of their personal and professional development (Chen, 2016; Kelchtermans, 2005; Lee & Yin, 2011; Meyer & Turner, 2007; Schutz & Zembylas, 2009).

Based on the empirical and theoretical material, this study has contributed to suggesting how the model of sentimentalization can provide a potential path to pursue, show interest in, acknowledge, pay attention to, and respect the preservice teachers' emotional life. This intention can help reduce the risk of preservice teachers leaving teacher education without being encouraged to consider their emotional preconditions, their emotional contribution to a relationship, the emotional atmosphere of the classroom, and their responsibility for their future pupils' emotional and relational development. At the same time, it is argued that acknowledging the preservice teachers' sentimentalization during teacher education, does potentially strengthen their ability to support future pupils in their emotional understanding and development.

In line with Van Manen (2014), the credibility of this study will depend on whether the reader can recognize themselves in the students' descriptions of their experiences and the interpretations of them. Against this background, the possibility that other researchers would have generated the same conclusions and results has been considered. To answer this question, the results have particularly been compared against previous



research and the theoretical framework. Regarding the transferability of the results of this study, it is considered reasonable to assume that the intention of inviting students into a dialogue about the emotional aspects of their experiences could be relevant in other educational contexts where emotional development is crucial concerning the quality of the professional development.

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