Local and global challenges in a Nordic context
– working with teacher students in the SPICA-network

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The SPICA network is a Nordic network for teacher educators and teacher students with the shared goal of building skills and knowledge relevant to the teaching profession in relation to key topics such as diversity, sustainability and democracy.
SPICA has since 2006 successfully applied for funding from the Nordic council.

Approximately 250 students and 35 academic staff have been directly involved in the network over the past 10 years.
The SPICA-network offers an annual 5 ECTS program, consisting of an online period and an intensive course, alternating between the different institutions every year.
Iceland 2016

Faroe Islands 2017
Recruitment: Students are recruited locally from different fields in teacher education

Application: Students submit a letter of motivation and a transcript of records to their local coordinator.

Facilitation: The institutions work to ensure that solutions are found that allow students to travel during term. Students receive travel grants.
In the following, we discuss some of the main trends in the students’ perceptions of their own learning outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iceland 2016 (N=19)</th>
<th>Faroe Islands 2017 (N=22)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finland: 3</td>
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<td>Sweden: 3</td>
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<td>Iceland: 1</td>
<td>Iceland: 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greenland: 3</td>
<td>Greenland: 1</td>
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</tbody>
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Online period

Film 2
Flipped classroom

Film 4
Place based learning

Film 5
Faroe ways of life

Film 6
Course theme: Lifestyle

Article to Read: Lifestyles by Roland Benedikter

Students meet in online groups to:

• Introduce themselves and their place of studies
• Discuss the didactic approaches in the films
• Begin to discuss themes their group might want to explore further in the Faroes
I found it teaching-wise very effective that the Norwegian team prepared a video that explains the technique [flipped classroom] by actually adopting it!

Student, Finland

[I] could, in my own pace, watch the video clips and read the articles. This allowed me time to think about the concepts and reflect on them.

Student, Sweden
It was a good way to start the course with online meetings. I think the division into small groups with different nationalities improved the group spirit in general. And it felt good to know some people in advance before travelling to Faroe Islands. I think this was one reason why we had such good atmosphere during the week.

Student, Finland
We were allowed to be students of this method [place-based learning] and really experience an authentic learning space. We were given several lectures on hydro power plants, seen from different points of view. Then we were allowed to go out and experience first-hand how it would affect nature if these plants were to be built. It soon became clear that the image portrayed by the businessmen was not the same image and reality that the citizens in the area had.

Student, Denmark
[The SPICA course] has helped me realise how subjects and topics are bound together and interlinked. How geography and geology are prerequisites for history and social studies, and how human needs and politics can dictate how we use the resources available and in turn influence nature...

Student, Norway
I believe during the course we got to experience both sides of the intercultural learning. We visited a different country, discussed with people from other countries and also reflected upon our own believes and the theories behind them.

Student, Finland
Before going there I could not understand it and I have to admit that I was a bit skeptical to even talk or see anything related with whale hunting, but it ended up that the knowledge I got in this experience made me change my mind and I would even defend Faroese culture now if I hear something bad about it. It is not that I support it now, but I understand it and I am not going to judge them anymore.

Student, Iceland
Appendix 1: Reflection paper criteria

The aim of the paper is that you reflect on and analyze your own learning process and learning outcomes related to your participation in the course.

Possible topics to include in your reflection could be the methods used, the course content, the cooperation with classmates, the learning environment, the process of producing a presentation or other parts of the course you are most efficient in your learning.

We propose the following structure:

1. Abstract. (A short text summarizing the main contents of your paper, approximately half a page). Must be written in either Norwegian, Swedish, Danish or English.
2. Reflection on the learning process (including the online course and the intensive course). Can be written in the language you prefer.
3. Reflection on your learning outcomes. Can be written in the language you prefer.

The total length of the paper should be between 5 and 9 pages. (Times New Roman, font size 12, 1.5 line spacing).

Deadline: 23 April (see E-mail). To upload your paper, send it to your local coordinator.
During the process I got to collaborate with students from the other Nordic countries. During this course, I have learnt a lot about the dynamics of group work and my own role in this. We were given several good lectures; both in video-format and «live» in Iceland. I learnt new ways of thinking about teaching, and I have used new knowledge about the UN goals for sustainable development to analyse curriculum in a new way. All of this is knowledge I take with me into the teaching profession with humility and confidence.

Student, Norway