Thinking and Re-thinking: A Qualitative Study of University Teachers' Perspectives on the Development Process for a New Online Interprofessional Education Curriculum in a Swedish Higher Education Institution

Sandra Einarsson
Department of Food, Nutrition and Culinary Science, Umeå University, Sweden
Contact corresponding author: Sandra Einarsson, e-mail: sandra.einarsson@umu.se

Anna Johansson[1]
Department of Community Medicine and Rehabilitation, Occupational Therapy, Umeå University, Sweden

Ethel Kautto[1]
Department of Food, Nutrition and Culinary Science, Umeå University, Sweden

Veronica Lindberg[1]
Department of Clinical Sciences, Speech Therapy, Umeå University, Sweden

Ann Margreth Ljusbäck[1]
Department of Community Medicine and Rehabilitation, Occupational Therapy, Umeå University, Sweden

Petra Rydén[1]
Department of Food, Nutrition and Culinary Science, Umeå University, Sweden

Monica Salander Ulander[1]
Department of Nursing, Umeå University, Sweden

Anncristine Fjellman-Wiklund[1]
Department of Community Medicine and Rehabilitation, Physiotherapy, Umeå University, Sweden

Maria Wiklund
Department of Community Medicine and Rehabilitation, Physiotherapy, Umeå University, Sweden

1   Authors contributed equally; listed here in alphabetical order.

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ABSTRACT

The objective was to reflect on the experience of working collaboratively across education programmes, departments, and faculties from the perspective of university teachers at a higher education institution. Nine teachers from five programmes working together to develop a new curriculum for interprofessional education (IPE) participated in a focus group discussion. Data were analysed using thematic analysis. Findings suggest that teacher experiences can be understood in terms of teamwork processes valued from both professional and IPE experiential variations within the group. Since findings illustrate pedagogical collaboration across department and faculty boundaries, they can inspire teachers who are planning a similar process.

Keywords: *teacher collaboration, teacher experience, higher education, curriculum development*

1 Introduction

Courses in higher education institutions (HEIs) aim to educate and prepare students for their future profession. For students in healthcare education programmes, it is imperative that their theoretical and practical knowledge is appropriate for the complex environment of healthcare provision. In addition, key or soft skills are important for interactions with other healthcare professionals, patients, and relatives. Interprofessional education (IPE) aims to develop and enhance key skills important for interaction and collaboration within interprofessional teams. In sum, the aim of IPE is to develop a "collaborative practice–ready health workforce" (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2010, p. 7).

To develop, incorporate, and create sustainability for IPE in HEIs can be a complex task with both administrative and logistic obstacles, since it involves the whole organisation from the top down (Oandasan & Reeves, 2005; Reeves et al., 2007). WHO (2010) emphasises a number of education mechanisms (e.g., learning outcomes, managerial commitment, teacher training) and curriculum mechanisms (e.g., programme content, shared objectives, learning methods) as being important for developing IPE. It follows that many factors need to be in place for successful development and delivery. This complexity has been highlighted in previous IPE studies. For example, IPE has been portrayed as a learning opportunity that lacks clarity in relation to learning outcomes and leadership engagement (Gilbert, 2005), and teachers have described it as a process parallel to other things that are taught and often set aside due to time constraints and profession-focused content (Lindqvist et al., 2019). The current literature on IPE has focused mainly on students' learning outcomes and the barriers to, or facilitators of, implementation (Gonçalves et al., 2021; Lawlis et al., 2014). There are also studies on how teachers see and express their own role in delivering IPE (Lindqvist et al., 2019; Lindqvist & Reeves, 2007). In a study by Lindqvist and colleagues (2019), some teachers experienced role ambiguity in achieving positive learning outcomes from IPE and reported the need to exchange best practice ideas on how successful IPE learning situations could be achieved.

Seen in the light of previous IPE studies, there are few descriptions of how teachers explain the process of planning and collaboratively developing new IPE curriculums. This often involves a number of teachers from different education programmes with

various occupational cultures and theoretical backgrounds. Furthermore, this is a process that could be quite rare, unique even, since HEI teachers often work in isolation from each other (Ostovar-Nameghi et al., 2016).

1.1 Frameworks of team processes

Working in a group setting, as a team, aims to achieve something more than the individual would create alone (Marks et al., 2001). However, reaching a mutual goal not only adds to the competence of everyone in the team, but is also highly dependent on processes happening within the team. When describing team processes, the heuristic input-process-output (I-P-O) model of small group interaction proposed by McGrath (1964) has generally been adopted (Bravo et al., 2019; Gist et al., 1987; LePine et al., 2000). In this model, team processes can be understood as the 'fuel' enabling the group to convert input variables into output (Marks et al., 2001). Marks and colleagues (2001, p. 357) define team processes as "members' independent acts that convert inputs to outcomes through cognitive, verbal, and behavioral activities directed toward organizing taskwork to achieve collective goals". Their recurring phase model of team processes brings additional dimensions to the I-P-O model by adding cyclic or temporal influences to team processes. That is, for the group to be able to finish the task it was set up to do, members engage in a series of I-P-O episodes that interrelate. In this model, the action phase and transition phase highlight different taskwork within the group. During the action phase, the group engage in work directly linked to task accomplishment, while the transition phase involves periods when the group evaluate and plan future activities. I-P-O episodes are periodically 'nested' into these phases. For example, output generated from a transition phase can be input for the next action phase.

To understand further how teams interact, the recurring phase model of team processes includes a set of processes referring to activities within the group (Marks et al., 2001). Some of these occur mainly during the action phase and transition phase, respectively, while some are referred to as interpersonal processes. Marks et al. (2001) further report variable success from these processes – ranging from very poor to very good – depending on the situation within the group. For example, in a meta-analysis of teamwork processes by LePine et al. (2008), there were positive connections between team performance, member satisfaction, and the team processes outlined by Marks et al. (2001). Hence, team processes are linked directly to task accomplishment, group members' well-being, and consequently, group success. In particular, interpersonal processess are described as factors that could 'make or break' the group at any point (Marks et al., 2001). This has received attention in studies on interprofessional work within healthcare (Dinh et al., 2020).

1.2 The organisation of higher education institutions in Sweden

The rhythm of the action and transition phases, and interlinked processes within a group, depend on factors such as environment, norms, objectives, and leadership

(Marks et al., 2001). It is therefore important to understand group processes in terms of the context and organisational structure in which the group acts. For the present study, the organisational context is a Swedish HEI.

In Sweden, responsibility for HEIs rests with the Swedish Parliament and with laws regulating the HEIs' main mission (Swedish Higher Education Authority, 2023). Within this framework, the HEI can decide its own organisation, except for the University Board run by the vice chancellor. This change to a freer organisational form for Swedish HEIs started in 1993, with another reform following in 2010 (Gribbe, 2022). In practice, most HEIs in Sweden have kept their former organisational structure with faculties responsible for the strategic planning, management, and quality assurance of education and research in their respective departments and units, where the actual teaching and research take place. In previous research on IPE, some challenges related to IPE curriculum development have come from difficulties in securing agreements and authorisation in the often 'silo-like' structures of departments and faculties in HEIs (Loversidge & Demb, 2015; Wong et al., 2021).

Aim

In the context of a Swedish HEI, the present study describes and reflects on the process of collaborative work between university teachers across healthcare education programmes, departments, and faculties when developing a new curriculum for IPE.

2 Method

Between January 2020 and December 2021, five different healthcare education programmes at a Swedish HEI collaborated on a pedagogical project termed: 'Teaming-up! Interprofessional learning between healthcare students in a digital environment'. The goal of the project was to develop a new IPE curriculum that could be utilised online by students from several healthcare education programmes.

2.1 Participants

The project group consisted of nine university teachers from five different healthcare education programmes (dietetics, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and nursing) spanning four departments, and two faculties. Median teaching experience in the project group was 20 years (min 2.5 years, max 25 years). An IPE teacher/researcher from another HEI acted as a critical friend during the process and participated in some of the meetings.

The project group (we) wanted to capture the (our) experience of working together in the project group, and the process of developing a new IPE curriculum. Thus, the participants of this study were all nine of the project members.

2.2 Data collection

During the two-year period, the project group met for a total of ten half-day meetings with individual work in between. The frequency was two to four meetings each

Table 1: Outline of meeting content during the pedagogical project. Most of the meetings were conducted online because of Covid-19 pandemic restrictions

| MEETING	CONTENT
Before start	Lunch to get to know each other.
1 (physical)	Going through the project overview, discussing project evaluation.
2 (physical)	Presentation of each educational programmes's current elements of IPE.
3 (online)	Presentation of each educational programmes's future need of IPE and group discussion on what type of IPE that should be developed.
4 (online)	Discussion with critical friend at the beginning of the meeting. Meeting continues with discussions on where to place IPE in relation to other course content.
5 (online)	Group discussion on IPE development.
6 (online)	Discussion with critical friend at the beginning of the meeting. Meeting continues with discussions related to the digital platform and IPE development.
7 (online)	Discussion with critical friend at the beginning of the meeting. Meeting continues with discussions related to the digital platform and software for virtual patients.
8 (online)	Inspiration from IPE conference at the beginning of the meeting. Meeting continues with discussions related to the digital platform.
9 (online)	Discussions related to the digital platform and IPE development.
10 (online)	Discussion with critical friend at the beginning of the meeting. Meeting continues with discussions related to IPE development. Project group evaluation in the end of the meeting.

Note: IPE = Interprofessional Education.

semester. During the first semester, the group had physical meetings, but as a result of Covid-19 pandemic restrictions remaining meetings were conducted online. An outline of meeting content is shown in Table 1.

Data collection for the study was done at the tenth and last meeting using a focus group discussion (FGD). As little is known about this development phenomenon, and how teachers reflect upon and describe this particular issue, a qualitative research approach using FGD was seen as the most appropriate method for data collection (Ivanoff & Hultberg, 2006). The first author (SE) led the FGD using open-ended questions tied to a set of overarching topics (Figure 1). The topics were on display for participants throughout the FGD, making it possible for them to switch easily between the different topics. The online FGD lasted 80 minutes, and was audio recorded using the built-in recording function for the digital platform.

2.3 Data analysis

The FGD was transcribed verbatim and analysed using thematic analysis, as detailed by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 77), who describe it as an "accessible and theoretically flexible approach" to analyse qualitative data for themes and patterns. It is also seen as useful in participatory approaches, like our project, with participants as collaborators. In brief, this procedure followed the steps of familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the results (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Firstly, the
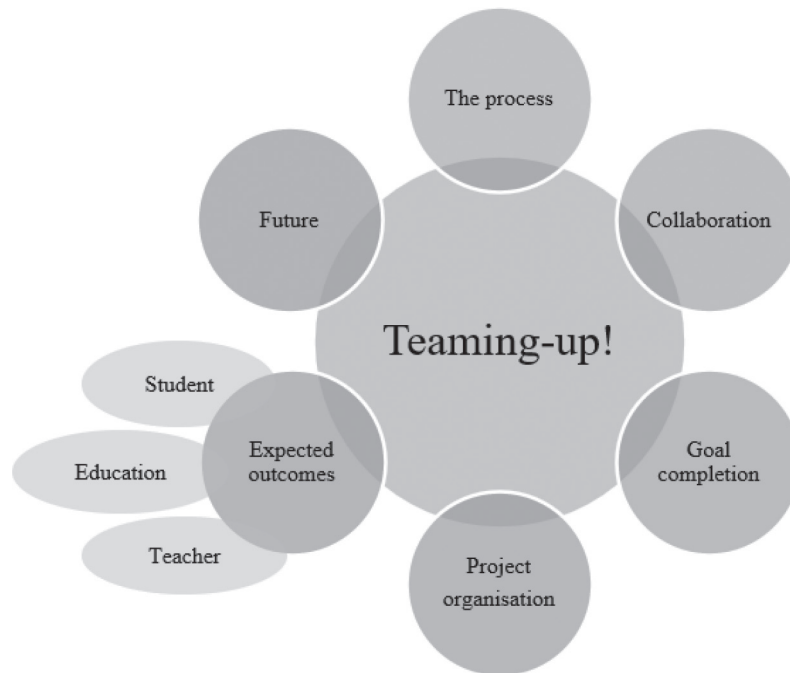
Figure 1: Overarching topics used for the focus group discussion with university teachers at a Swedish higher education institution.

data were read repeatedly to get an overview, and thereafter, the text was sorted into meaning units, that is phrases describing a joint value. These were condensed and coded with a word or sentence describing the core essence. Codes were then organised into groups of preliminary themes, to describe a joint phenomenon in relation to the research question. Thereafter, these themes were adjusted and refined in a back-and-forth process between the different steps to ensure a rigorous analysis. Finally, a schematic model was developed, illustrating how the themes related to each other. The analysis was carried out mainly by the first author (SE), with support and reflective comments from the last author (MW). Triangulation was used to enhance trustworthiness. Themes were discussed and further adjusted until consensus was reached among all authors with their different competences and perspectives (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). An example of each of the steps in the analysis is shown in Table 2.

2.4 Researchers' preconceptions

All authors had previous experience in working collaboratively with other teachers to develop learning elements in the HEI context. However, this project group situation was new, and no one had specific experience in working pedagogically across department and faculty boundaries. Previous teaching experience in IPE varied among group members, and in total, the group represented five different professional backgrounds with each teacher bringing her own profession-specific theoretical paradigm to the group collaboration process.

Table 2: Example of the analysis. Data from a focus group discussion with university teachers at a Swedish higher education institution

INTERVIEW TEXT	CONDENSED MEANING UNIT	CODE	THEMES
"Having a mentor or critical friend in this type of project I think is very helpful."	Having a mentor or critical friend in this type of project is very helpful.	Importance of critical friend	Finding meaningful direction by clear structure and peer-support
"Because it was the experience that … when the critical friend came in … [it was a] *How do we go on now?* feeling in the group … or I had that feeling. That was probably an important step in the whole thing."	Before the critical friend came in, the experience in the group was … "How do we proceed?"	Critical friend gave direction when there was hesitancy in the group	
"I can only agree, and I think that for my part … When there is a clear structure in the process, it is something that is incredibly valuable."	When there is a clear structure in the process, it is something that is incredibly valuable.	Important to have a clear structure	
"… and then, as the critical friend mentioned, that … it is … people around who are connected to each programme, who represent each programme, is important as well."	It is important that there are people around (the coordinator) who are connected to each programme.	Important with people around the coordinator	Building sustainability, making IPE also a top-down priority

Note: IPE = Interprofessional Education.

2.5 Ethics

All members of the project group had been informed beforehand about the FGD taking place at the last meeting and all agreed to participate (verbal informed consent). For quotes in the presentation of results, each project member was given a number (P1, P2, etc.) instead of using real names.

3 Findings

The analysis resulted in six themes: thinking and re-thinking IPE by contemplation and flexibility; co-creating across borders adds value; finding meaningful direction by clear structure and peer-support; facing facilitating and non-facilitating elements; enabling a 'win-win' in many directions; building sustainability, making IPE also a top-down priority. Figure 2 shows the collaborative process for developing IPE, including the different themes in relation to each other.

3.1 Thinking and re-thinking IPE by contemplation and flexibility

The participants agreed that developing IPE was a flexible and dynamic process that took, and needed, time and effort. Hence, IPE elements were assessed and re-assessed continuously during the process assuring progress and meaningful direction. The contemplation element of the process was also described as a way to work sustainably,

Facing facilitating and non-facilitating elements
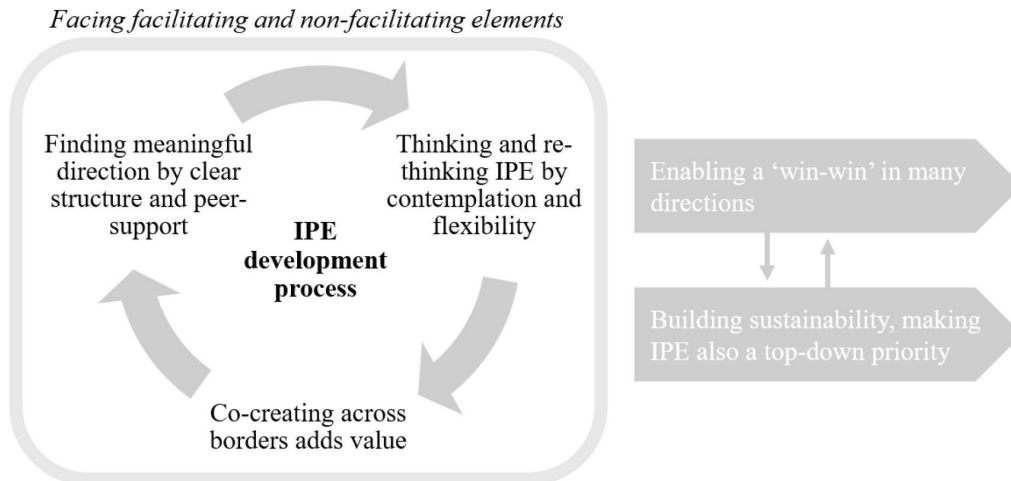
Figure 2: Schematic model of the themes in relation to each other in a dynamic collaborative process of developing a new curriculum for IPE (Interprofessional Education). Results from a focus group discussion with university teachers at a Swedish higher education institution.

to have time for reflection, something that participants felt they had little room for in their day-to-day teaching.

> One thing that has made the process easier, is that we many times had to continue the discussion next time, and then you have gained perspectives, had time to land, without the stress. (P1)

The flexibility element was related to 'rolling with' the pedagogical process rather than being restricted to fixed boundaries within the project. This made the process within the group more dynamic, and also enabled adapting to a heavier workload caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The process, characterised by thinking and re-thinking, was also seen as dealing with the participants' diverse experiences and thoughts as they worked towards consensus.

3.2 Co-creating across borders adds value

Meeting across boundaries, that is between teachers from different healthcare education programmes and departments, was seen to provide new insights and perspectives on the pedagogical process. Reflecting on this, participants felt that they not only had *talked* about interprofessional collaboration, but had also *experienced* it themselves. Teachers from different professions met and solved a task together, namely the task of developing IPE that had students' learning as the main focus. Everyone agreed there was strength and added value in meeting in a group representing different professions. The process of giving and receiving input creates something more than you could produce on your own.

> There is a lack of group constellations ... and that is probably what the students express [when wanting more IPE] ... that is a feeling I am referring to

right now. This [the group sense of belonging in the project] has given so much so you want to continue … I want more and this is an interesting feeling, I understand the [student] evaluations … that you want more … you create something together that you cannot create alone. That one plus one is three and not two – it is a cool feeling. (P2)

Participants reported that the process itself was in focus, not the specific health-care profession each one represented. The effect was that the group met in a non-hierarchical atmosphere. In relation to this, it was also said that where there was more than one teacher from one healthcare education programme in the group, it was possible to continue discussions between meetings, and be able to keep up with group progress if one is unable to attend a meeting. It also helped to anchor the project in each healthcare education programme.

3.3 Finding meaningful direction by clear structure and peer-support

Clear structure and peer-support enabled the project to find a meaningful direction. Structure was, for example, created by the project manager sending out timely invitations with the agenda and task reminders before each meeting. The role of the project manager was also described as someone creating stability, ensuring everyone was on track, and keeping the process alive.

The structure in the form of clear meeting agendas, clear presentations, and repetition. It has given us stability in a rather shaky time of pandemic … (P3)

Making progress was augmented by the critical friend who came at a time when the project group was struggling to find a common denominator and appropriate content for the IPE elements, and had no clear direction forward.

The critical friend was very good, otherwise we would not have come as far. Sometimes we stood still … we want so much in the group … it has been very good that she has given us an outside perspective, being able to be more objective. (P4)

The critical friend provided new perspectives and insights that enabled a focus on the tasks ahead. From this, participants acknowledged the importance of taking help in the process from someone already experienced in developing IPE.

3.4 Facing facilitating and non-facilitating elements

Understanding the facilitating and non-facilitating elements can be viewed as an integral part of the process going forward. As described above, one of the obstacles encountered during the process was to find the right direction at the start, since discussions often circled around visionary topics for IPE elements instead of being more direct. The feeling was that in the beginning of the project, the task led the group in the wrong direction: it was acting as a non-facilitator. However, having gone through the whole process, participants could reflect on that part of the process as something that

shaped the group. To gather around a simple and specific task became an element of 'getting to know each other', sorting out different roles within the group.

The main driving force was curiosity, and an interest in IPE questions, but there was also the effect of mutual respect and commitment to ensuring that everyone's voice was heard. Heterogeneity within the group was described as favourable for this dynamic and created space for discussion. The differing experiences of working with IPE were one example of this. Some members had little experience and others had worked with IPE for many years.

> I have had only little experience with IPE, and then there were others in the group who have had a lot of experience, and I think there was a good mix because the obvious must then be said ... it was a successful composition based on the differences within the group. (P3)

> I have had [a] little more experience, it has been so good that there are some people who can ask critical questions ... because it is so easy to think based on previous experiences ... repeat something again. So, it has been very good to have this mix. (P5)

Educating online during the Covid-19 pandemic put an extra burden on participants, which at times, was felt to have a negative impact on their ability to push the project forward. On the other hand, the enhanced experience gained from teaching online during the pandemic was described as a facilitator for the pedagogic process. Participants felt that they could more easily envisage performing IPE online than they would have been able to do before the pandemic.

> I think the pandemic and the digitalisation of teaching has in some way also been beneficial, at least in thought, to see that this is possible to implement ... preparation has, so to speak, happened by itself. (P6)

The pandemic effect on the project was, therefore, described as having both pros and cons by the participants.

3.5 Enabling a 'win-win' in many directions

A general hope among the participants was that the IPE elements developed during the project would generate positive effects in many directions. The hope was to create opportunities for students to practice and develop important key skills for interprofessional collaboration, which would support them in reaching expected learning outcomes. There was also the hope that the project would be an 'IPE-catalyst', that is to say the project would promote and enable opportunities for IPE, and demonstrate the need for IPE in more healthcare education programmes than those involved in this project.

Participants also described personal gains. The project was seen as stimulating, providing new insights and perspectives that led to positive effects on their teaching in general. Some of the participants had also used reflections made during the process as partial fulfilment of an educational qualification.

3.6 Building sustainability, making IPE also a top-down priority

Participants also discussed the way ahead, including factors important for implementation, as well as how to create consistency for IPE. There were responsibilities for different actors to be found on all levels of HEI organisation. When reflecting on the next steps in the process, one could focus on one's own healthcare education programme and how IPE could best be combined with existing course content. Discussions with colleagues, as well as student engagement, were seen as imperative in this process. Participants also spoke of how they could participate in activities, such as pedagogical conferences, to inspire others to get involved in IPE and interdepartmental collaboration.

Participants knew before the FGD that the faculty was planning to add an extra resource as IPE coordinator for the forthcoming year. This additional person was seen as an important factor for progress and supporting structures for IPE activities and implementation. For this kind of IPE organisation, the participants expressed a need for each healthcare education programme to have a teacher responsible for IPE, and the importance of having a project group as a part of the implementation process.

Having support from the leadership of the departments and faculties was seen to be important as a cornerstone for sustainable IPE organisation, thus recognising that IPE is as important as other pedagogical activities.

> In larger pedagogical discussions, there are several areas as such … it must always be put on the agenda. Interprofessional education, sustainability, internationalisation, there are several areas like this that always need to be included and clarified in whatever you talk about pedagogically. (P5)

Making IPE a top-down priority, rather than only driven from the bottom up, would be to always put IPE on the agenda. This was seen as crucial for the implementation and survival of the project.

4 Discussion

The present study highlights the issue of collaborative work among teachers in an HEI when developing a new IPE curriculum. This was a process that needed time and effort, and teachers stressed the importance of contemplation and flexibility to be able to engage in the dynamic activities within the group. Findings from this study can be seen through the framework of team processes, using the concepts of transition and action phases to understand the different group activities addressed by the teachers.

4.1 Action and transition phase processes

As mentioned in the introduction, action phases are periods when the team 'act' and represent processes important for reaching expected goals (Marks et al., 2001). In the present study, this refers to the project meetings. Participants highlighted the importance of the 'flexibility' that allowed adjustments to the current situation and the

pedagogical process. This relates to the action phase process of 'coordination', which can be explained as the way the team coordinate their efforts and make strategy adjustments as the work proceeds (Wittenbaum et al., 2002). The transition phase encompasses teamwork processes in periods between actions (Marks et al., 2001), which in the present study could be seen as the time periods between meetings. From our results, contemplation, the 'thinking–rethinking' element, was said to be an important ingredient in this particular phase. Clark (2009, p. 209) describes this process as "stepping or sitting back from a situation to review it". One does not rush, but lets the pedagogical process take time by going through the IPE elements repeatedly. Hence, when developing IPE, the rhythm of meeting frequency should not be underestimated when wanting to support contemplation. In addition, 'strategy formulation and planning' is another process included in the transition phase, which encompasses, for instance, when and how actions should be performed to meet team members' roles, responsibilities, and the final outcome in the best way possible (Marks et al., 2001). In the present study, participants highlighted the importance of having one person take on the role of project manager, creating structure and stability, and another person acting as a critical friend, providing the outsider perspective. Thus, both roles can be said to be important in supporting teamwork processes. In sum, a number of transition and action phase processes were highlighted by the teachers as important when working collaboratively to develop a new IPE curriculum. When addressing the activities within the group using frameworks for team processes, it is important to recall the cyclic and dynamic rhythms – the recurring pattern of I–P–O that build on each other, and the different phases that blend into one another rather than act separately (Marks et al., 2001).

4.2 Interpersonal processes

Interpersonal processes may occur during both the action and transition phase, and change over time depending on the activity in focus (Marks et al., 2001). These processes are important for the group and facilitate goal accomplishment. As shown in our findings, participants were highly appreciative of the interpersonal relations within the group. Participants described how they had both *talked* about interprofessional collaboration, and also *experienced* it while developing the IPE curriculum. Group interpersonal processes could therefore be explained in terms of *partnership* and *interdependency*, two underlying concepts of interprofessional collaboration (D'Amour et al., 2005). In our study, the concept of partnership is demonstrated in the highlighted importance of mutual respect, and the value put on diverse experiences and perspectives spanning departmental boundaries. The concept of partnership can also be seen in working towards a common goal (Henneman et al., 1995). The process of developing IPE with student learning as the main focus was placed ahead of the specific healthcare profession each member represented. Interdependency can be found in participants' descriptions of synergy, meaning acknowledging the added value of meeting as a group (D'Amour et al., 2005). Hence, sharing best IPE practices

through networking amongst teachers should not be underestimated (Lindqvist et al., 2019). Furthermore, the heterogeneity of group composition, shown in the diversity of prior IPE experience, also illustrates interdependency, since each group member was dependent on the perspectives of others.

4.3 Implementing a new curriculum in a higher education context

Building a sustainable IPE organisation is an important issue to address (Lindqvist et al., 2019; Oandasan & Reeves, 2005), and this was stressed by the teachers when highlighting the value of different HEI actors. The extra resource of an IPE coordinator was referred to as pivotal by the participants. Such administrative support has been described as important in creating sustainability, since the coordinator should not only perform an administrative function, but also ensure ongoing progress and further development of IPE (Wong et al., 2021). As IPE often means collaboration between departments, the coordinator would function as a node for the different teachers responsible for IPE in each education programme, thus bringing the horizontal dimension into the streamlined HEI organisation (Gribbe, 2022). Teachers responsible for IPE in each healthcare education programme, called interprofessional facilitators in the literature, are actors who play a central role in 'doing' IPE, and should be supported accordingly in this process (Reeves et al., 2007). Regular opportunities for discussion and reflection among these facilitators have been suggested as part of such supporting structures. Also, as indicated in the present study, students ought not to be forgotten actors in the process of IPE development, since their involvement will give positive and complementary effects (Behrend et al., 2019). However, the most important actor in being able to develop a sustainable IPE organisation is HEI leadership, and their commitment to making IPE a 'top-down' priority (Wong et al., 2021). Leadership engagement in terms of openness to interdepartmental relationships, as well as inter-faculty partnerships, have been described as essential for IPE development (Loversidge & Demb, 2015). A major cornerstone of this addressed by the study participants, is recognising that IPE is as important as other pedagogical activities.

4.4 Strengths and limitations

This study has both strengths and limitations. One strength was the collaborative and emergent approach, which permeated the whole project, as well as the qualitative exploration of the process. The study was conducted in the specific context of a Swedish HEI, and based on one FGD, which should be taken into account when interpreting the results and their transferability. To expand the study context further, this pedagogical project was financed by the HEI. This meant that the teachers in the study had time to participate in the project, which could have increased the teachers' motivation and willingness to participate. The project was also conducted during the unprecedented period of the Covid-19 pandemic, which had a major impact on society in general, as well as the HEI and work within the project group. Another potential weakness is the aspect of neutrality. The first author (SE) led the FGD, and

all participants were members of the project, contributing to the process and, hence, the FGD. This aspect of us all being 'insiders' and 'outsiders', contributing to both the FGD and the interpretation of the data, has therefore been thoughtfully recognised, and the results have been verified within the project group, making sure that everyone recognises and accepts the process as described (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015). Our regular meetings with a critical friend provided an important 'outsider' perspective during the process of developing and reflecting upon IPE. Continuous triangulation among project members, with their differing perspectives and competences, also proved important in deepening the analysis and ensuring trustworthiness throughout the whole process (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Given these limitations, our results highlight important aspects of IPE to be further explored in future research.

5 Conclusion

Working collaboratively in a group of HEI teachers across healthcare education programmes, departments, and faculties, can be understood using team process frameworks. Teachers highlighted a variety of interpersonal, action, and transition phase processes as important in creating a new IPE curriculum. When looking toward the implementation of a new curriculum, these teachers emphasised engagement from different HEI actors in order to build a sustainable IPE organisation. Since the findings illustrate pedagogical collaboration across department and faculty boundaries, it can inform, and hopefully inspire, teachers planning a similar process, both in IPE and in other interdepartmental or cross-faculty collaborations.

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