



International Teacher Education: Promising Pedagogies (Part C)

InFo-TED: Bringing Policy, Research, and Practice Together around Teacher Educator Development

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InFo-TED: BRINGING POLICY, RESEARCH, AND PRACTICE TOGETHER AROUND TEACHER EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is contributed by InFo-TED, the International Forum for Teacher Educator Development. This newly established community brings together people from across the world to exchange research, policy, and practice related to teacher educators' professional learning and development. We define teacher educators broadly as those who are professionally involved and engaged in the initial and on-going education of teachers. Our contention is that while there is general agreement about the important role played by teacher educators, their professional education is under-studied and under-supported. Here, we elaborate the rationale for this initiative, delineate our conceptual framework, and provide examples of steps taken in Belgium, Ireland, and Norway to develop the professional identities and knowledge bases of those who educate and support teachers, and conclude with

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implications for a scholarly study agenda having to do with research, policy, and practice relating to teacher educators' professional development.

Keywords: InFo-TED; teacher education research; teacher education policy; teacher education practices; teacher educators' identities; knowledge base of teacher education

INTRODUCTION

Teacher educators are key players in international educational systems as they impact the quality of teaching and learning in our schools. However, those who teach the next generation of teachers – the teacher educators – have, until recently, largely been ignored by researchers and policy makers who have focused instead on structures of teacher education and on relationships between teacher education programs and student achievement in schools. In this chapter, we focus squarely on the professional learning and development of teacher educators whom we define broadly as those who are professionally involved and engaged in the initial and ongoing education of teachers. Our contention is that while there is general agreement about the important role played by teacher educators, their professional education is under-studied and under-supported (i.e., [Loughran, 2014](#); [Lunenberg, Dengerink, & Korthagen, 2014](#)).

This chapter is contributed by a group of experienced teacher educators from Ireland, Scotland, England, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Israel, and United States, who have come together over the past two years to develop the *International Forum for Teacher Educator Development* or InFo-TED. Our purpose is to promote professional education for educators in the field of teacher education. Spurring our work has been the increased interest in teacher education around the world and especially in Europe where the European Union (see [European Commission, 2012, 2013](#)) has stressed the important role of well-prepared and highly qualified teacher educators to prepare the next generation of teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels and to support those already at work in schools and other related educational settings.

As we have met together in the various participating countries and studied the landscape of research around teacher educator development, we have come to understand the need for a specific focus on developing and supporting the professional expertise of teacher educators. We have seen

that although the vast majority of practicing teacher educators have one or more post-graduate degrees in education or a cognate discipline, worldwide, those responsible for the education of future teachers have rarely been formally prepared for their vital role (Zeichner & Conklin, 2005). With the exception of Israel's MOFET Institute,¹ there has not been any systematic effort to develop a formal induction or continuing professional development framework for teacher educators. Our study suggests that moving from teaching in a content area to teaching that fuses content knowledge with knowledge of how to teach that content requires a fundamental shift in understandings of expertise and of instructional practice (i.e., Ball & Cohen, 1999; Grossman, 2005; Shulman, 1986, 1987) as well as in teacher educators' sense of professional identity (i.e., Berry, 2007; Zeichner, 2005). To support the development of a new conception of professional expertise among teacher educators, a common set of commitments has emerged among members of InFo-TED. These include:

- Developing a shared vision and common understanding of what is meant by quality in educating teachers;
- Access for teacher educators to high-quality opportunities for continuing professional development conceived to meet the specific needs of teacher educators;
- Effective collaboration between teacher educators working in different settings (university subject area departments, university teacher education departments, schools, local authorities, etc.).

In the next parts of our chapter, we further elaborate the rationale for this initiative, delineate our conceptual framework, and describe the initiatives that have been taken up by InFo-TED to date.

HISTORY AND RATIONALE OF InFo-TED

The foundations of InFo-TED were laid through a “coming together” of a group of experienced teacher educators at the 2012 Annual meeting of the *American Educational Research Association* in San Francisco. The group informally connected around a shared interest in some of the questions we perceived as needing to be answered: “*What is the nature of the professional knowledge involved in the work of educating teachers to teach?*,” and “*How do teacher educators build and develop that knowledge?*” These questions were not necessarily new. In fact, similar questions have been raised by

Ducharme (1986) and by Lanier and Little (1986) as early as the 1980s and have, since then, consistently been reiterated (see, for example, the 2011 Special Issue in the *Journal of Education for Teaching*). What was new, however, is the fact that these questions were being seriously considered and collectively acted upon by those involved in the field of teacher education across the globe. In a sense, then, InFo-TED can be read as a public and organized response to earlier and persistent calls for research focusing specifically on the professional lives, work, and development of teacher educators.

The very fact that these questions were raised as in need of specific attention by policy makers, practitioners, and researchers, highlights our fundamental starting premise: the work of educating teachers requires knowledge, skills, and beliefs that are qualitatively different from those developed as an experienced classroom teacher. “Although the work of teaching has much in common with the work of teacher education, the two positions are significantly different in important ways” (Dinkelman, Margolis, & Sikkenga, 2006, p. 6). This starting premise contrasts starkly with the implicit assumption that a teacher educator is someone who simply teaches (his/her subject) to students in higher education instead of to students in elementary or secondary education. Underlying this premise is the idea that “educating teachers is something that does not require any additional preparation and that if one is a good teacher of elementary or secondary students, this expertise will automatically carry over to one’s work with novice teachers” (Zeichner, 2005, p. 118). In keeping with assumptions like these, little research attention has been paid to the specific nature of teacher educators’ professionalism in terms of what they define as their role as a teacher educator and how they construct the knowledge and skills for this role. Similarly, in line with such assumptions, there has been little need to pay any specific attention to teacher educators’ induction or to their on-going professional learning and development needs.

There is strong evidence from the research literature that such observations have had international acceptance. Zeichner (2005), for example, wrote about what he called the “seat of the pants approach” to the preparation of new teacher educators in the U.S. context; Berry (2007) published a self-study of her struggles to coming to know what and how to teach her students about teaching as she moved from classroom teaching into teacher education in Australia; and Murray and Male (2005) conducted research on the challenges faced by successful classroom teachers in establishing their professional and scholarly identities as teachers of teachers in higher education in England. Similar research has been conducted in Israel by Ben-Peretz, Kleeman, Reichenberg, and Shimoni (2011); by

Davey (2013) in New Zealand; by Lunenberg et al. (2014) in the Netherlands; by Smith (2011) in Norway; and by Vanassche and Kelchtermans (2014) and Tack and Vanderlinde (2014) in Belgium. This lack of attention to the induction and professional development needs of teacher educators as well as the absence of a public and codified knowledge base in teacher education is also, in part, what led to the emergence of the *Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices* (or S-STEP) movement (see Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey, & Russell, 2004).

In distinguishing between the work of teaching and the work of teacher education, Murray and Male (2005) conceptualize teacher educators as *second-order practitioners*, that is, teacher educators induct their students into the practices and discourses of both the first-order context of schooling and the second-order context of teacher education. As second-order practitioners, teacher educators draw on *second-order knowledge* to teach in the *second-order context* of higher education (see also Murray, 2005, 2008). Understood in this way, teaching about teaching requires the ability to hold two perspectives simultaneously: the perspective of the classroom teacher and the perspective of the teacher educator. For teacher educators, content knowledge (knowledge about teaching) and pedagogical knowledge (teaching about teaching) are inseparable (see Loughran, 2007; Russell, 1997). Teacher educators design instructional environments conducive to students' learning, they support learning processes, and select curriculum materials, pedagogies, and assessment strategies, but this teaching is always intended to support student teachers' learning about teaching (see also Kelchtermans, 2013). Put differently, teacher educators' distinctive expertise or disciplinary knowledge is teaching. "It is teaching teachers *about* teaching, rather than a specific subject discipline (i.e., physics, mathematics, English) that commands teacher educators' loyalty" (Vanassche, 2014, p. 3). Therefore, second-order practice demands extended pedagogical expertise, the capability to teach the subject of teaching in the higher education setting, and a specific understanding of oneself as a teacher of teachers.

Building an understanding of oneself as a teacher educator (i.e., Davey, 2013; Murray & Male, 2005; Swennen, Jones, & Volman, 2010) and constructing a personal pedagogy of teacher education (i.e., Berry, 2007; Loughran, 2007; Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2014) is then best understood as a process of becoming. InFo-TED is rooted in this process and desires to build and strengthen in a sustainable way the work and professional development of teacher educators globally. It aims to serve as a forum and community of practice for building a research-based understanding of what

teacher educators know and how that knowledge may be conceptualized and made public as well as actively supported and developed.

DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

In the preceding section, we presented a short history and rationale for establishing Info-TED. Among the first activities we carried out in the InFo-TED community was developing a conceptual model that describes how we see teacher educators' professional development. We developed this conceptual model with a twofold purpose: On the one hand, to provide a map to explain the object of our interest – which is teacher educators' professional development; and, on the other hand, to provide a common language to frame the issue of teacher educator professional development – a necessity given the diversity in teacher educators' work globally and our need to communicate with and understand one another. At the same time, we are very much aware that in this mapping and choosing of a language, we take a stance and that stance implies normative, political, and professional choices. Yet, the purpose of our conceptual developmental work is primarily descriptive and communicative. Hence, our model should NOT be read or understood as a normative blueprint (Kelchtermans, 2013). On the contrary, with our conceptual model, we react against mainstream “blueprint” approaches and plea for a “practice-based” approach (see Kelchtermans, Smith, & Vanderlinde, 2015; for a more full elaboration of this point as well as of the model itself).

Fig. 1 presents this conceptual model. It is our attempt to visualize what we understand about teacher educators' professional development.

The core elements and assumptions of our conceptual model are presented in the gray circles in Fig. 1. In our opinion, the starting point (outer circle in our model) for the professional development of teacher educators has to be their practice. This is what we mean by a practice-based approach (Kelchtermans, 2013). Our assumption is that acting teacher educators have good reasons for doing their job in the way they are doing it. This practice-based approach – as contrary to the blueprint approach – starts from a positive appreciation of the practice in which teacher educators “enact” their expertise. As InFo-TED, we do not want to compare individual teacher educators with a norm, fixed standards, or a list of competencies. The practice-based approach that we support starts with the idea that a teacher educator's actual practices reveal “who” a teacher educator is,

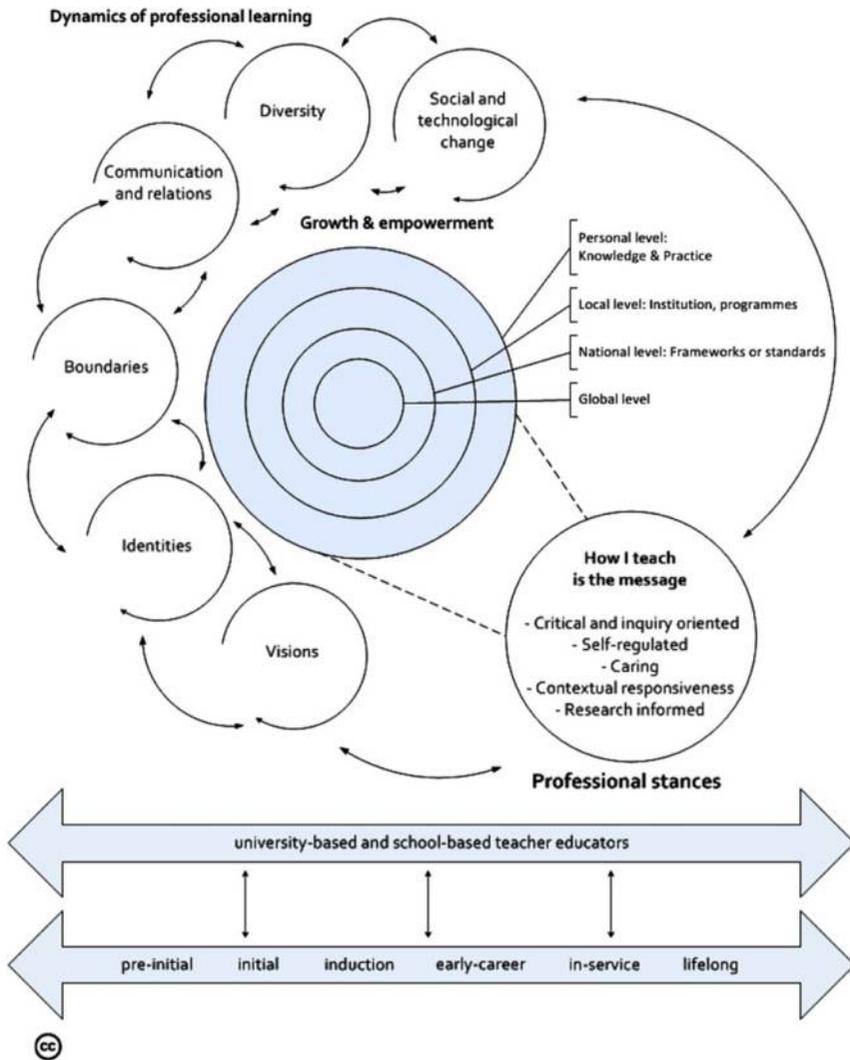


Fig. 1. The InFo-TED Conceptual Model of Teacher Educator Professional Development (see also Kelchtermans et al., 2015).

and what s/he really stands for. Such a position implies that the professional actions and decisions teacher educators undertake are professional messages, for, as [Russell \(1997\)](#) writes: “How I teach is the message.” In our understanding of research and our own experience in the field, we understand that such messages are reflections of a teacher educator’s professional stance and likely to include being critical and inquiry-oriented, self-regulated, contextually responsive, and research-informed.

In the InFo-TED conceptual model, teacher educators’ practices are situated in the concrete context of the local teacher education institute and/or in the national or regional policy context. The local level refers to, for instance, the culture of the teacher education institute, the existing teacher education programs, or teacher education curricula. This level can also refer to relations with placement schools or other partnerships. The national level refers to national policy measurements, existing frameworks, or standards for teacher educators. Finally, teacher educators’ practices are situated in a global level stressing their relation with supranational and societal change.

As a next step in developing our model, we situated these messages in what we called “*dynamics of professional learning*.” These are presented in the left-hand side of our model where we present a non-exhaustive list of possible content domains that we believe ought to be included in opportunities for teacher educators’ professional development. These domains are related to, for instance, social and technological change, diversity in society, communication and relations between teacher educators and different stakeholders, the multiple identities teacher educators have (i.e., teacher of teachers, researcher, gatekeeper, broker; see [Lunenberg et al., 2014](#)), and the broad visions teacher educators have about the nature and future of “good” education. Given our practice-based approach to teacher educators’ professional development, we present these content domains as non-exhaustive, or, to put it differently, providing set parameters for these domains would imply a choice for a blueprint approach.

Under the circles in [Fig. 1](#), our conceptual model further contains two arrows. The first arrow reminds us that thinking about teacher educators’ professional development means thinking broadly about teacher educators as both university-based and school-based. This arrow prompts an inclusive definition of teacher educators (i.e., [European Commission, 2013](#)) encompassing a wide spectrum of positions in the educational system and field and implies that we are aware that teacher educators enter the profession with different backgrounds. Some, for example, enter having worked as teachers, some as researchers with or without a Ph.D., and others may

come from a variety of education-related roles. At the same time, this double-ended arrow implies that we stress the importance of thinking of teacher educators' practice and professional development as situated in a temporal context that recognizes that teacher educators enter the profession at different moments in their careers – with different experiences and different learning needs.

To conclude, the conceptual model of InFo-TED that we have developed illustrates that our starting point for teacher educators' professional development should lie in teacher educators' lived practice. With our conceptual model we take a stance against a blueprint approach that would attempt to identify as well as assess professionalism via an exhaustive list of standards or competencies (knowledge, attitudes, and skills) that teacher educators need to have in order to rightfully consider themselves to be "professional." Contrary to this approach, the InFo-TED conceptual model starts from a full appreciation of the work teacher educators are doing and of the way they are doing it: their enacted practice.

In the next section, we present three cases that describe how teacher educators' professional development is organized in three different countries: Flanders (Belgium), Ireland, and Norway. By presenting these country cases, it becomes clear that who teacher educators are differs from country to country, inevitably implying that professional development activities, initiatives, and structures are likely to differ from country to country. As such, the presentation of the three country cases illustrates the need to develop a conceptual model of teacher educators' professional development – a tool to map the professional development of teacher educators and a common language to frame this issue.

MAPPING THE TERRAIN: TEACHER EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT IN DIFFERENT NATIONAL CONTEXTS

The Professional Development of Flemish Teacher Educators: A Lonely Enterprise?

Flemish teacher education in 2015 is framed by the 2006 Decree on Teacher Education that was the culmination of yearly debates that began in 1989 about the reform of teacher education. These debates began when Belgium became a federalized state and the Flemish government received

full authority for educational policy in Flanders. The 2006 Decree (re-)organized initial teacher education into two types of programs, both of which result in the same teaching certificate, but are provided by different institutes each aiming at particular student teacher populations. First, the Decree describes “*integrated programs*” provided by Colleges of Higher Education, which combine extended internships in schools with general educational theory and subject matter knowledge. These programs result in the degree of bachelor in education (i.e., kindergarten, primary education, or lower secondary education). Second, so-called “*specific programs*” that can be taken either during an initial subject-oriented study at university as part of one’s master’s program or as a separate program at Centers for Adult Education. These programs are for candidates with relevant work experience who want to become teachers mainly in the practical training areas of vocational and technical secondary education. These different institutional contexts inevitably shape the staff positions of teacher educators working in these institutes – including their opportunities for professional development. For example, in contrast to research-intensive settings, Colleges of Higher Education and Centers of Adult Education, have traditionally taken a much more utilitarian approach to knowledge and have not developed strong research agendas nor required staff to engage in research. Teacher educators working in these non-university settings generally have not had opportunities to develop the necessary conceptual and methodological expertise to actively conduct research themselves, including research on their own practice as a means of their own professional development. In this respect, Flemish teacher educators’ professional development has been a lonely enterprise.

Furthermore, teacher education in Flanders has not typically been an intentional career choice. Broadly speaking, three pathways typify the entry of Flemish teacher educators into the profession: (1) successful classroom teachers become teacher educators and focus for the most part on the practical training components; (2) subject specialists with an initial degree in a subject discipline (i.e., science, mathematics) enter teacher education often without having taught in elementary or secondary schools for extended periods of time themselves; and (3) so-called “general educationalists” with master’s degrees in educational sciences enter but generally have limited practical teaching experience.² Clearly, the work of educating teachers was generally not thought of as requiring any specific expertise or preparation and, in the absence of any organized induction or continuing professional development measures, these entry pathways have had an enormous impact on teacher educators’ understanding of their new role as well as the knowledge they bring to the profession.

Frustrated with this situation and inspired by various forms of practitioner research, several Flemish regional teacher education consortiums started organizing small scale, *ad hoc* initiatives – but nevertheless systematic professional development trajectories for Flemish teacher educators – often in close collaboration with universities. In 2008, for example, the University of Leuven collaborated with the School of Education³ on a two-year professional development project in which six experienced teacher educators from different institutes (one university-based program, one Centre for Adult Education, and three Colleges of Higher Education) conducted research on their own practices using the S-STEP approach (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015a). This was the first enactment of the S-STEP approach in Flanders and its pedagogical rationale and outcomes have been subjected to rigorous research (see Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015b).

Building on these understandings, a second and more recent example involves the organization and implementation of a seven-month “Masterclass” for teacher educators on practitioner research. This project is funded by the Expertise network AUGent,⁴ and involves a collaboration between a College of Higher Education, a Centre of Adult Education, and a University with a shared interest in improving teacher educators’ professional development. A central goal of the Masterclass is understanding and meaningfully conceptualizing teacher educators’ professional development as the development of a research-oriented disposition (Tack & Vanderlinde, 2014). At the start of the project (2013–2014), 16 teacher educators from two different teacher education programs participated in this professional development experience using practitioner research. Currently (2014–2015), 30 teacher educators at work in eight different teacher education programs are taking part in this Masterclass.

Underpinning both projects is the idea that the active engagement of teacher educators in studying their own practice is a valuable approach not only to improve their own practice but also to inform the development of a public knowledge base of teacher education in Flanders and elsewhere (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Hadar & Brody, 2012; Rust, 2009; Tack & Vanderlinde, 2014; Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015a). Embedded in this idea is recognition of teacher educators’ professional autonomy and responsibility in (organizing) their own professional development.

Clearly, the establishment and sustainability of such small-scale and local projects depends on the goodwill of the different stakeholders involved as well as the prolonged structural support that is implicit in the funding of these projects. The S-STEP research group in the first project,

for example, did not continue its activities after 2010 when the funding which was used to “buy out” research time (i.e., 10% or four hours a week) from the teacher educators’ daily job to participate in this project ended. However, a major benefit of the small-scale and local character of these projects and others is the opportunity to acknowledge and give central place to the contextualized nature of teacher educators’ work and development. Both projects clearly illustrate how teacher educators’ individual experiences, questions, commitments, or professional development always need to be interpreted and understood against the background of the working conditions in the teacher education institute. They highlight the fact that the context in which teacher educators work and develop *matters*.

The different institutes, in which Flemish teachers are educated as well as teacher educators’ professional identities, different student teacher populations, teacher education curricula, and program structures – all clearly influence teacher educators’ understanding of their work and professional development and these factors are increasingly receiving attention in Flemish policy circles. Recently, for example, as part of a large-scale evaluation study funded by the Flemish government to evaluate the implementation of the 2006 Decree on Teacher Education (EVALO, 2012), six policy groups were initiated to discuss possible improvements of our Flemish teacher education. One of these policy groups had an explicit focus on teacher educators. This group discussed whether organizing formal initiatives on teacher educators’ induction and on-going professional development might be desirable and questioned how such initiatives might be implemented.

The Flemish case suggests that if teacher education is to improve, it is essential to acknowledge and commit to the understanding that educating teachers cannot be *ad hoc*, that it requires specific expertise and nurturing of that expertise, and that the context of teacher educators’ work must be central to their professional education and support (there cannot be a “blueprint” approach to teacher educator professional development).

*The Professional Pathways of Teacher Educators in Ireland:
New Opportunities to Prepare for Work in Teacher Education?*

Teacher education in Ireland has been significantly reconfigured over the last decade due to a number of factors. First among these was the establishment of the Teaching Council (professional regulatory body) in 2006. Second, in response to a marked drop in reading literacy scores among 15-year-olds as measured in PISA 2009 (Department of Education & Skills

[DES], 2011; i.e., a drop from 5th in 2000 to 21st in 2009), was the issuing of new guidelines for all teacher education programs (Teaching Council, 2011a, 2011b) and, as Conway and Murphy (2013) point out, the re-design since then of all initial teacher education programs. Third, as part of wider rationalization of higher education, was a review and subsequent initiation of radical restructuring of the way in which teacher education is made available in Ireland (Hyland, 2012; Sahlberg, Furlong, & Munn, 2012). The key point with regard to teacher education in Ireland is that, while teacher education has become a policy priority in the last decade, the professional preparation of those working in teacher education has not been a policy focus per se, and the multiple professional pathways into the work of teacher education has remained similar to a historic pattern of entry by two different groups: a minority of early starters typically with strong research backgrounds and possibly some experience teaching in schools, and a mid-career entry for the majority with professional practice in schools. However, with the recent and on-going Government initiated restructuring and system rationalization, the goal of which is to reduce the number of teacher education providers from 19 to 6, and to concentrate teacher education in these six sites as *centers of excellence*, there have been inevitable implications for the status, work, and future professional preparation of those working in teacher education.

As a case in point, as this section of the chapter was being written, a strike was being called for by teacher educators in one small dedicated college for post-primary home economics teachers. The background of this strike call had to do with the way in which the new policies were being interpreted relative to the formation of the six centers of excellence. In keeping with the proposed amalgamation of a teacher education college program with a university into a teacher education center of excellence (as recommended by the Sahlberg Report (2012) and accepted by the Higher Education Authority), it is proposed that all the teacher educators from the colleges (here, read the home economics college) should be re-titled “university teachers” thereby losing their “university lecturer” title and their academic research status in one fell swoop. However, those already working as teacher educators in the university will retain their status as “university lecturers.”

This single case of a call for a strike illustrates a number of tensions in relation to the professional preparation of teacher educators in Ireland, tensions that are especially acute in a context of increased rankings pressures on universities. In the university involved here, there was concern that the university’s research score would be lowered by the inclusion of

the 60 staff members from the home economics college whose considerable professional practice expertise was perceived to be not strong enough to outweigh their lack of research outputs. While a significant number of the teacher educators in the home economics college do have Ph.Ds as well as research publications, the majority of those being transferred have followed the dominant professional pathway in which professional experience as teachers along with a master's degree is the typical entry profile for new full-time teacher educators.

Although the calling of a strike in this case has not been typical of how the current restructuring is unfolding in Ireland, it starkly illustrates the implications of differing entry points and professional preparation pathways for the work of teacher education – especially when, as recommended by the Sahlberg Report (2012), teacher education is increasingly seen as optimal in a university setting. It further suggests that despite the current policy focus on the quality of initial teacher education program provision, there has been a relative lack of focus on professional learning for teacher educators as evidenced in the early 2000s review of primary teacher education (Kellaghan, 2002) as well as in post-primary teacher education (Byrne, 2002). As such, the prioritization of teacher education in the last decade and even more so in the last five years is evident in the significant Teaching Council prioritization of a labor intensive accreditation of all initial teacher education programs in the country since the publication of binding national initial teacher education regulations by the Council in 2011.

In conclusion, there are a number of key points in the case of Ireland. First, like the Flemish case described earlier, entry into teacher education is most likely a mid-career opportunity. Second, given mid-career entry for most teacher educators, there are ensuing implications for the potential opportunities to learn to be a teacher educator. Third, the joint influence of the more complete universitization of teacher education recommended in the recent Sahlberg Report (2012) along with increased rankings pressure on universities has meant that there is more pressure on teacher education academics as they work in higher educational institutions to acquire a Ph.D. and publish in peer-reviewed research outlets. Fourth, in the absence of particular required qualifications for work in teacher education, most teacher educators look to doctoral study in jurisdictions other than their workplaces (the United Kingdom, the United States typically) and other higher education institutions in Ireland. Fifth, the increasing diversity of the school system (Heinz, 2008) and attention to the complexity of schooling and how best to re-imagine teacher education (Waldron & Smith, 2012), with attendant implications for the professional preparation

of teacher educators, has led to an emphasis on the up-skilling of staff (especially part-time teacher educators who are often retired teachers – a point noted in the Sahlberg Report) to meet the demands of the current policy focus on inquiry-oriented teacher education program provision. Sixth, this up-skilling has, since early 2000, seen increasing involvement of teacher educators in self-study (i.e., Farren, 2005; MacPhail, 2014), and, since the 1998 Good Friday Peace Agreement, in a vibrant cross-border network of teacher educators (Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South or SCoTENS) (Furlong, Pendry, & Mertova, 2011).

NAFOL, A Dream Comes True

NAFOL (Norwegian Research School of Teacher Education) is the story about how a dream of making a change, a dream of moving teacher education in Norway from a seminar level into a research-active, dynamic, academic field, is coming true.

To understand why we Norwegians started to dream, some background information might be useful. Norway has a population of about five million people spread out in a long country with a coastline of 100,915 km. This explains why, per today, the country has 30 teacher education institutions in university colleges and universities. Many of the university colleges are too small to develop a strong research agenda on their own. However, they play an important role with regard to Norway's policy to keep remote districts alive and each region self-sufficient with qualified teachers. Another incentive for our dream was a shocking report published in 2004 by the Norwegian Research Council (NFR, 2004) in which Norwegian educational research was harshly criticized. The authors of the report challenged the higher educational institutions to strengthen efforts around key five areas: (1) research leadership and organization, (2) internationalization, (3) thematic efforts and prioritization, (4) recruitment, and (5) national coordination and cooperation. Furthermore, a White Paper from the parliament, *Will to Research* (White paper 20, 2004–2005), suggested that national graduate schools should be created with the purpose of strengthening quality and increasing the doctoral completion rate in universities offering advanced education. As a follow-up, in 2009, a new White paper, *The Teacher, the Role, and the Education* (White paper 11, 2008–2009), stated that national doctoral schools were to be established to empower teacher educators' research and development. Within this context, the dream about NAFOL developed. It was presented to the National Council for

Teacher Education which strongly recommended it to the government, and, after a year of planning, NAFOL was launched in 2010 as a national doctoral school for teacher education.

What Does NAFOL Offer?

NAFOL is a research school providing additional support to teacher educators engaging in doctoral studies. It is part of Norwegian educational research policy to transform a practice-based teacher education into research-informed teacher education. Nearly all of the country's relevant teacher education institutes have established a network which forms NAFOL, and they provide funding for four years to teacher educators' doctoral studies. Each student has to be accepted into a doctoral program at one of the universities or one of the few university colleges offering doctoral education. When accepted into a regular doctoral program, they can then apply to NAFOL to receive extra support, supervision, and beyond that, belong to a cohort of doctoral students from all over the wide-spread country. The cohort meets four times for two days per year during the four year period NAFOL offers support, which means that NAFOL administers 16 seminars (four for each cohort currently in the program) every year. Each cohort will have 16 seminars within the four year period dealing with themes such as academic writing, methodology, communicating research, theory of teacher education, and subject didactic research. The theme leaders are prominent national and international teacher educator researchers and theoreticians. However, the heart of the seminars is the feedback sessions where the students present texts from their doctoral work to a small group of peers and a national and international senior researcher for the purposes of getting feedback on work in progress. NAFOL works strongly to pull the doctoral students out of isolation, and to avoid writing a full thesis based on feedback from only one's supervisor(s). Two times during the four years each cohort participates in NAFOL initiated seminars abroad with professors and their doctoral students from a foreign university, to enable students to create international networks, and to discuss the doctoral work with international voices. NAFOL also supports study periods abroad, and two international conferences per year for the students if peer-reviewed presentations are accepted. In addition, NAFOL financially supports Ph.D. courses offered by the network institutions, and pays for NAFOL students' travel, accommodation, and fees to attend these courses. The idea is to encourage all NAFOL's network institutions to stretch beyond initial teacher education. NAFOL acknowledges the

importance of quality supervision in doctoral education and therefore organizes two seminars per year for supervisors of the doctoral students.

However, not all teacher educators want to engage in doctoral studies, yet, they are still working within a teacher education system in which an attitude of inquiry and publications are expected. Thus, NAFOL offers three seminars per year for teacher educators who want to develop their practical expertise informed by self-studies, action research projects, and curriculum development. This alternative leads to a broader qualification, called 1st lecturer (*førstelektor*). These teacher educators can also participate, if they wish, in NAFOL's Ph.D. supported doctoral courses, and during the seminars they are invited to present texts for feedback from peers and professors.

Current Status

The original plan approved by the Norwegian Research Council in 2010 granted funding for four cohorts of 20 students (altogether 80 teacher educators) during the four years from 2010 to 2016 (the last cohort would then be accepted in 2013 to graduate by the end of 2016). However, things developed beyond our expectations due to an extremely positive mid-project international evaluation, an increasingly positive reputation around Norway's education system, and a policy shift that will, beginning in 2017, situate all teacher education at the master's level (i.e., research-based master's degree). This requires teacher educators with research competence to supervise master's theses. As a result, NAFOL's project period has been extended and fully funded until the end of 2019, and the number of cohorts yearly has grown to six. Each cohort has about 20 students (some cohorts are bigger). Two cohorts have already graduated. By 2019, we anticipate that NAFOL has supported around 160 teacher educators in the completion of their doctoral degree. That is, we believe, a significant number in a country of 5 million people. We fully anticipate that Norway's remarkable investment in teacher educators and their professional development will lead to a substantial enhancement of Norwegian research in, on, and with teacher education.

Innovation and Challenges

In Norway an innovative aspect of NAFOL is the double aim of the research school to scaffold doctoral work and to support practicing teacher educators in developing an identity as researchers. The dialogue between the two levels is strengthened through networks formed by the students as they become integrated in national and international communities of

researchers. Being systematic, yet dynamic in structure, and sensitive to the needs of the students and the society, NAFOL presents an innovative concept of doctoral studies in which students' voices are integral to shaping the doctoral program.

The impact of the graduate school is under constant evaluation with one of the most important factors being how many students will complete their doctorates (Ph.D. programs). So far, the results from the two graduated cohorts (cohort 2010 and cohort 2011) show that the majority of students have graduated or are in the process of completing their doctoral work. Another outcome indicator is the number of publications by NAFOL students in peer-reviewed national and international journals. Here, too, we see a sign of success as the list is impressive. So is the number of presentations by NAFOL students at international conferences. However, by the end of the day, the main question we need to seek answers to is whether the quality of Norwegian teacher education has improved and whether there will be concomitant improvement in Norwegian education and schools become a better place for students. This question cannot yet be answered by counting numbers of Ph.D.s in teacher education or by lists of publications. So, we in NAFOL still dream about improving education, and NAFOL is, for us, a means on the way to make the dream come true.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter constitutes a report on Info-TED's commitment to create a shared language for teaching about teaching that demonstrates and makes public (i.e., opens up for critical debate) the richness of the professional expertise that it aims to describe. As a network of experienced teacher educator researchers embarking on this commitment, we have taken the stance that the work of educating teachers requires a distinct professional repertoire as well as a distinct understanding of oneself as a teacher educator. We envisioned our role as very much like that of a broker as defined by Lunenberg et al. (2014) in their extensive review of teacher educators' professional roles: actively sustaining dialogue across different institutional contexts and across policy, research, and practice, as well as creating a shared vision and approach concerning teacher educator development.

Embedded in this commitment are several issues or concerns that are clearly illustrated in the country cases and which will need to be dealt with on the level of policy, practice, and research. To conclude this chapter, we

have formulated these issues as a series of questions that can be read both as guiding questions for building a research program on teacher educator development and which can serve as “touchstones” for the development of policies regarding teacher educator professional development as well as initiatives and induction programs.

First, how can we conceptualize and meaningfully support processes of professional development that serve to improve action as well as help teacher educators to develop a refined understanding of personal beliefs and their impact on practice? Underpinning our conceptual model is an understanding of teacher education as a “pedagogical” practice in which the central goal is to “educate” a future generation of teachers who have been entrusted to us as teacher educators. Therefore, the work of educating teachers inevitably implies normative choices that, as the Ireland case suggests, potentially involve political consequences. Hence, teacher educator development cannot suffice with the upscaling of instrumental knowledge (i.e., “how to”-questions: how to teach; identifying the most effective approaches); professional learning and development must also address “what”-questions (i.e., selecting curriculum materials), “why”-questions (i.e., defining goals and purposes), and “who”-questions (i.e., expertise and professional responsibility of teacher educators) (Kelchtermans, 2012). This was clearly illustrated in, for example, the Flemish case in which it was found that the professional value for teacher educators actively conducting research on their own practices and in their own institutes hinges on the ways in which this process influences one’s personal beliefs and assumptions.

Second, who is to be served by research conducted by teacher educators on teacher education and, following from this, what are the necessary methodological qualities of the research conducted by teacher educators? Looking across the country cases, the answer seems to lie in conceptualizing teacher educator development as a process of inquiry (or teacher educators becoming active scholars as the result of professional development processes). If our interpretation is correct, the cases fit in nicely with the broader research literature (i.e., Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006). Yet, as the cases of Flanders and Ireland demonstrate, there are different understandings of research operating in these cases that clearly intersect with differing research paradigms among teacher educators at different levels across institutional contexts. What these cases highlight is a tension between relevance and rigor (see Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015a) and associated decisions about data collection and analysis as well as knowledge outcomes: Moving too far to the side of relevance produces research that could open up new understandings for the individual teacher educator

in his/her local context, but its value does not reach beyond that context. Moving too far to the side of rigor may result in concessions to methodological issues that steer the teacher educator away from the concern that triggered his/her interest to begin with and eventually leave the teacher educator without any real benefit from his/her efforts. The question then relates to where on the continuum studies deemed most valuable in moving both teacher education practice and research might be placed. Here the case of Norway may be instructive.

Third, how are teacher educators' understandings of their roles as teacher educators, as well as their development, shaped by the contexts in which they enact their expertise? Teacher education across the globe is organized in a wide range of programmatic, curricular, and institutional models. This contextual situatedness inevitably influences teacher educators' understanding of their work and professional selves as well as their (opportunities for) professional development. Adding an additional layer to this already complex situation is the body of research that indicates that the micro communities of practice within these already diverse organizational and institutional settings are central shaping forces in teacher educators' work lives and development (Murray, 2005, 2008). There is clear evidence in the three country cases that the organizational and institutional contexts in which teacher educators enact their practice matters. This understanding is neither new, nor ground-breaking. Yet, it is absolutely vital for teacher educators themselves to become aware of the organizational and institutional working conditions in which they enact their practice (and the affordances and constraints offered by these working conditions) as well as for educational researchers to develop the theoretical-conceptual tools to tap into the mediating role of context in teacher educators' work lives and development. As a consequence, in building a knowledge base for teaching about teaching (including the education of teacher educators) it is necessary to combine theories of professional learning and development – which traditionally take the individual (or the team) as the focus of attention – with “systematic” or institutional frameworks that allow for a more refined conceptualization of the working conditions in teacher education institutes and the ways in which these conditions interact with teacher educators' personal understandings of their work (see Kelchtermans, 2012). In our plea for a practice-based approach with an emphasis on actual teacher education practices for conceiving of teacher educator professionalism and development, we have tried to operationalize this contextualized character of teacher education in a manner in which teacher educators globally can identify and instantiate.

NOTES

1. See <http://www.mofet.macam.ac.il/eng/about/Pages/default.aspx> for MOFET's mission statement and core practices.
2. This illustrates the fact that having a teaching certificate is legally not required for teaching in Flemish teacher education.
3. The School of Education is a regional consortium of 15 Flemish teacher education programs and provides a structural platform for collaboration between five Colleges of Higher Education, nine Centers for Adult Education, and the KU Leuven.
4. The Expertise network AUGent is a regional consortium of nine Flemish teacher education programs and provides a structural platform for collaboration between three Colleges of Higher Education, five Centers for Adult Education, and Ghent University.

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