Teacher Educators' Professional Development: Towards a Typology of Teacher Educators' Researcherly Disposition

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TEACHER EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF TEACHER EDUCATORS' RESEARCHERLY DISPOSITION

by Hanne Tack, *Ghent University* and Ruben Vanderlinde, *Ghent University and Research Foundation Flanders*

ABSTRACT: Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the need for teacher educators' – or those who teach the teachers – professional development became increasingly recognised in both policy and research literature. In this respect, a growing body of publications highly stress the teacher educators' task of engaging in research and becoming a teacher educator-researcher. This article assumes that teacher educators' professional development can be conceptualised as the development of a 'researcherly disposition'. A researcherly disposition is defined as the tendency to engage in research, and involves an inclination towards research (affective aspect), an ability to engage in research (cognitive aspect) and a sensitivity for research opportunities (behavioural aspect). Twenty in-depth interviews with teacher educators were conducted and analysed in order to empirically explore the concept and assess differences in teacher educators' researcherly disposition. The findings indicate a typology with three types of teacher educators: 'the enquiring teacher educator' (Type 1), 'the well-read teacher educator' (Type 2) and 'the teacher educator-researcher' (Type 3). Based on the proposed definition of a teacher educator's researcherly disposition, each type's disposition towards research is presented. Finally, implications for further research and for future programmes that focus on teacher educators' professional development are discussed.

Keywords: researcherly disposition, teacher educators, professional development, professional learning, teacher education, typology

1. INTRODUCTION

Although there is a worldwide urgent need for high-quality teacher education, the professional development of teacher educators – those who teach the teachers – was neglected until the end of the twentieth century. In this respect, a robust body of research on teachers' professional development emerged (see, for example, Borko, 2004), but research on teacher educators' professional development remains scarce (Loughran, 2014; Lunenberg *et al.*, 2014). At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Murray stressed the teacher educators' profession as 'an under-researched and poorly understood occupational group' (2005, p. 68).

In this regard, major questions concerning teacher educators' training and professional development have been raised (Bates *et al.*, 2011; Ben-Peretz *et al.*,

2013; Lunenberg *et al.*, 2014). This is, for instance, clarified in the context of British teacher education, where Arthur notes that 'the role of English universities in the education of teachers is under serious threat' (2013, p. 383). Referring to the non-disputable impact teacher educators have on the quality of teaching and learning in the schools (see, for instance, Hattie, 2009; Marzano *et al.*, 2001), the European Commission (2013) comes to similar conclusions when stressing the importance of high-quality teacher education.

As a consequence, the significant need for professional development of teacher educators has grown internationally since the beginning of the twenty-first century, and now receives recognition in both the research (for example, Bates *et al.*, 2011; Ben-Peretz *et al.*, 2013) and policy literature (for example, European Commission, 2013). In this respect, the majority of authors have increasingly emphasised that a significant part of a teacher educators' occupation, in addition to teaching teachers, should be to conduct research (Lunenberg *et al.*, 2014). Cochran-Smith clearly illustrates this two-fold goal by stressing that the role of teacher educators 'depends upon a rich dialectic of the two [researcher and teacher of teachers] wherein the lines between professional practice in teacher education and research related to teacher education are increasingly blurred' (2005, p. 221). In other words, teacher educators are nowadays expected to excel in both teaching about teaching and conducting research (Berry, 2007).

As will be argued, the development of a 'researcherly disposition', a concept strongly related to concepts such as 'inquiry as stance' (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009) and 'inquiry habit of mind' (Bruggink and Harinck, 2012), offers a promising view on teacher educators' professional development and takes into account the persistent demands on this group of professionals to engage in research (Loughran, 2014; Vanassche, 2014). However, the current literature does not provide a clear and comprehensive understanding of these concepts, nor does it present empirical work on teacher educators' researcherly disposition. The current study addresses this gap in two steps. First, a theoretical framework is presented wherein teacher educators' researcherly disposition is conceptualised as a triad of inclination towards research (affective aspect), an ability to conduct research (cognitive aspect) and a sensitivity for research opportunities (behavioural aspect). Second, the findings of the study are presented, offering a typology on teacher educators' researcherly disposition with three types of teacher educators: 'the enquiring teacher educator' (Type 1), 'the well-read teacher educator' (Type 2) and 'the teacher educator-researcher' (Type 3).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Teacher Educators' Professional Development

Teacher educators are defined by the European Commission as 'all those who actively facilitate the (formal) learning of student teachers and teachers' (2013, p. 8). This broad definition covers a heterogeneous group of professionals who are

all involved with the education of teachers but can be occupied in diverse professional work settings. Indeed, this definition encompasses both teacher educators working within institutions of teacher education and mentors who are mainly occupied in schools.

Given the large differences between these two groups of teacher educators (e.g. professional work context, qualifications, target group) (see Lunenberg et al., 2014), this article has a focus on institution-based teacher educators. Institution-based teacher educators are mainly involved with the education of future teachers enrolled in a pre-service teacher education programme. Even within this subgroup of teacher educators, there are still differences in expertise and background experiences, as teacher educators are not formally prepared for their role as a teacher educator. Usually one becomes a teacher educator when expertise in a particular field can be proven (Berry, 2007). This implies that a teacher educator's training (qualifications and degree) and previous experiences strongly influence their professional development (Livingston et al., 2009).

Most studies on teacher educators' professional development emphasise that teacher educators' engagement in research is a key component in their professional development (Lunenberg et al., 2014). To highlight the fact that becoming active in research is a fundamental aspect of a teacher educator's learning trajectory, Loughran even describes teacher educators' careers as a 'research journey' (2014, p. 2). He further argues that teacher educators have to engage in research to improve their knowledge about their students learning, their own teaching about teaching and teacher education in general (Loughran, 2014). In this respect, Cochran-Smith (2005, p. 219) uses the phrase 'working the dialectic' to refer to the fact that a teacher educator's role as a researcher is intimately tied to the core of a teacher educator's work: teaching about teaching (Murray and Male, 2005). To put it differently, if teacher educators aim to become better teachers of teachers, they will have to engage in research activities enabling a better understanding of that teaching practice.

However, teacher educators' research engagement cannot be considered an obviously existing part of everyone's practice. In this respect, Livingston et al. (2009) argue that some teacher educators have developed expertise as researchers before or during their work as teacher educators (i.e. by working in an academic environment or by pursuing further academic studies), while others have not. A lack of research experience and/or a lack of clear expectations regarding a teacher educator's role as a researcher can possibly explain why most find it hard to identify themselves as someone with a research role. In addition, the review study by Lunenberg et al. (2014) reveals that those who do consider research to be a part of their work greatly differ in their perceptions of this role. These perceptions range from merely reading published research to conducting research into one's own practice and disseminating these results in research journals or at conferences. Given these different perceptions, clarity regarding what it means to fulfil one's role as a teacher educator-researcher is still needed (Lunenberg et al., 2014).

According to Loughran (2014), fulfilling one's role as a teacher educator-researcher means that teacher educators have to at least be 'smart' consumers of research, able to research their teaching practices and value the importance of a research identity as a teacher educator. In his reasoning, Loughran strongly builds upon the previous work of Cochran-Smith (2003), who describes teacher educators' professional development as the development of an 'inquiry as stance', which refers to 'the process of continual and systematic inquiry wherein they question their own and other assumptions and construct local, as well as public, knowledge appropriate to the changing contexts in which they work' (2003, p. 24). In other words, these authors stress that a teacher educator-researcher should conduct research to serve a two-fold goal: to improve their own practice and knowledge about teacher education, and also to contribute to the broader knowledge-base on teacher education. The first goal refers to Cochran-Smith's (2003) notion of being a creator of 'local knowledge', and the second goal refers to her notion of being a creator of 'public knowledge'. Contributing to the public knowledge-base refers to intentionally making public the developed knowledge and its dissemination to the research community in teacher education (i.e. through research reports, articles in professional or academic journals, conference presentations). In other words, besides improving their teaching practice based on results of their own research, teacher educators who aim to fully develop their role as a researcher are also expected to systematically make explicit these research findings and share them with the broader community of teacher education.

Loughran (2014) describes the demands on teacher educators' research activities as three-fold: they need to be linked to the field of teacher education; they need clear connections with their daily practices; and they need to focus on the improvement of student teachers' learning. The research conducted by teacher educators thus largely depends upon their own professional spheres (Vanassche, 2014). This means that the professional concerns of a teacher educator in a particular context will largely determine the research problem one is about to study. For instance, some teacher educators may feel a need to assess the impact of their teaching style on students learning, while others may aim to study the relevance of use of integrated information and communications technology in their classrooms. However, irrespective of the topic of a teacher educator's study, the research has to focus on both the improvement of local teaching practices and its transformation into more public knowledge. In this respect, practitioner research, or 'the intentional and systematic inquiry into one's own practice' (Dinkelman, 2003, p. 8), is often described as a powerful strategy because of its dual focus on both the production of local and public knowledge on teacher education.

The Development of a 'Researcherly Disposition'

The concept of 'disposition' can play a key role in explaining successful behaviour, and is therefore a growing and important concept in educational studies (Crick and Goldspink, 2014). A disposition is defined in psychology as

a tendency or a habit of mind towards particular patterns or behaviour (Katz and Raths, 1985). Related to this study, teacher educators' researcherly disposition could be roughly described as 'the tendency to engage in research'. However, the definition of a researcherly disposition in its broadest interpretation would imply that this concept could still be critiqued in research on teacher education as 'an unresolved challenge' (Wayda and Lund, 2005, p. 34) or 'a superfluous construct' (Murray, 2007, p. 381) due to its lack of analytical value. Nevertheless, Perkins *et al.* (1993, p. 8) provide an analytical lens through which they deconstruct the concept of 'disposition' into a triad of inclination, sensitivity and ability:

- inclination refers to 'the person's felt tendency toward behaviour X';
- sensitivity involves 'the person's alertness to X-occasions'; and
- ability covers 'the actual ability to follow through with X-behaviour'.

By deconstructing the concept of disposition into three inter-related but distinct units of analysis (inclination, sensitivity, and ability), the authors developed an analytical framework to better understand what influences individuals to actually decide to behave, or avoid behaving, in a certain way. In this respect, they concede to definitions on dispositions that often only refer to the inclination aspect. What is more, these authors recognise that 'the trio of inclination, sensitivity, and ability constitute individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for behaviour' (Perkins *et al.*, 1993, p. 10). In other words, this framework allows for a starting point to conceptualise teacher educators' researcherly disposition as a comprehensive construct, and thus initiates a better understanding of what is important in teacher educators' professional development as teacher educator-researchers.

Based on both the description of teacher educators' role as researchers and the concept of a 'triad disposition' (Perkins *et al.*, 1993), our definition of 'teacher educators' researcherly disposition' is the habit of mind to engage in research and thus to produce both local knowledge and public knowledge on teacher education. This researcherly disposition embodies three interrelated aspects: an ability to conduct research; a sensitivity to research occasions; and an inclination towards research. The first aspect of a teacher educator's researcherly disposition involves an affective dimension, which refers to his or her inclination or felt tendency towards research. Here, important indicators concern the extent to which a teacher educator values a research-oriented approach towards his/her daily practices and, as such, recognises his/her role as a researcher. The second aspect is of a cognitive nature and refers to a teacher educator's actual ability to conduct research and to contribute to the knowledge base on teacher education. Knowledge and understanding of educational research and research methods are important indicators of this dimension. Finally, the third dimension of a teacher educator's researcherly disposition involves a

behavioural dimension, which refers to a teacher educator's sensitivity or alertness to research opportunities in his/her daily practice.

By using this conceptualisation of teacher educators' researcherly disposition as a theoretical framework, the research goal of this explorative study is to unravel teacher educators' researcherly disposition by means of a qualitative study with 20 teacher educators. More specifically, we aim to assess whether or not teacher educators' researcherly disposition can be conceptualised according to a 'triad concept', and whether differences can be identified among in their individual researcherly dispositions. Summarised, the goal is to develop a typology that can be used to distinguish different types of teacher educators' researcherly disposition.

3. Methodology

Context

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 teacher educators from two teacher-training institutions: a Centre for Adult Education (Centrum voor Volwassenenonderwijs) and a College of Higher Education (University of Applied Courses or 'Hogeschool') in Flanders. Different from universities, these institutions offer professional training in teacher education, whereas universities offer research-based academic training. This means that these institutions of higher education have no real research traditions and their main focus is on the education of professionals. For this study, this implies that none of the teacher educators had been asked to conduct research within his/her occupation as a teacher educator. This is very different from the careers of teacher educators in the United States or Pacific Rim systems, as these teacher educators are all formally expected to combine teaching roles with research roles (Hamilton and Clandinin, 2011).

Participants

Twenty institution-based teacher educators, seven working at the Centre for Adult Education and 13 occupied at a College of Higher Education, were included in this study. These teacher educators were interested in participating in a professional development programme on practitioner research in order to support the development of their researcherly disposition, and thus recognised research as being a part of their occupation.

The mean age of the participants, eight male and 12 female, was 35.5 years (standard deviation = 8.28). The majority ($n = 18$) had completed their master's degree. The participants' years of experience as teacher educators ranged from three months to 20 years. All of the participants teach in the field of pedagogy. Nine of the participants teach 'general pedagogy'. The other teacher educators

teach subject-oriented pedagogy, such as 'Physics', 'English', 'French', 'History' and 'Dutch as a second language' or 'Interdisciplinary Courses'.

The participants followed different trajectories in becoming teacher educators. Nine participants had experience as teachers in compulsory education, whereas the other 11 entered the profession without any experience as teachers in compulsory education. Of these 11 participants, seven started working as teacher educators immediately after obtaining their master's degree and their teaching qualification in teacher education, and the other four began working in the field after a number of years as university researchers. Of the participants, 12 were familiar with conducting educational research and two had previous experience with practitioner research in the context of a postgraduate course entitled 'School Development'.

Table 1 presents an overview of each participating teacher educator ($n = 20$), presenting their age, work context, qualification and background experiences (in chronological order). Special attention is paid to teacher educators' professional work setting, years of experience in higher education, experience as a teacher in compulsory education and experience as a researcher since several studies (Ducharme, 1996; Murray, 2010) indicate that these characteristics are determining factors in teacher educators' professional development.

Data Collection

A semi-structured interview protocol was used for the interviews. All questions in the protocol are based on the theoretical framework discussed above. The first questions relate to the participants' background characteristics (e.g. age, qualifications, professional experience as a teacher educator, work experience in compulsory education, experience in research). During the second part of the interview, the participants were asked to explain their understanding of research methods and educational research (cognitive dimension). Other questions attempted to reconstruct the teacher educators' beliefs, motives and attitudes towards conducting research and becoming teacher educator-researchers (affective dimension). Moreover, the participants had to indicate the extent to which they already engage in research. Teacher educators had to provide examples from their daily practices in their answers (behavioural dimension).

The interview protocol was piloted with one teacher educator in order to determine limitations within the protocol before the data collection process began (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The pilot respondent was asked to answer each question and to give feedback on the formulation of each question. Afterwards, the initial protocol was slightly modified.

Data Analysis

All interviews ($n = 20$) were conducted by the first author in January 2014. With permission from the interviewees, all interviews were audio-recorded and

TABLE 1: *Overview of the respondents*

Name	Age	Institute	Qualification	Background: formal experiences in education (CE/TE) and research
Noah	40	CAE	MA in African Studies, teaching qualification	14 years in CE 2 years in TE 1-year postgraduate course 'School Development'
Daniel	47	CAE	MA in Languages (Dutch, English), teaching qualification	3 years in CE 2 years in non-profit organisations 14 years in TE (of which 8 years combined with part-time task of head of department)
Emma	50	CAE	MA in Law, teaching qualification	11 years in higher education as lecturer 1 year as a research assistant 16 years in TE (of which 14 years combined with part-time task of head of department)
Emily	30	CAE	MA in Education, teaching qualification	6 years as scientific staff at a university 2 years in TE
Elizabeth	29	CAE	MA in Education, teaching qualification	3 years as scientific staff at a university 5 years in TE
Jessica	28	CAE	MA in Audiology and Speech–Language Pathology, teaching qualification	5 years in CE (still works part-time in CE) 3 years in TE
Charlotte	27	CAE	MA in Education, teaching qualification	3 months in TE
Jacob	40	CHE	MA in History, teaching qualification	1 year as scientific staff, 8 years as assistant (PhD degree not obtained) 7 years in TE
Mason	34	CHE	MA in Engineering and MA in Cultural Sciences, teaching qualification	8 years in TE (of which 6 years was combined with part-time leadership of research and development)
Ethan	35	CHE	MA in Audiovisual Arts, teaching qualification	2 months in CE 6 years in TE (of which 4 years was combined with part-time leadership in research and development)
William	31	CHE	BA in Education (primary education)	8 years in CE

(Continued)

TABLE 1: (Continued)

Name	Age	Institute	Qualification	Background: formal experiences in education (CE/TE) and research
				3 years in TE 1-year postgraduate course 'School Development'
Liam	39	CHE	MA in Education, teaching qualification	8 years in TE
Michael	33	CHE	BA in Education (lower secondary education)	7 years in CE
Olivia	44	CHE	MA in Languages (Dutch, English)	6 years in TE 2 years in CE
Amelia	30	CHE	MA in Education, teaching qualification	7 years as research assistant (PhD degree not obtained) 6 years in TE
Claire	30	CHE	MA in Education, teaching qualification	6 years in TE
Stella	57	CHE	MA in Philology, teaching qualification	6 years in TE
Lauren	33	CHE	MA in Languages (Dutch, English), teaching qualification	5 years in CE
Lilly	27	CHE	MA in Education, teaching qualification	2 years affiliated with a university as research staff 20 years in TE 4 years in CE
Katie	27	CHE	MA in Education, teaching qualification	8 years in TE 3 years in TE
				1 year as teaching assistant in a university 3 years in TE (with 1 year part-time in charge for research and development)

Note: BA, bachelor's degree; CAE, Centre of Adult Education; CE, compulsory education (primary education or secondary education); CHE, College of Higher Education; MA, master's degree; TE, teacher education.

transcribed before the analysis. After reading the transcriptions several times, all reports were segmented and coded. The text fragments were labelled with descriptive and interpretative codes based on the theoretical framework. All names were removed to protect anonymity when writing-up case reports.

The analysis was carried out in two phases. First, a vertical analysis was conducted (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and each individual teacher educator

served as a unit of analysis. Twenty systematic summarising reports were thus written, presenting the analysis for each participant in a structured form. Next, these reports were compared during the horizontal analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994). By adopting a constant comparative analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), the goal of this phase is to look for similarities and differences between the teacher educators. This is an iterative and recursive process, where interpretations are developed, reconsidered and modified if necessary.

With regard to the internal validity (Creswell and Miller, 2000), the authors independently conducted each analysis. Afterwards, the interpretations were discussed and refined until consensus was reached. Furthermore, a member check was conducted and four participants reviewed the findings and commented on their accuracy (Van Hove and Claes, 2011). By carefully describing the theoretical framework, the research procedure, the data collection, the analysis and the quality of the research process can be critically judged by others.

4. FINDINGS

Although each teacher educator reported explicitly on the behavioural, cognitive and affective aspect, important differences exist between individuals. More specifically, the analysis reveals a typology with three types of teacher educators: 'the enquiring teacher educator' (Type 1), 'the well-read teacher educator' (Type 2) and 'the teacher educator-researcher' (Type 3). All of the names in the next paragraphs are pseudonyms that refer to the respondents in the study.

Type 1: 'The Enquiring Teacher Educator'

The first type of teacher educator values the teacher educator's role as a researcher. Enquiring teacher educators (Type 1) possess an inclination towards research, which is, for instance, illustrated by the participants' voluntary decision to participate in a professional development programme on practitioner research. However, this first type of teacher educator acknowledges a lack of understanding of research methods and knowledge about research, and neither engages in research activities nor contributes to the knowledge base on teacher education (see Table 2). The lack of understanding and knowledge refers to the cognitive

TABLE 2: Teacher educators' researcherly disposition – Type 1: 'the enquiring teacher educator'

Type 1	
Cognitive dimension	
Behavioural dimension	
Affective dimension	✓

aspect, while the lack of sensitivity to research occasions refers to the behavioural aspect.

Enquiring teacher educators are mainly those who have gained a lot a practical experience as a teacher in higher education or/and as a teacher in compulsory education. They are often experienced teachers with full teaching schedules who lack any experience in research. The quotation below clearly illustrates the profile of Type 1 teacher educators:

> I think I cannot call myself a teacher educator. For now, the only thing I do is teach. And being a teacher educator is more than teaching. A good teacher educator thinks about his teaching, discusses it with others, and even studies it. As a teacher educator, you have to be able to systematically look at yourself and ask: How is my teaching? What is well structured? What could be better organised? (Lilly)

Eight of the participants are considered Type 1 teacher educators. Four worked as teachers in compulsory education and the others had started as teacher educators immediately after graduation. Remarkably, all of these teacher educators perceive this year as a turning point in their career. This means that each of them is facing a critical transition period wherein existential questions on their teaching practices are raised. These questions mostly relate to the participants' careers as teacher educators and become most prominent when the interviewees explain their interest in participating in the professional development programme:

> At the beginning of this year, I reflected on my three-year occupation as a teacher educator and I decided that this year will be a significant year that determines my future. I am a very passionate teacher, but I doubt if that also counts for my work as a teacher educator. What is a good teacher educator? When do I conform to the identity of a good teacher educator? I guess I am really experiencing a professional identity-struggle. (Lilly)

Or, as one of the participants stressed:

> I have been working for eight years as a teacher educator and I am in need of something new and challenging. A year ago, I started to talk with my colleagues about the idea of conducting research. However, one year later, it is still an idea. (Lauren)

To conclude, Type 1 teacher educators are defined as 'enquiring teacher educators'. They are characterised as being very critical professionals who question their own practices and their work as teacher educators. However, they do not engage in systematic research and do not possess the required knowledge. More specifically, individuals in this group lack methodological expertise and time to engage in research activities. In other words, they will need sufficient time and support to become teacher educator-researchers who fully fit the definition of a 'researcherly disposition'.

Type 2: 'The Well-Read Teacher Educator'

The second type in the typology concerns a teacher educator who strongly values research as a part of his/her occupation (affective aspect). A Type 2 teacher educator has developed the cognitive ability to conduct research throughout the years by gaining knowledge and understanding of research and is quite familiar with literature on the subject of teaching. However, a Type 2 teacher educator does not systematically engage in research about his/her teaching practices, and does not disseminate these findings to the broader community on teacher education. This is summarised in Table 3.

Eight of the participants can be described as Type 2 teacher educators. Even though they vary widely in age, years of experience and teaching area, they all have formal experience in research. Three kinds of experiences were found among these participants: previous experiences as a university researcher ($n = 3$), previous experiences with practitioner research in the context of a one-year postgraduate 'School Development' course ($n = 2$) and current experiences with 'research and development' in the teacher training institution ($n = 3$). The answers given by the Type 2 teacher educators to questions related to the cognitive aspect demonstrate that they all developed knowledge and understanding of research and learned about research methods. One of the interviewees with a previous research career at a university described this:

> I have worked as a research assistant at the university for seven years. This implies that I learned about literature in my subject (History). I also got the opportunity to learn about different research methods, as for instance, literature reviews. (Jacob)

This quote also illustrates that one has to be critical when assessing research experience, knowledge of research methods and the understanding of it. For instance, Jacob has developed a lot of knowledge regarding historical research, but this does not imply that his knowledge on researching teacher education can be taken for granted. Studying teacher education as a teacher educator often requires additional knowledge and experience.

One teacher educator clearly explains that he is still struggling with why he does not engage in research as part of his teaching practice next to his formal occupation of conducting research:

TABLE 3: *Teacher educators' researcherly disposition – Type 2: 'the well-read teacher educator'*

Type 2	
Cognitive dimension	✓
Behavioural dimension	
Affective dimension	✓

> Being in charge of Research&Development, my role is to promote research within our department and the wider institution. When they want to apply for research funding, I support the writing of their research proposals. However, and that may sound odd, I do not systematically study my teaching practices or try to improve them based on research results. (Mason)

These testimonies clearly indicate that they value research and most of them actively promote it among colleagues. During the interviews, they all illustrated that they regularly read research related to their field, and they can thus be described as 'smart' consumers of research (Loughran, 2014). However, a Type 2 teacher educator does not actively conduct research regarding his/her own practices (see Table 3). Several reasons for this lack are enumerated, of which lack of support and research culture in the institution are recognised by all teacher educators as the main factors:

> I think every teacher educator needs a research-oriented attitude. But conducting research as a teacher educator and reporting it, that is too time-intensive and we don't have time to do it. (Elizabeth)

Another respondent expanded on the lack of support and argued:

> Support is an essential aspect for teacher educators to sustain in researching their own practices. For instance, it is problematic to start a data collection when I have no access to scientific databases such as *Web of Science*. (Noah)

Another teacher addresses this, stating:

> Currently, I miss appreciation within my institution for teacher educators who conduct research. They do not have to praise me each day, but a pat on the back from time to time would be very motivating. (Jacob)

Type 2 teacher educators, or 'well-read teacher educators', often have experience as researchers or have worked in academic environments. These individuals thus have the potential to become teacher educator-researchers. A Type 2 teacher educator is described as a 'well-read teacher educator' because they do read research from time to time and they gained understanding of the research through a variety of research experiences. However, even though they value research as a part of their professional role, these teacher educators do not fully own a researcherly disposition as they are not sensitive to research opportunities in their daily practice.

Type 3: 'The Teacher Educator-Researcher'

The Type 3 teacher educator fully complies with our definition of having developed a researcherly disposition by encompassing a sensitivity to research opportunities, the actual ability to engage in research and an inclination towards research (see Table 4).

TABLE 4: Teacher educators' researcherly disposition – Type 3: 'the teacher educator-researcher'

Type 3	
Cognitive dimension	✓
Behavioural dimension	✓
Affective dimension	✓

A minority of the participants (4/20) are considered to be this type of teacher educator. A Type 3 teacher educator strongly values a research-oriented attitude towards his/her teaching practices. Moreover, these teacher educators recognise that being a teacher educator-researcher is a vital part of their role (affective aspect). As Olivia argues:

> The world has moved on. Your students change and if you do not dare to study your own practices and the practices of others … Then, teaching becomes very problematic. It is also very elevating on a personal level. Without doubt, research has to be part of every teacher educators' practice. (Olivia)

Additionally, Olivia further argues that 'at least a few members of the department should be engaged in research'. She explains this:

> Within our department, I work closely together with five other colleagues. Together we are, what is called, 'a good teacher educator'. In this respect, my weaknesses are covered with the strengths of other colleagues. (Olivia)

Emma, an experienced teacher educator, who also acts as the head of the department in one of the participating teacher education institutions, emphasises that every teacher educator needs at least a 'basic' disposition towards research, which is principally what has been described as 'an inclination towards research', 'the affective aspect' in our theoretical framework. Emma illustrates this as follows:

> Charlotte has recently started to work as a teacher educator. I do not think that we can expect her have gained a lot of experience. But, what I do believe is that every starting teacher educator has to be disposed towards becoming a teacher educator-researcher. Therefore, as Head of Department, I facilitate my staff to explore their role as researchers by offering them time and support to develop this role, and thus, to participate in professionalization courses. (Emma)

All of the Type 3 teacher educators have gained knowledge and understanding of research and research methods during formal (e.g. PhD study, research staff in a university) and less formal (e.g. engagement in professional learning communities, reading international research journals) experiences in research. They have developed the knowledge and understanding to become teacher educator-researchers. Emily, for instance, has worked as a researcher in a

university for six years and studied a subject that is still part of her daily practice: teacher education. Next to methodological expertise, she also learned about significant developments in the field of teacher education (i.e. important theoretical frameworks, innovative technologies in education). Emily says:

> I still value my experiences as staff in the university. I have gained expertise on teacher education during those years, which still serves as a fundamental part of my daily practice. (Emily)

On the other hand, Olivia has worked as a research assistant for seven years. Even though she did not finish her doctoral study, she still values her experiences as a researcher. This illustrates that even though she worked on a specific research topic which is no longer relevant to her current practice as a teacher educator, she still benefits from it on a methodological level. It is significant, however, that Olivia and Jacob have similar background profiles but are categorised as two different types of teacher educators, respectively as 'Type 3' and 'Type 2'. Indeed, both of them have developed subject-oriented research expertise (cf. History and English), but Olivia goes substantially further than does Jacob by systematically studying current research needs in her teaching practice and making them explicit by sharing the results with other teacher educator-researchers at international conferences.

As illustrated, the experiences of Olivia and Emily are developed during formal careers as researchers before starting careers as teacher educators. However, an informal way of becoming active in research is also possible, which Emma and Daniel demonstrate. They developed their expertise throughout the years by, for instance, engaging in research on teacher education, participating in professional learning communities and networking with academics in the field.

Finally, the Type 3 teacher educators' abilities to engage in research and their positive inclination towards research are also reflected in their practice. In other words, in their daily practice, these teacher educators are sensitive to occasions where a particular situation could be improved by systematically and intentionally studying it. Indeed, these participants' practices are characterised by regular participation in research activities, such as practitioner research or small-scale studies on their teaching subject. Moreover, Type 3 teacher educators are often involved in enquiry by reading international research journals. One participant explains:

> I read a lot of research literature related to my own teaching subject. Besides, I participate in professional learning communities to share interesting research literature and findings from my own research with other teacher educators. I also try to disseminate research findings in research articles and on conferences. (Daniel)

As Daniel illustrates, this dissemination often takes place by presenting at and attending (inter)national conferences for teacher education or by publishing

small-scale studies in professional journals. Emily, in addition, argues that attending conferences is highly stimulating for her work as a teacher educator.

The teacher educator-researchers' engagement in research (Type 3) is based on the moral belief that every teacher educator should be a researcher, and moreover is underpinned by their methodological and subject-specific expertise in teacher education. Type 3 teacher educators are those who continually recognise research needs in their practices and strive to keep themselves up to date on current developments in their field. Moreover, they disseminate their work in research journals and try to attend research conferences to contribute to the further establishment of the knowledge base on teacher education.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the development of a researcherly disposition by teacher educators is discussed as a promising direction to enhance teacher educators' professional development (Lunenberg, 2014; Vanassche, 2014). Despite its relevance for improving teacher educators' practices, this concept has been underexposed in literature. Teacher educators' researcherly disposition is presented as a concept focusing on the development of a teacher educator's role as both a 'teacher of teachers' and a 'researcher' (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Since a theoretical framework supported by empirical work on this topic is still lacking, this explorative study is a first attempt at providing clarity on the concept of teacher educators' researcherly disposition. As such, the findings of this study add to the body of literature in several ways.

First, a definition regarding teacher educators' researcherly disposition is presented. A teacher educator's researcherly disposition is broadly defined as the habit of mind to engage in research. This description is specified by explaining three components of a teacher educator's researcherly disposition: an affective aspect referring to an inclination or a felt tendency towards research; a cognitive aspect concerning the actual ability to engage in research; and a behavioural aspect involving a sensitivity to research opportunities. Together, this triad explains why some teacher educators become teacher educator-researchers and others do not. In this respect, a teacher educator-researcher is described as a teacher educator who engages in research on his or her teaching practices, modifies those practices and shares the research findings with the broader community in teacher education.

Second, based on the theoretical framework of researcherly disposition, a typology with three different types of teacher educators can be identified. These types are described as 'the enquiring teacher educator' (Type 1), 'the well-read teacher educator' (Type 2) and 'the teacher educator-researcher' (Type 3). The enquiring teacher educator is a teacher educator who has a 'basic' disposition towards research. This 'basic' disposition only involves the affective aspect, and refers to a clear recognition and appreciation of a teacher educator's role as a researcher. The well-read teacher educator values the role of researcher and has

developed knowledge and understanding of research during (previous) research experience. However, this group does not systematically detect occasions to fulfil this research role in their teaching practice. Finally, the teacher educator-researcher is a teacher educator who fully possesses a researcherly disposition as defined in the theoretical framework. Individuals in this group have the ability to engage in research and naturally conduct research regarding his/her teaching practices because he/she is convinced that engaging in research is the norm to become a good teacher educator.

Most teacher educators participating in this study could be categorised as 'enquiring teacher educators' and 'well-read teacher educators'. Only a small group is 'teacher educator-researchers'. This is not surprising, as research already indicated that most teacher educators do not identify themselves with their role as teacher educator-researchers (Murray and Male, 2005). Moreover, this typology indicates that, in line with previous research (Livingston, 2009; Murray, 2010), personal histories play an important role in defining a teacher educator's researcherly disposition. Indeed, their experiences with research mainly determined to what extent an individual was categorised as a 'Type 1' or a 'Type 2' teacher educator.

However, the study also stresses that a researcherly disposition can be developed by further supporting each of the three dimensions. In this respect, this study has important implications on the organisation of professional development programmes. First, the definition of 'researcherly disposition' can be used as a framework to determine what is required from teacher educators' who aim to become teacher educator-researchers. Second, the typology can be used as self-assessment tool for them to evaluate their own professional development needs as a teacher educator-researcher. Third, each type of teacher educator will have different professional development needs, implying that both the organisation of these programmes and the support during these programmes (Lunenberg *et al.*, 2014) should be adapted to meet each type's specific needs.

The present study has certain limitations. First, the relatively small sample of this exploratory study does not allow the results to be generalised to the broader group of teacher educators. The study does, however, provide a first and necessary step to provide insights into teacher educators' researcherly disposition. A quantitative study on this topic could further improve the typology as presented in the findings.

Second, only teacher educators who were interested in conducting research as a teacher educator participated in the study. This implies that a possible fourth type of teacher educators was not yet discovered in the present study. This fourth type could be those who have no inclination towards research, no sensitivity to research opportunities and no ability to engage in research. It could be hypothesised that a fair number of teacher educators will be categorised as this type, because previous research has shown that most do not perceive 'research' to be a part of their daily practices (Lunenberg *et al.*, 2014).

Third, the examination of the 'institutional context' on teacher educators' researcherly disposition is lacking within the scope of the current study, which mainly aimed at exploring the concept 'researcherly disposition'. However, studies (Lunenberg *et al*., 2014) indicated that the institutional context could be a significant factor in the evolving nature of teacher educators' professional development. Therefore, it would be interesting to conduct a follow-up case study with the present sample of teacher educators in order to assess the impact of institutional context and the impact of the professional development programme on their researcherly disposition.

Overall, this study illustrates that developing teacher educators' researcherly disposition requires a deep engagement from teacher educators on a cognitive, affective and behavioural level. It requires teacher educators to intentionally study their practice and make explicit the developed knowledge on a local and public level. Moreover, it demands methodological expertise, theoretical knowledge about teacher education and a deep commitment towards one's role as a teacher educator-researcher. In this respect, developing a researcherly disposition becomes a powerful tool in enhancing individual professional's knowledge about his or her own teaching, their students learning and their knowledge about teacher education.

6. REFERENCES

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