



TRANSIT project

ECTs transitioning into teaching from the research perspectives of the six partners.

Research on ECTs

- **Focus:** Early career teachers' (ECTs) transition from initial teacher education to professional practice.
- **Thematically:** What kinds of support and challenges do ECTs encounter as they enter the teaching profession?
- **Method:** Semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) with ECTs and/or experienced teachers (ETs), conducted as both individual and focus group interviews.
- **Analysis:** Thematic analysis or content analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022; Strauss & Corbin, 1998)
- **Note:** Findings are preliminary, the articles are currently under review (Faix, 2024; Merket et al. 2026a; Merket et al. 2026b)

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Summarizing and *preliminary* findings from the participating countries

Category	Theme	Description
Challenging perspectives	Too little practical experience	Reports of insufficient practice
Challenging perspectives	Collegial cooperation	Challenges in collaboration
Challenging perspectives	High responsibility	Heavy workload
Challenging perspectives	Increasing student diversity	Needs of diverse learners

Too little practical experiences

Both ECTs and ETs describe difficulties in linking theory to practice and express a need for more practical training. They report that university courses devote insufficient attention to key areas such as school–home collaboration and classroom management.

Example from Germany:

During my teacher education studies, we actually did very little when it came to inclusion and teaching in heterogeneous classrooms. There was that one large psychology lecture—(...) - but that was pretty much it (ECT 13).

Example from Norway:

For many say they read and read, and then they are thrown out as teachers. But there is not much in the education that they get to try out and experience... Such things stifle many newly graduated teachers. Especially the school-home collaboration, I think (ET 7).

Collegial cooperation

The ECTs describe it as challenging to adapt to the collegial environment at school. This includes expressing their views, understanding the school's organizational structures, and adjusting to the pace and routines of everyday work.

Example from Germany:

So what you should definitely do is network with your colleagues to get people on your side who can answer your questions or show you positive examples. And in some cases, they can also give you a sense of security. I think you have to show a lot of initiative to build that up. Because, of course – this may sound strange – it's not that people don't approach you, but I think that real collaboration and stuff like that only happens when you ask for it (ECT 5)

Example from Norway:

I really noticed this, when I came in as a new teacher, the colleagues I worked with... (...)... it was a bit like, “No, we usually read this text.” And then I asked, “But why? What's the goal? What are we supposed to learn from this?” “Which curriculum objectives does this text address, in your opinion?” And they could hardly answer me. I wasn't asking to test them or put them on the spot, I genuinely wanted to understand (ECT 2)

High responsibility

The ECTs and ETs describe it as challenging for ECTs to adjust to the high level of responsibility. This includes extensive administrative duties, high performance demands, a heavy workload, and substantial expectations from both colleagues and the wider school community.

An example from Germany:

I'm always thinking about work. In the evening, I'll be watching television and suddenly remember things I need to do the next day, or I'll quickly write an email. In the morning, I often sit down before I've had breakfast and start working (ECT 6).

An example from Norway:

As someone who has spent her entire career as a teacher, I understand that [name] and I, who sit in that office and work together, know that I don't know as much as she does. I don't have as much experience, and I have to learn this. But when I'm in the classroom and when I'm in front of the parents, I have the same curriculum, the same goals, the same expectations, and my job is the same. So, in a way, I'm expected to do as good a job as [colleague]. And it's hard (ECT 2).

Increasing student diversity

The increasing heterogeneity of pupils and the need to adapt teaching to each individual create additional challenges for ECTs as they enter the profession.

An example from Germany:

I notice it directly because the children are so needy and I'm left alone, even though I only have 23 children, which is a joke compared to most schools, I just can't do them justice because some of them are so relationship-intensive that you actually have to sit next to them and work with them so much (ECT 1).

Summarizing and *preliminary* findings – supportive perspectives

Category	Theme	Description
Supportive perspectives	Relevant experiences at university	Case-based discussions prepare ECTs
Supportive perspectives	Strong school structures	Teamwork and onboarding
Supportive perspectives	Strong mentoring practice	Proactive mentor support
Supportive perspectives	Developing inner confidence	Building autonomy and coping

Case-based teaching at the university

Emphasise on teaching practice in teacher education and case-based teaching at the university. More prepared for complex challenges when ECTs enter the profession.

An example from Norway:

Working with different cases... I feel we [colleagues] are still doing the type of discussion as we did during teacher education, but now it is for real (ECT 2).

Strong school structures

Both teacher education and the schools have supportive structures when ECTs enter the profession. For instance, included in teamwork among the teaching staff, supportive structures to inform the ECTs, social events, tacit knowledge etc.

An example from Germany:

The Circle of new staff members, that's cool as well. We do it a bit like collegial supervision. (.) That means each person, we do a round at the beginning, can say how the week was. And we can then use examples to discuss how this case can now be handled. I find that very helpful. And then the school also says that there should always be presentations on what the inclusion concept is and so on (ECT 7).

An example from Norway:

To be invited so that we get to know the social environment and the distinct way of communicating at the school (ECT 4)

Strong mentoring practice

Strong mentoring practice that support the ECTs during their induction years. Support by collegians and room for failure.

An example from Germany:

From the school's side, it was primarily the mentors who provided enormous support for me. They were really proactive, pointing out things like, 'Look, this student needs more support; you should pay special attention to them (ECT 5).'

An example from Norway:

... and it was good to have my mentor. I appreciated sharing an office with him, because it made it possible for me to turn around and say, 'Hi, what happens when I have written this and that and...' (ECT 4).'

Developing inner confidence

ECTs that uses their autonomy in their working experience. For instance, the ECTs that believe in themselves, that is not afraid to ask for help and adapts to the high work pace.

An example from Germany:

But I think what is relieving is that you don't feel any pressure anywhere here. (.) Nobody would blame me if I didn't have a key now. Or say in my first science lesson, I just don't know this place yet, please help me. Or the pupils often even know where lots of things are. (...) That would perhaps be better for a proper organisation, but emotionally it's not so stressful (ECT 7).

Two examples from Norway:

I now have to be my own mentor during my own tutoring (ECT 1)

... and that I said I had never experienced this, and they have to tell me about it (ECT 3)

Further questions for ECTs professional development

1. What did you find most surprising in the findings we have presented?
2. In your view, what is most important in supporting ECTs as they enter the profession?
3. In an ideal world, what kinds of support would you hope for?

References

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