

EDITORIAL



Teacher educators as teachers and as researchers

Teacher education has attracted many researchers over the years. It has also been subject to national and international debates about its goals and core features as well as issues of quality and effectiveness. Much has been written about ways of educating future teachers and the curriculum of initial teacher education in order to address the current and future needs of schools (Flores 2016). More recently, attention has been given to the work, identity and professional development of teacher educators. While there has been growing attention to teacher educators, existing literature points to divergent orientations and, to some extent, to lack of clarity regarding who they are, what they do, and how they develop professionally (Flores 2018; Ping, Schellings, and Beijaard 2018).

Teacher educators are both teachers and researchers, a hybrid position which can be challenging to fulfill. The literature highlights the tensions between teaching and research in relation to time, competence, institutional and external demands, and not least, self-fulfillment (e.g. Murray and Male 2005; Berry 2007; Loughran 2014; Kelchtermans, Smith & Vanderlinde, 2017).

This special issue aims to present recent international research on how teacher educators, institutions and policy makers perceive, act on, and experience the dual responsibility teacher educators are required to develop. The collection of articles in this special issue address the topic of teacher educators as teachers and researchers in various countries and contexts, namely Australia, Belgium, England, Ireland, Israel, Portugal, Norway and USA. Collectively the authors examine the work of teacher educators considering their core mission, their professional development opportunities and the demands and needs of their working contexts.

The first paper 'The Janus-Faced Teacher Educator', authored by Kari Smith, Norway, and Maria Assunção Flores, Portugal, sets the scene of this Special Issue by drawing on existing international literature about teacher educators and their professional development. The authors focus on two main components, namely teaching and research, and the rather strong tension between the two experienced by many teacher educators. They contend that teacher educators in most settings are Janus-faced due to the competing demands of excellence in both research and teaching. They argue that the quality of teaching should not be inferior to research and publications. The authors claim that sufficient resources need to be provided for assuring the quality of both teaching and research. Seen as complementary and not contradictory to each other, Smith and Flores conclude that teaching and research can merge in the face of a researching teacher educator. Examples of European, national and local initiatives of teacher educators' communities of practice at the various levels are presented.

In the second paper 'Once were teachers? Australian teacher education policy and shifting boundaries for teacher educators', Simone White, from Australia, looks at professional learning and boundary spanning of two mentor teachers as they navigated changes in their dualistic identities, roles and places of work as both teachers and school-based teacher educators. The author, focusing on the Australian context, discusses the emergence of 'hybrid' teacher educators who need to work across and between the boundaries of schools, their communities and universities. White analyses the boundaries in moving from teacher to university-based teacher educator, from school to university and from practitioner to scholar and researcher of practice. She concludes that teacher education boundaries are more fluid and thus more porous, and that different boundaries are crossed for those who 'once were teachers' but now take on the dualistic role of teacher and teacher educator.

In a similar vein, in the third paper 'Capturing the relations between teacher educators' opportunities for professional growth, work pressure, work related basic needs satisfaction, and teacher educators' researcherly disposition', by Hanne Tack and Ruben Vanderlinde, from Belgium, the focus is on working conditions and professional development opportunities of teacher educators in Flanders. Drawing upon Self-Determination Theory, the authors report on a large-scale study which looks at the connections between teacher educators' experienced work pressure and opportunities for professional growth, their work-related basic needs satisfaction (i.e. autonomy, competence and relatedness) and their researcherly disposition (i.e. being a smart consumer of research, being able to conduct research, conducting research and valuing research). The findings show that teacher educators' opportunities for growth as well as the experienced work pressure are significantly related to the satisfaction of teacher educators' basic psychological needs at work. Tack and Vanderlinde also found positive relations between the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs and teacher educators' researcherly disposition.

In the fourth paper 'Articulating, reclaiming and celebrating the professionalism of teacher educators in England', Eline Vanassche, Warren Kidd and Jean Murray, take us to the complex English context. They look at the effects ideological and policy changes in teacher education landscape since the early 80s have had on teacher educators. The authors argue that these changes have led to the marginalisation of the role of the university in teacher learning and, as a result, narrower and more instrumental forms of teacher education emerged. Vanassche, Kidd and Murray reason there is a need to re-state (and reinstate) the importance of higher education-based teacher educators, and to reclaim and celebrate their practices and the nature of the professionalism involved. They advocate the need to rethink teacher educator professionalism as what is enacted by teacher educators engaged in their professional activities.

The fifth paper, entitled 'Challenges for Irish Teacher Educators in Being Active Users and Producers of Research', by Ann MacPhail and Mary O'Sullivan, reports on empirical work conducted in Ireland aimed at examining current teacher educators' positioning in the Irish context as active users and producers of research through in-depth interviews with ten experienced teacher educators. Taking into consideration the bulk of curricular reforms and changes in higher education landscape, the authors examine the challenging contexts in which Irish teacher educators work. The authors found that the teacher educators were active, engaged and committed to preparing teachers for

contemporary schooling, but they also recognise their frustrations with local working conditions which reflected a level of freedom to follow their research interests, however, with limited support, recognition and research funding. In addition, MacPhail and O'Sullivan highlight that the participants recognised the importance of research informed-practice, however, struggled to satisfy the required level of teaching and at the same time to be research active.

In the sixth paper, 'Israeli Teacher Educators' Perceptions of their Professional Development Paths in Teaching, Research and Institutional Leadership', Ainat Guberman and Oded Mcdossi look at development paths of teacher educators in Israel, including teaching, research and institutional leadership. The authors present data from semi-structured interviews with 16 experienced, research-orientated teacher educators who work in various teacher education colleges in Israel. The authors found that research promotes their teaching and institutional leadership and that they struggle to find a balance between the three paths. Guberman and Mcdossi also state that support for career planning is not provided and that teacher educators' professional development is seen as a personal, rather than as a collective institutional endeavour.

In the final paper, 'Redesign in Teacher Education: The Roles of Teacher Educators', Frances Rust, from the USA, drawing on the framework of design theory relative to Dewey's powerful discussion of teacher education, examines current issues regarding the status of teacher education in the context of policy and practice in the United States. The author argues for the need to develop new approaches to teacher education that are driven by inquiry among teacher educators who focus on expanding understandings of partnership between universities and schools aimed at the preparation and support of teachers and of schools themselves.

Collectively, the seven papers in this special issue present diverse contexts, yet there seem to be similar challenges teacher educators meet across national borders. The tension between maintaining high quality teaching and an increased demand for being research active is described by several authors. Moreover, the global practice turn in teacher education places a large responsibility on teacher educators working in school as well as in higher education institutions. The purpose of the current issue is to draw attention to those who teach the teachers, teacher educators, who seem to a large extent to have been forgotten in the policy driven discussions about the structure and content of teacher education.

Disclosure statement

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