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Collaborative

Teacher Educator Professional Development in Europe: Different Voices, One Goal



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We

- developed initiatives to support the professional development of teacher educators nationally
- carried out research on the occupational group
- tried to speak out to influence our respective policy makers and governments
- worked on these issues in transnational contexts.

We are interested in the potential of teacher educators' learning across and within different European contexts.

International Forum for Teacher Educator Development (InFo-TED)

- Established at AERA 2013
- Norway, Netherlands, Belgium, England, extended with Scotland, Ireland, and with representatives from Israel, USA and Australia
- Mission: "*to bring together, exchange and promote research, policy and practice related to teacher educators' professional development so as to develop the professional identities and knowledge bases of those who prepare and support teachers as a means of advancing the state of teacher education in Europe and globally*".
- Meetings: twice a year and in between at conferences
- Activities: development conceptual model, conference presentations, development survey, conducting survey, writing papers, writing and submitting a funding proposal

For more information: <https://www.ntnu.edu/info-ted>

Teacher Educators' professional development

- 'linchpins in educational reforms' (Cochran-Smith, 2003)
- second order teaching (Murray and Male, 2005)
- pedagogy of teacher educators (Loughran, 2006)
- roles of teacher educators (Lunenberg, Dengerink, Korthagen, 2014): teacher of teachers, researcher (Tack & Vanderlinde, 2014), coach, curriculum developer, gatekeeper and broker.
- professional learning designs for various 'stages' of working as a teacher educator (Kosnik et al., 2011)
- 'multifaceted teacher educator' (Smith, 2011).

Also: Recognition of the need for professional development of teacher educators by policy makers (European Commission, 2013)

Teacher Educators' professional development in different national contexts

- Norway: research development of teacher educators (NAFOL), but less attention to knowledge of school practice
- Belgium (Flanders) and the Netherlands: national frames of reference, but only small-scale initiatives to further develop teacher educators' quality
- Norway, Belgium and the Netherlands: national governments increasingly taking on responsibility for professional developments activities
- England: fragmented system, responsibility of employing institutions, no government initiatives.



What InFo-Ted activities stimulated our professional learning and self-understanding?

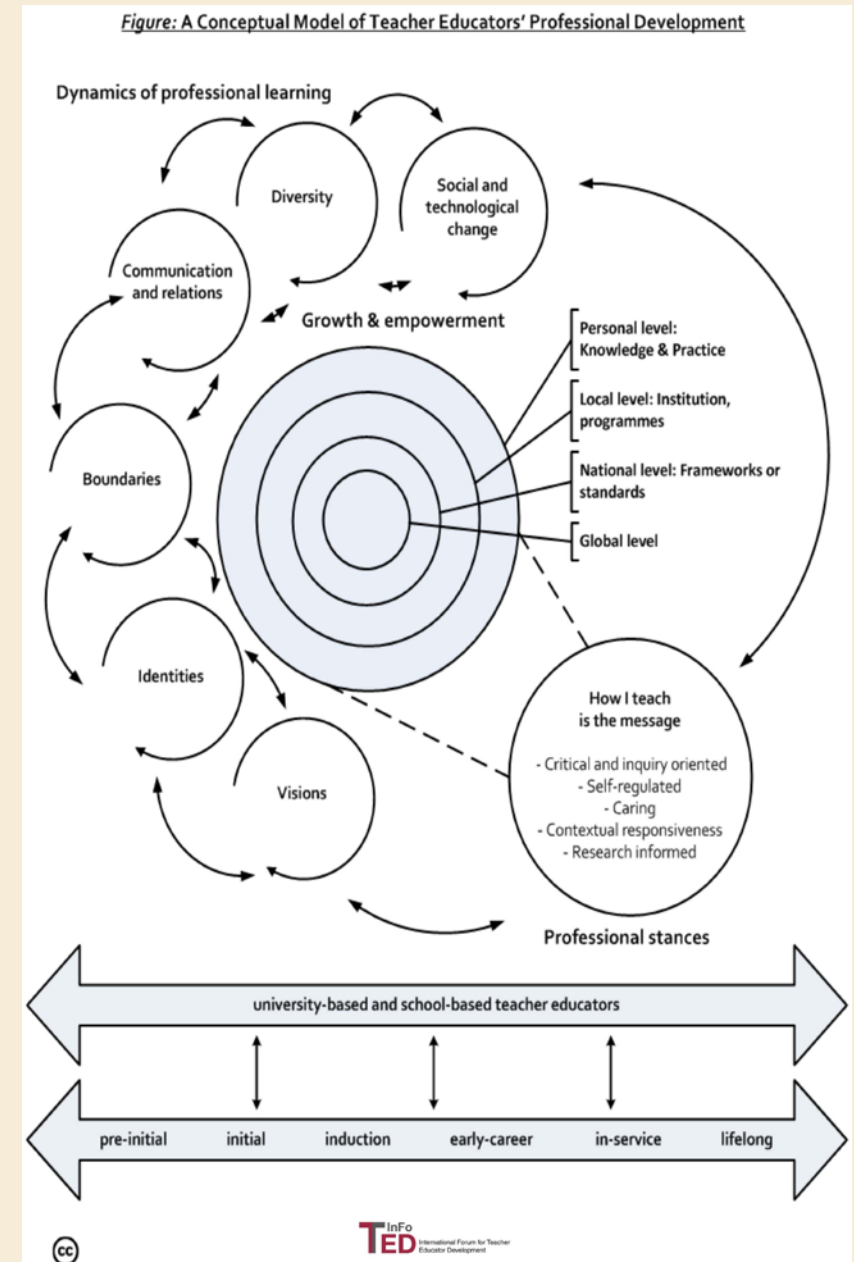
- Info-TED documents (discussion papers, minutes of InFo-TED meetings, conference presentations and publications by the group).
- Analysis: patterns of participation across the group during meetings: mapping the learning environment.
- Individual narratives (our personal learning when engaging in the group's activities, challenges we felt in supporting our teacher educator colleagues' professional development, factors influencing teacher educators' professional learning in each country).
- Analysis: one of the authors took the lead, focusing on issues that had evoked learning by the authors. Shared and discussed with the other authors, until agreement was reached.

Critical friends: Roundtable Discussion ECER, Porto 2014.

Results (1)

- Learning environment: non-hierarchical group structure, open discussions, respect for differences of opinion, all individuals contributing to debates, acknowledgment to limitations imposed by national contexts, challenge of deep rooted assumptions.
- Learning by developing a conceptual model: exploration of terms and definitions, but also go beneath these languages to values and beliefs to the policies which they encapsulated.

Ruben: 'moving from national projects and initiatives to European/international activities compels us to speak a shared language.'



Results (2)

- Learning by developing a survey: started from the InFo-TED model, infused by the group's knowledge of the literature, debates about the exact form of the questions, with the need '*to honour the different national voices involved*' (KS), taking into account nationally relevant terminology, specific ethics requirements, etc. Limitation: we could not define 'school-based teacher educators' across boundaries.

In sum:

Going beneath local language was an important learning processes for us all and we feel we can learn from this for supporting colleagues in our national contexts too.

Reciprocal effect of working in national as well as in transnational contexts: learning from each other's successes and pitfalls, explaining our national systems gave us a deeper insight into our own systems.

Conclusion

This study has helped us in our ongoing *process* of making sense of our experiences and how they impact our “selves” and help us *‘to develop our understanding of professional learning in complex and changing times when global imperatives have an increasing influence on the policies and practices that shape professional learning at the local level’* (Stevenson, 2015: 758).



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