Teacher Education Matters: Finnish Teacher Educators' Concerns, Beliefs, and Values

Introduction

In the early 2000s interest towards teacher educators and their professional development begun to increase globally. One of the first to raise this issue was Smith (2003), who spoke on behalf of this neglected area in the literature on teacher education. Since then, there have been an increasing number of articles, books and special issues on teacher educators globally, although Swennen & Bates (2010) along with Flores (2017; 2018) argue that there is still too little of such research. This article is about the concerns, values and beliefs of Finnish teacher educators. There has been relatively little research on Finnish teacher educators, especially from the viewpoint of entering this career, professional development during one's career, or possible obstacles or concerns at work. With this qualitative case study, we aim to contribute to this particular arena.

In the 1970s, elementary school teacher education became fully academic in Finland. With this change all teachers in Finland nowadays have a master's-level academic degree. The increase in the academic status of teacher educators took place gradually. Nowadays, practically the entire faculty holds doctoral degrees and the Finnish teacher education is characterized as research-based. (Tirri, 2014; Krokfors et al., 2011.) This enhanced academic status brought about an increase in research and often this research targets teacher education. Most of the teacher educators are qualified teachers and most of them also have experience in the field itself. The development from the seventies to the present has revolved around the increasing academic status of teacher educators. Continuing with this theme, according to Loughran (2014, 272), who refers to Davey (2013), the "academization" of teacher education has been important in shaping teacher education as a profession. Many teacher educators were once schoolteachers and the change from being a teacher to becoming a teacher educator can be challenging.

The findings of Murray and Male's (2005) study show that the majority of teacher educators took between two and three years to establish their new professional identities. They faced challenges in two key areas—developing a pedagogy for higher education-based initial teacher education work and becoming research active (Murray and Male, 2005). Loughran (2014, 272) emphasizes this issue in his discussion of difficulties of transition in teacher education, such as feelings of unease concerning changes in the role of teaching and the expectations of academia.

Inspired by the work of the International Forum for Teacher Educator Development (InFO-TED), as well as by Loughran (2014), we decided to investigate our own Faculty's teacher educators' professional development from a specific point of view, namely concerns, beliefs and values. Teacher educators' concerns were studied in Van der Klink, Kools, Avissar, White, & Sakata's (2017, 167) study, which drew on the work of Conway and Clark (2003), based on Fuller's (1969) concerns-based model. Loughran (2014) considers that Korthagen's Onion model of reflection (e.g. Korthagen 2004) illustrates well teacher educators' beliefs and values, which are attached according to Murphy and Mason (2006, cited in Löfström & Poom-Valikis, 2013, 105). Thus, the two research questions we posed for this study were:

1. What are the professional concerns that teacher educators experience?
2. What beliefs and values do teacher educators express in relation to their professional work?

Theoretical Background

Professional Development in TE

According to Smith (2010, 681), professional development is "an internal process in which professionals engage within a formal or informal framework. The process is rooted in critical self-analysis of professional practice". Changes in work-related beliefs and assumptions are essential for

professional development. Based on their broad review study, Lunenberg, Dengerink and Korthagen (2014) have suggested that eight factors affect the professional development of teacher educators. These eight factors Lunenberg et al. (2014) grouped under four categories, namely, *Context, Building on personal qualities of teacher educators, Support* and *Research.* By "Context" Lunenberg et al. (2014) refer to the existence of some kind of professional standards or a frame of reference that offers an understanding of the complex nature of teacher educators' work and serves as a knowledge base and trajectory of professional development. In the category "Building on personal qualities of teacher educators", Lunenberg et al. (2014) split their analysis into personal qualities and the recognition of gaps in prior knowledge and experience. Intrinsic motivation and such personal qualities as openness to new ideas, eagerness to learn, enjoyment in sharing, interest in technological development, study-oriented focus, and personal interest in the subject discipline and in students' contribution to the professional development of teacher educators. However, the learning of teacher educators is usually informal and takes place at work. The support of colleagues, especially the support of more experienced colleagues, plays a critical role in this learning process. Colleagues can also help to find the balance between research and teaching that is a central problem specially for beginning teacher educators. The research methodological help of experienced researchers is also very important for the professional development of teacher educators. Yet, not all teacher educators are interested in research or in theoretical argumentation about their work (see e.g., Meeus, Cools & Placklé, 2018; Griffiths, Thompson, and Hryniewicz 2010, Dengerink, Lunenberg and Kools, 2015), as was shown in Meeus et al.'s (2018) study. The most popular professional role of teacher educators was "teacher of teachers".

According to Loughran (2014, 277), "learning about the learning of teaching clearly requires thoughtful, focused, and meaningful professional development for teacher educators". Furthermore, he states that the development of teacher educators' knowledge of these issues is tied to an understanding of identity, and a recognition of the challenges and expectations along with "the place

of scholarship as an important marker of knowledge, skill, and ability in the academy" (Loughran, 2014, 272).

Concerns, Beliefs and Values

Many studies about teacher educators' induction phase have shown that the main concern in the beginning is 'to survive' and to find out what it means to be a teacher educator and to become engaged in the shift from teacher to second-order teacher (Murray & Harrison, 2008; Swennen & Van der Klink, 2009; Van Velzen et al, 2010; White, 2013; Murray & Male, 2005). The themes that concern teacher educators are at the heart of their professional development. Van der Klink, Kools, Avissar, White, & Sakata's (2017, 167) study drew on the work of Conway and Clark (2003), which was based on Fuller's (1969) concerns-based model. Van der Klink et al's (2017) study indicated the concerns that teacher educators had when they started their career and the main concerns at the time of the research interview. The participants in the study identified one of more concerns they had encountered 'back then' and now. The main concerns back then were: Becoming a teacher educator; Managing student group; Instruction of students; Getting used to the university/institute; Adequacy of their own knowledge; and Developing teaching materials. The main concerns at the time of the research interview were: Linking theory and practice; Empowering students; Reflection and one's own development; Preparing students for work as a teacher. The concerns that were mentioned 'then and now' were: Responsibility as teacher educator; Improving teacher education; Stimulating students; Maintaining quality in my teaching (Van der Klink et al, 2017). Previous research has also revealed that there are a number of inhibitors for the professional development of teacher educators. Several studies (e.g., van der Klink et al., 2017; Snoek, Swennen, and van der Klink, 2011) have shown that job stressors like lack of time, excessive workload and lack of resources are barriers to professional development. Lack of encouragement from managers and a negative working climate also negatively affect professional development. At the individual level, such things like fear of change and lack of

intrinsic motivation hinder professional development. Davey (2013, 129) describes these pressures as the ambivalences, ambiguities, contradictions, complexities and tensions that teacher educators face.

According to Richardson (1996), beliefs are understandings that are personally felt to be true, and they involve some cognitive content and some sort of affective loading toward that cognitive content– conscious or otherwise (Sanger, 2017, 340). Fives and Buehl (2012) suggest that beliefs serve as filters for interpretations, frames for defining problems, and guides or standards for action (478). Teachers' beliefs have a significant influence on their behaviour (Pajares, 1992) and they are a form of personal knowledge that contains implicit perspectives on learning, pupils' development, and the subject matter (Fives & Buehl, 2012; Kagan, 1992) According to Kagan (1992), teachers' beliefs appear to be relatively stable and resistant to change and they tend to be associated with a congruent style of teaching evident across classes and grade levels (p. 66). Furthermore, "beliefs have been described as primers for action (Mahlios, Massengill-Shaw, & Barry, 2010), i.e. they influence how individuals react to a situation, what choices they make, and what strategies they adopt" (Löfström & Poom-Valickis, 2013, 106). Richardson (2003) points out that the process of making held beliefs explicit is critical. Loughran, referring to Pajares' (1992) work, states that beliefs play a critical role in defining behaviour and organizing knowledge and information. They not only strongly influence perception but can be an unreliable guide to the nature of reality; this is important to acknowledge when discussing professional development. McKeon and Harrison (2010, 27) conclude, that "[t]eacher educator's own intentions in their teaching need to be clear to both themselves and their students so that what they do reflects the thinking and intentions that direct practice". Individuals are ready to act upon beliefs and hold on to them even if conflicting evidence is presented, because their values are attached to their beliefs (Murphy & Mason, 2006 cited in Löfström & Poom-Valikis, 2013, 105). Teaching is, and always has been, a moral activity (Hansen, 2001), and teacher education is no exception. Teacher education prepares future teachers whose responsibility is not only to teach

subject matter content, but also to morally educate children and adolescents. According to Willemse, Luneberg & Korthagen (2005), there is an evident gap in research and literature concerning the values of teacher educators or the moral aspect of teacher education. The values of teacher educators are significant: "teacher educators … must reflect on how best to promote the development of values in their student teachers, how to stimulate them to become participating citizens, and most of all, how to prepare them to fulfill their moral task in the schools where they work or will work" (Willemse et al., 2005, 208). Willemse et al.'s (2005) own research confirmed that preparing student teachers for moral education was implicit to teacher educators and their study "leads to the view that teacher education is more of a haphazard process than we would like to believe" (p.214). Furthermore, Willemse et al. (2005, 206) emphasize the importance of teacher educators being able to express their own values, but also help their students to develop their own values. The onion model of reflection, that was created by Korthangen and his research group (e.g. Korthagen 2004; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005; Hoekstra & Korthagen, 2011), contains beliefs and values enacted in the form of core reflection (Loughran, 2014, 279). The levels in this model move from the outer world towards the person's inner world, the first level being Environment; the second level Behaviour; the third level Competencies; the fourth level Beliefs; the fifth level Identity; and the final level Mission (Korthagen, 2004).

Context of the Study

Finnish TE & Teacher Educators

There are eight research-intensive universities providing teacher education in Finland. The university requirements state that all senior lecturers must have a PhD. However, there is still no official requirement that teacher educators must have a teacher's qualification, which in Finland means Teachers Pedagogical Studies (60 ECTS), although in practice most teacher educators have this

qualification. In the University of Helsinki there are six different teacher education programmes, namely early childhood education teacher, class teacher, home economics teacher, handicraft teacher, special education teacher and subject teacher education programmes.

Research Methods, Data and Analysis

This is a qualitative case study of a Faculty of Education in a Finnish research-intensive university. The interview guide was based on specific elements. The first element reported in this research is *concerns*, and it was inspired by van der Klink et al.'s study (2017), in which they asked their participants their concerns at the beginning of their career and at the present time. The second element reported in this paper was inspired by Korthagen's *onion model* of reflection, which Loughran (2014) discusses as part of teacher educators' professional development, illustrating their values and beliefs. We decided to use the questions (for example Vasalos & Korthagen, 2011, 79) as interview questions to find out what kind of values and beliefs these teacher educators express.

The participants in this study were 15 teacher educators from all of the teacher education programmes that exist in the faculty, who volunteered to be interviewed about their professional development. The average age of the interviewees was 46 years, and their average experience as a teacher educator was 11 years. Ten worked as university lecturers, two as postdoctoral researchers, two as professors, and one as a doctoral researcher, and they all hold doctoral degrees, except for the doctoral student. In order to protect the participants' anonymity, we have identified them as TE and a number, and we do not reveal what their own subject is when they are talking about it. In cases where specializations are common enough to have several teacher educators working on these particular issues, the specialization is specified.

The data comprises 15 semi-structured interviews, which were digitally recorded and transcribed. The interviews lasted approximately 56 minutes, varying between 34 minutes to 1 hour and 28

minutes. For this article we analysed questions related to the interviewees' concerns, beliefs and what is important to them, nine questions altogether (Appendix A).

The transcribed interview data was analysed inductively (e.g. Patton 2002). We used thematic analysis, following Braun & Clarke (2006), who explain the steps of the process in the following way: 1. Familiarizing yourself with your data; 2. Generating initial codes; 3. Searching for themes; 4. Reviewing themes; 5. Defining and naming themes; and 6. Producing the report (87). The results of our research questions are presented in this order. First, we present the results for the professional concerns the teacher educators experienced, and second matters that they consider to be important in their professional work.

The results

Professional concerns at the beginning and presently

The concerns at the beginning of the teacher educators' careers as well as presently were grouped into themes that emerged from the interviewees' discourse (Table 1). The same teacher educator might mention several different concerns, and all these concerns were categorized. Some stated that they had no particular concerns, but still mentioned some in the discussion. This explains why the number of concerns exceeds the number of participants.

[Table 1 here]

The main concerns at the beginning of the career mainly dealt with the new job. Most concerns were related to the tasks that were involved with the position as well as the stability of the work. In the following data extract, TE 10 is reflecting on her first years as a teacher educator, and the kind of concerns she had at that time. Her experience had an effect on her self-esteem as a teacher educator,

which was apparent to the students. However, there is also a tension between the different demands included in the work:

> Let's say, the first year I was quite confident, because I came from the field [practice], so I felt that I will survive this first year because I have so much experience, at that point 20 years of experience. So, somehow, the students accepted that "This teacher knows something about real life". But then after the first year some concern began to creep in, because I felt like I cannot ride with these experiences [forever], so how do I keep myself up to date, how do I find time to do research, and where do I get all that scientific knowledge? So the concern also related to time: Where do I find the time to do everything? *TE 10*

Many also mentioned the worry of not being competent enough, or they felt that they were too young and had only recently graduated. This can be characterized as a question of establishing authority. In this example a young novice teacher educator (TE 3) is remembering the insecurities she had when she first began her career:

> Am I sufficient enough professionally, I mean competent enough, though competent is a bad word because competence is often related to one's background education. I know that I was probably competent enough, even before I took my PhD., but had I mastered the pedagogical content knowledge extensively enough both the subject didactics as well as in general didactics? *TE 3*

In the quotations above there are two almost opposite concerns: teacher educator 10 was confident about teaching, but hesitated about academic competence, whereas teacher educator 3 is less confident with the students, but more confident with her knowledge.

The big institution meaning the Faculty of Education, was unfamiliar to some teacher educators. The Faculty had a large number of different kinds of employees, unfamiliar organization structures, and many buildings. Also the job description was unclear to some: they were not quite clear what was expected of them, nor did they know how they fitted into the bigger picture, as can be seen with TE 6:

> Probably this big house, I kind of had no idea what I was coming to when I began working here. … . And then I had some colleagues who told me straight to do this course and here you find this and that. But I still had a sort of feeling of amorphousness: What is connected to what? Where do these students come from? What is their background knowledge? How do my courses fit into their programme [laughter]. *TE 6:*

In the previous example the teacher educator felt challenged about her knowledge of the students. The Faculty of X has six different teacher education programmes and is a very large organization. On some courses teacher educators can encounter students from all or any of these programmes, and this makes the situation even more difficult.

At the time of the interview, the concerns were clearly more wide-ranging than at the beginning of the career. Most of the teacher educators were concerned with being too busy, having too heavy a workload, and too many demands. In the following examples TE 12, who is already a more senior educator, is concerned whether she would be able to keep up with all the rush and new things, whereas a junior faculty member (TE 3) is more concerned about being able to take care of herself and her personal life on account of the demands the work sets:

> This rush that we have and the changes all the time, and then, maybe, also a tiny fear that I might get stuck, the concern with whether I am capable enough to follow the new things that are happening. *TE 12*

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My concern is related to my own wellbeing … . The hours in our contract should be enough, but it depends on how you organize your work. … And personally, I have a small child and it is really important to me to make a clear distinction between work time and free time … . You need to take care of yourself [your well-being], and you might need to rearrange your schedule to make it work. *TE 3*

The university had at that time experienced significant changes due to political decisions and the following financial cutbacks two years previously, and these caused concern. TE 8 was very concerned about the changes that had taken place in the university sector due to political decisions. She compared her experience as a teacher student about ten years ago to today's education. At that moment the universities were demanding that students did not exceed their 300 European Credit Points that the MA degree has, and they could no longer choose many minor subjects. They had to study efficiently: this was both a requirement from the university, but also from the government, which provided money for the students. So, in other words, TE 8 was concerned that today's students did not have the freedom to explore a variety of interesting subjects or courses, but they had to follow a ready-made study path to the letter and graduate as soon as possible:

Where is teacher education heading? When I studied, I could take many minor subjects, and we were actually encouraged to do some side paths so we would get a degree that reflected our interests and all the minor subjects did not need to be directly related to employment opportunities. … But now things are quite different. I have to tell my new students not to study for more study points than is necessary for the BA degree. And I wonder, how do I give them advice about making choices that are significant to them,

and take some optional studies as well, but at the same time study very efficiently? TE 8

Following the same line, some teacher educators mentioned that they were concerned about the societal and political changes and the overall climate in Finland at that time. The Finnish government had decided on quite large financial reductions in the educational sector, including schools and universities, which caused severe consequences to the Faculty of Education. At the same time, the University decided to renew the curricula of all disciplines and degrees. Teacher educators were concerned with our programmes and curriculum as well as the plans about individual courses:

> Somehow I am also concerned with our class teacher programme that those things that we should go through in teacher education are sort of multiplying in the world. … The world is getting more complex and you need more skills, and at the moment we are honestly concerned if our education is enough to provide competence in meeting the language learners [immigrants]. … Our teaching resources are scarce. *TE 11*

In this example TE 11 is worried about the world getting more complicated than before, and whether teacher education is meeting the current school needs. The societal changes taking place throughout the world are also evident in Finland. Students need to study effectively and fast, but there is simultaneously a pressure to include new content in the courses due to our rapidly evolving world, but using the same amount of resources as before.

What beliefs and values do the teacher educators express?

The teacher educators responded to seven questions which were formulated based on the onion model of reflection. These questions illustrate what kind of things the teacher educators value, what kind of

beliefs they hold, and how they see their own identity and their identity as part of the community. Figure 1 illustrates the eight themes that emerged from the data. The size of the circle indicates the significance of the theme.

[Figure 1 here]

The mostly mentioned topic was students. For these teacher educators the students were seen as very important, and such issues as what was in the best interest of the students, what assignments should be selected for students, and what were the best possible or most beneficial learning experiences for students were raised. TE 2 explains in this extract, that in his courses he considered the goals of students.

TE 2: You have to consider what kind of teaching position the students are aiming at – what is their intention. … So you should know as background information where they plan to teach in the future.

In the following extract TE 3, on the other hand, feels very responsible for her students, and considers that the quality of education is of utmost importance. From these examples it can be deduced that the teacher educators considered both moral levels – the responsibility towards the students, but also a more practical level, the organizing and functions.

TE 3: My mission is that those students that we have granted a study place to, they need to get as good an education as possible. I am responsible to them, not really to anyone else. … So I kind of think that the student is a customer, and I have a responsibility; it

is part of my job to do it as well as I can. … So I guess my mission is that students are the priority.

The second biggest theme was research and research-based education. It was mentioned as being part of work, one's identity, as well as its importance in academic education. TE 1 defines his identity as being clearly linked to research, as can be seen in the following excerpt. Also in the extracts below, when asked about herself in the community, TE 4 describes herself through research. To her the high quality of research produced in the Faculty is important. TE 11 then again defines the education or the programme, justifying her response by arguing that because teacher education is part of higher education in Finland and belongs to research-intensive universities, it is also important that research is carried out.

> Interviewer: What kind of teacher educator's identity do you feel you have?
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> TE 1: It's research-based, so I think according to paradigm. It is how I understand things from socio-cultural view, so research is really central part of it [identity].
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> TE 4: I feel I am positive towards research, and I guess I'm also quite demanding regarding its quality. I want to take the research quality forward all the time.
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> TE 11: … This is in reality higher education and we do conduct research and we do have research-based teaching, and I think that is important.

The third largest theme was community and collaboration. It was viewed as important as it revealed how teacher educators viewed themselves as collaborators. In the following extract, TE 7 describes her teacher educator's identity as a collaborator, whereas TE 8 has a vision of good teacher education being a community where people encourage and support each other and are also interested in each other's work. Collaboration is also a very important topic in the Finnish National Core Curriculum and in practice in school work, and thus should be an integral element of teacher education.

> TE 7: I believe that first and foremost I as a teacher educator am a collaborator.
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> TE 8: My thought I guess is that good teacher education is where we [the Faculty] are in an encouraging way enthusiastic about each other's work, and hopefully the work community supports and encourages this.

The next theme is one's own subject or specialization, and it was mentioned as an identifying element. It was considered to be important to the teacher educators, to be something they felt they were competent in, and this competence was also regarded as a mission. TE 6 describes her two views on what is important to her: one is what she defines as the "official view", in other words, what would be the "right" answer to this question, and the other one is what she truly feels:

> TE 6: Well, the official explanation is probably that what should be important for me is the knowledge and understanding of my own field of specialty, so that I am able to pass that on, that I would be good in that and the students get the most recent research-based knowledge there is. They then have the capacity to implement the teaching of that subject. So, yes, kind of, but then our subject is somehow special or challenging, so that I have to work really hard through my own personality to make the students feel that this is actually really cool and fun, and try to pass on this enthusiasm, and that they can and are able to do this. So I think that trying to spread the enthusiasm … I think often,

that when they graduate, leave us and go into the field, that they don't remember these things, but if they have the feeling and the emotion that teaching this subject is actually all right, that I tried it, and I know I can do it, then I think this is in fact more important [than the official explanation].

In the next extract TE 12 describes her very clear mission, namely her own field of specialty, and the core of her work:

TE 12: Well, yes, I do have this mission [laughter], have had it for years, that I want to save young children in Finland, and the understanding of the significance of early childhood education. It has been my mission for so long, and I am so happy that finally it seems to be pushing through, that is, how much we can have an impact on people's lives when we are able to provide a good childhood for them. … So yes, that is my main mission, and how I try to work for it.

The teacher educators considered teacher education to be important work. They also clearly thought that what they do can and does make a difference, that teacher education does matter and it could have far-reaching effects, even changing the world, as can be seen from the following excerpts from TE 8 and TE 4.

TE 8: I think that it [teacher education] is significant work …

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TE 4: Of course I believe that this work is important. I also think that our work has an impact and we can change the world. Here, in just a few years, we are able to develop school and develop teaching and develop everything.

The teacher educators' own values often came up in their interviews. They described these values both implicitly and explicitly. They also often mentioned societal values that they considered to be core values in their professional work. Future teachers will encounter and learn to work with a diversity of students and this is also already evident in teacher education:

> TE 12: I am probably best at interaction, and understanding different people. A kind of equal way of seeing [people], I don't categorize. … I feel I have quite a strong background, that I am a humane person, and also that I see the societal point of view to teacher's work as being significant.
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> TE 1: … I am interested in … and also in my research societal values, social justice and criticality are present.

The theme of Interaction was also often mentioned in teacher educators' talk. They emphasized the importance of meeting the student, being present, having good social skills, and so on. In the following example, TE 15 tells directly the guiding rule he has when he is teaching: he wants to be present and available for the students:

> TE 15: My own understanding is that I am always present during the instruction. I am both mentally and physically present in these situations and when I have ongoing lessons, they start when they have been scheduled, and they finish, when they have been scheduled. … The time that is marked in the schedule for teaching, that time I am fully and totally available for the students.

TE 12 talks about how she thinks she is a role model to the students in how people are encountered, and she explicitly defines interaction and caring as important to her in her professional work, as can be seen from the following excerpt:

> TE 12: I guess it must be the interaction and being interactive and caring … and kind of having responsibility for my own actions, because I am model for the students how people are encountered [and treated]. And it is not only this theoretical stuff, but I really am a model for the students and through that I think how I meet people [and interact], and it has so much significance. And it is not coincidental, but instead after a lot of reflection you achieve this ability and skill to do that. You pass this on not by lecturing but by being and doing.

Teacher educators also talked about being enthusiastic about their own subject or their teaching, as TE 4 does in this next extract:

> TE 4: … also an enthusiasm about teaching and developing teaching, they are also important matters.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study investigated Finnish teacher educators' concerns, beliefs and values and was inspired especially by Van der Klink, et al. (2017), Loughran (2014), and Korthagen (2004). Teacher educators' main concerns in the beginning of their career dealt with the position, their task and their competence, whereas at the time of the interview the concerns dealt with too heavy workload and their own well-being as well as curricular and program level issues. We can sum up that the teacher educators' concerns dealt with personal, work-related, and contextual matters. The personal matters included their personal development as teacher educators, their own wellbeing, competence, and young age (cf. Van der Klink et al., 2017). The work-related matters dealt with the uncertain stability

of their position in the Faculty, unclear job descriptions, and too many demands. They also felt too busy and that their workload was heavy (cf. Czerniawski, Guberman, & MacPhail, 2017). The contextual matters include programmes, courses and the teacher education curriculum. Some interviewees felt that the Faculty was like a big and unfamiliar institution, and the changes in the university also raised concern.

The teacher educators described what is important to them, that is their beliefs and values. The main results show that the teacher educators appreciated mostly the students, research, community, and their own specialization. We can conclude that these important matters included firstly personal aspects, such as values and enthusiasm. Secondly important matters related to community, such as students, interaction and collaboration. Thirdly the important matters dealt with teacher education. To be a teacher educator was regarded as important work, including the importance of their own subject or specialty, but they also contemplated research and research-based teacher education. The results of this study showed clearly that students were the most frequently mentioned topic. The interviewees considered students to be the most important part of their work (cf. Meeus et al., 2018). Teacher educators were also concerned to see that students had the possibility for freedom and individual choices during their studies, and ready-made study paths were seen as a limiting element for interest-based studying. This also reflects teacher educators' own enthusiasm about their own subject and their teaching and their uneasiness about interest-based professionalism. Our previous study on teacher educators' views of research-based education (Krokfors et al., 2011) indicated that teacher educators appreciated the research-based nature of teacher education. In the current study, research-based education was mentioned as being part of work, of one's identity, as well as being an important part of academic education. It is clear that the "academization" of teacher education has influenced teacher education as a profession, development in one's profession, and also the idea and feeling of academic status as a university teacher educator. Some of the concerns the teacher educators expressed were related to the rapid pace of change in society. The curriculum cycle of teacher

education programmes is not as rapid and this causes difficulties in integrating all the themes into the programmes that should be included.

The results also indicate that a Finnish teacher educator is a professional with high work ethics. The pedagogical relationship between a teacher (educator) and a student is one aspect of the Ethical Principles for the Teaching Profession that have been published by the Trade Union of Education (Tirri & Laine, 2017, p. 768). The issues that exist between teacher educators and students contain an ethical aspect. Although the ethical role of the Finnish teacher educator has changed from being a religious and moral example towards being a principled professional who needs moral competence in pedagogical encounters (see Tirri, 2014), teacher educators still value being a role model to students.

Societal values were considered to be core values for teacher educators' professional work, although teacher educators' own values often came up in their interviews. The fact of that the world was becoming increasingly more complicated, along with the societal and political changes that Finnish society was confronting, were sources of worry to teacher educators. In Boyd & Harris's (2010) study new teacher educators were seen as seeking credibility in complex and confusing contexts. They also focused on students as their key audience, but were overwhelmed with work during the induction period. Our study found that the general atmosphere in society affects university politics, and some of the participants in this study were very concerned about the changes that have taken place in the university sector due to political decisions.

In the research, the authors have complied with the ethical principles of research in humanities and social sciences and behavioural sciences of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK), as well as the ethical principles of the Ethical Review Board of the Human and Social and Behavioural Sciences of University of Helsinki. The limitations of this research include little data, the limitations of generalizability, and the interview format. The relatively little data must be taken into account when making conclusions about these results. The entire faculty of teacher educators in

the University of Helsinki is approximately 250, which means that the participants in this research represent only 6% of the faculty. Larger data collection methods, such as a questionnaire, would provide an opportunity for many more views and voices to be expressed. These results must be considered to represent the teacher educators of one Finnish university. However, this study is part of a larger research project that aims to investigate Finnish teacher educators from multiple perspectives, using quantitative methods, and targeting different Finnish universities in order to form a more holistic view of teacher educators' professional development.

This study shows the importance of a good community; these teacher educators shared a vision of good teacher education as a community where students and staff alike encourage and support each other and are interested in each other's work. Given the challenges of being too busy in one's work, having too heavy a workload, having too many demands and unclear job descriptions, it is highly understandable that some professionals were not precisely clear about what was expected of them, especially at an early stage of their career, nor was it completely apparent how they fitted into the bigger picture (cf. e.g. Czerniawski et al., 2017; Snoek et al., 2011). The shared vision within a community might clarify to what extent teacher education is meeting the current needs of society and school reality. In earlier study (Krokfors et al, 2011) teacher educators' views on teacher education were investigated. One of the results of the present study was that teacher educators shared an understanding and vision on salient elements of teacher education, including the essential role of research. Based on these results and experiences of a common understanding, we are convinced that teacher educators are able and willing to seek a shared vision within a community and to that extent teacher education is meeting the current needs of society and the school reality. Overall, our study shows that Finnish teacher educators consider teacher education to be an important and challenging task.

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APPENDIX A. Interview guide

Concerns

1. What were your main concerns when you began your career as a teacher educator?

2. What are your main concerns at the moment in your work as a teacher educator?

Values and Beliefs

3. What is important to you in your work as a teacher educator? Why are they important?

4. Describe how you see this Faculty as a working environment and a community.

5. Describe yourself and your behaviour as a teacher educator in this environment.

6. What are you good or competent at as a teacher educator?

7. What kind of beliefs do you have related to your work as a teacher educator?

8. Describe yourself professionally. What kind of teacher educator's identity you have?

9. Do you have a specific mission in your work, or a mission you try to accomplish through your work?