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## The Role of Early Childhood Teachers in Finnish Policy Documents : Training Teachers for the Future?

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## **The Role of Early Childhood Teachers in Finnish Policy Documents - Training Teachers for the Future?**

Professor Heidi Harju-Luukkainen & Associate Professor Jonna Kangas

During the last few years all steering documents in Finland, on the field of early childhood education, have been renewed. This has had its effects on the practices on the field, but also on the teacher education. In this paper we explore, with the help of content analysis, three different policy documents that are steering the quality of teacher education in Finland. We examine the role that teachers are given in these documents from three categories. These categories are defined by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland and they describe the objectives for both pre-service and in-service training. As our theoretical frame we describe current policies and practice within the field of ECEC. We point out the responsibilities of different stakeholders and describe the structure of the Finnish early education system with qualification requirements. According to the results, recent policy documents highlight the current knowledge and role of teacher's but point out only occasionally towards needed future competencies.

### **1. Introduction to the Finnish ECEC system**

In Finland there are several policy documents steering the ECEC provision. At national level, ECEC is a responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the national expert agency for ECEC is the Finnish National Agency of Education. The Ministry of Education and Culture designs the acts and the Finnish National Agency of Education develops tools to put them into practice.

There are also international, national, and local policy documents governing early childhood education and care in Finland. On the international level, the guiding documents come from European Commission (1996), the United Nations (1989, 2006), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (1994). Further, the content of ECEC is guided by the national curriculum for early childhood education (ages 1-5; Finnish National Agency for Education 2018) and national curriculum for preschool education (age 6; Finnish National Agency for Education 2014). Naturally, also other Acts and policy documents are guiding the work in ECEC settings, but with a smaller impact regarding the everyday pedagogical work.

The Finnish early childhood education working teams are multi professional, consisting of professional with varying combination of qualifications. The teams consist of at least one teacher with an academic bachelor's degree and two assistant teachers with lower educational degrees. Further, the

law of early childhood education (Finnish law of early childhood education 540/2018) declares the child-teacher ratios. For a maximum of every four child under the age of three and for seven children over the age of three, there needs to be one teacher with a bachelor's degree. It is common practice that a team consisting of three staff members is in charge of a group of 21 three to five years olds or 12 one to two year old children.

Social sustainability is highlighted in the Finnish policy documents which creates equitable well-being and liveable communities in the future. Here especially accessibility, quality and affordability of each childhood education plays an important role (Garvis et al. 2019). One of the key principles of the ECEC system is therefore the universalism, meaning that everyone should have access to good-quality services (Paananen & al. 2018). In practise this means that when parents needs a ECEC placement for their child they contact the local municipality and within three months they get one. Therefore in Finland, every child (10 months to 6 year-olds) have a subjective right to participate in public ECEC (Finnish law of early childhood education, 540/2018). In 2015 68 percent of 4-years-olds, 76 percent of 5-years-olds and almost 100 percent of 6-year-olds participated in ECEC (Karila, Kosonen & Järvenkallas 2017; OECD 2015). These are much lower percentages compared for instance, to the other Nordic countries (Garvis et al. 2019) and to other OECD countries (2019), where the average is 87 percentage amongst 3-to 5-year olds.

## **2. The concept of Finnish Early childhood education**

Finnish ECEC pedagogy is described as systematic and goal-oriented activities based on multidisciplinary knowledge, particularly in the fields of educational sciences and early childhood education, that are professionally managed and implemented by professional personnel aiming to support children's well-being and learning by the National Curriculum Guidelines (2018). In addition, Finnish pedagogy of early childhood education is understood to be as a dynamic and holistic process of interaction, scaffolding and joint meaning making where the children together with teachers shape the culture of their society, its practices and values through active meaning making (Kangas & al. 2016; Kumpulainen 2018). For this kind of early childhood education solution teachers need to be high qualified professionals who are able to design, plan, implement, modify, document, evaluate and finally develop the education, their teaching, the interaction in the classroom and their professional skills. In Finland there are no readymade lesson plans, no text books or ready printed material for classes and no teachers' guidebooks for the daily education. Therefore, the National Core Curriculum for ECEC (Finnish National Agency for Education 2018, 31) define the role of teachers by underlining: "The preschool teacher has the overall responsibility for planning the activities for the group of children, the implementation of activities with a goal-oriented and systematic approach as well as the assessment and development of the activities." Teachers are expected to create the classes by paying attention to children's personal skills, competences and needs for learning. (Kangas & Brotherus 2017). In their everyday practices teachers observe children's development and skills,

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interact with children as individuals and as a group, design, implement and evaluate activities and children's learning, and finally reflect on their own professional skills, cultural routines of class and policy documents such as curriculums to develop the practical ECEC further (see Kangas et al. 2019; Karila and Kinos 2012).

The entire ECEC in Finland is built on a holistic view of children's growth, development, and learning, including pedagogical knowledge, phenomenon based (cross-curricular) knowledge, and pedagogical interaction and expertise (Finnish law of early childhood education 540/2018). Therefore, it can be said that Finnish early childhood education is planned to create the foundation for a child's lifelong learning, balanced growth and development, well-being and health (Education and Research 2011–2016, 2012).

The latest Finnish curriculum of ECEC was introduced in 2016 and updated in 2018. This document renewal can be seen as a part of a larger reform process of Finnish curriculums, but also of the entire education system, which took place between years 2014-2016 (Väljjarvi & Sulkunen 2016). During the process, for example the values of education and the greater goals, called transversal competencies were created and a path of ongoing learning from early education to higher education were created through these transversal competencies (More about the reform and the transversal competencies Kumpulainen 2018 and Niemi, Toom & Kallioniemi, 2016).

There are several concepts that are central for the Finnish ECEC. These are for instance the children's agency and possibilities to participation, children as members of the society and children's right to playful learning. In the latest Finnish early childhood education the promotion of children's agency and participation are seen an essential (Finnish National Agency for Education 2018; Kangas & al. 2016). In the whole process the view of children's competences and agency are underpinned by the understanding that children are not merely receivers of knowledge, but creators of meaningfulness and full members of the society. Teachers are challenged to implement pedagogical methods to support children to become active agents of their learning and to create shared learning experiences (Sairanen & al. 2019; Väljjarvi & Sulkunen 2016; Kangas & al. 2016). According to Sairanen et al. (2019) latest research, the Finnish teachers are not only delivering the curriculum but they are making their own pedagogical choices and designing the pedagogy so that the children's agency, learning materials and the context (subjects) were taken into account. In this process teachers were mentioned to have agency when designing and conducting the pedagogy (Sairanen & al. 2019). In the Finnish IEA Preprimary Study, when teachers of 4-year-olds were interviewed about their expectations of the children's learning and development in eight different areas, the results underlined that the three most important skills, in order of importance, were social competence, self-sufficiency, and language competence (Montie et al. 2006). In the Finnish educational context playful learning is a highly valued approach, where children's natural way of acting, exploring and understanding of the world is emphasised (see Kangas & al. 2019; Sintonen, Ohls, Kumpulainen, Lipponen 2015). In this approach

teachers play an important role in taking into account children's own initiative and further promoting these as a part of the joint meaning making process. Thus, imagination shapes these meaningful and productive learning processes where children's participation in the society and the world around them becomes evident (Thomas & Seely Brown 2011).

The role of parents in early education is also considered strong, and staff should practice open and dialogic education to emphasise parents' participation to the services. (Finnish National Agency for Education 2018; Uusimäki et al. 2019). It is however argued that teachers have a limited understanding of how to address people with different family, social and ethnic backgrounds (Layne & Dervin 2016) and proposed new reflectional models to support parents' participation (Lastikka & Lipponen 2016) including twice a year held discussion about the child's interest, strengths and competencies (Finnish law of early childhood education 540/2018).

### **3. ECEC teacher training in Finland**

The bachelor's degree, that is required of ECEC teachers, is a three-year degree earned from a university or from a university of applied sciences. The minimum requirement for a teacher is a bachelor's degree in education or in social sciences. Other personnel should have at least a vocational upper secondary qualification in the field of social welfare or health care.

The 1995 Act on Pedagogical Studies and Teacher Education (Asetus kasvatustieteellisen alan tutkinnoista ja opettajankoulutuksesta) defines which universities in Finland can educate teachers and, on a general level, the content requirements of each program. For example, the main goal of Finnish teacher training is to develop inquiry-oriented teachers (Jyrhämä and Maaranen 2012). In doing so, teachers will be able to combine both theoretical and practical knowledge and, based on this knowledge, form a practical but personal theory that is applicable to their classroom. While programs do conduct research in the field, in Finland being research-based also focuses on developing teaching candidates' pedagogical thinking and decision making, especially in regards to how to justify his/her decisions (see Kansanen 2006). Since 2007, prospective students have been required complete a written examination as part of their admittance process, adding to the competitiveness to enter the teacher training programs. This exam is administered by VAKAVA (Valtakunnallinen kasvatusalan valintayhteistyöverkosto), a cooperative network of teacher training programs, and provides a single application process to all member programs in Finland. Those students who are the most successful on the VAKAVA examination are then selected to continue in the application process. Since the VAKAVA is demanding, students in Finnish teacher training programs tend to be older than are those students in many other countries that also require entrance exams (see Hauschildt et al. 2015).

#### *3.1. Educating teachers for the future?*

Teacher education is constantly battling with a discrepancy. We are suppose to educate teachers for the future, but we do not know how the future looks like. We only have research based information of

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the moment at hand and the past. Therefore, educating teachers for the future needs continuous development from many instants in the policy chain of the education system. Also one of the important aspect of this work is to identify most likely challenges in the future that needs to be addressed with the help of teacher education. At the same time teacher education is teaching teachers for the future, since teachers with current education will be working for decades in the future.

In 2016 Finnish government founded a teacher education forum to guide and discuss the future needs of the teacher education in Finland. The founding document of the forum defines and predicts some of the existing and future challenges of teachers' profession and states the goals for teacher education itself as following:

*“Teacher’s work is knowledge intensive expert work, and demanding interactive work in changing contexts. The current challenges in a teacher’s work include e.g. increasing diversity of pupils/students and families, changing working contexts due to the availability and usage of knowledge and digitalisation, and learning focused emphasis in instruction. For this demanding work, a teacher needs versatile pedagogical skills and content knowledge, especially capabilities related to learning and instruction, interaction, well-being and school development. Teacher competence is the major factor influencing on student learning. The most important task of teacher education is to support learning to teach throughout the career. Finnish academic teacher education provides solid basis for a teacher’s work, although in-service teacher education requires significant developments. Teacher education and teacher educators are makers of future teachers, and thus, it is necessary to develop them in research-based manner. Here the national strategy for research on teacher education is crucial.” (Husu & Toom 2016, 5).*

Further Toom and Husu (2016) suggest, that in Finland teachers' autonomy and the opportunities teachers have to explore and innovate what works in their practice, is part of the accommodation process in the evolving Finnish Education System. Also that year, the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (2016) published a strategic policy document about refinements to teacher training in Finland on all levels. It defines future objectives for both pre-service and in-service training. The main objectives emphasise the need to provide perspective Finnish teachers with a wide basic knowledge, expertise and acting that creates innovations, and both individual and organisational expertise (see Fig. 1; Harju-Luukkainen et al. 2018.).



Figure 1. Objectives for future teacher competence in Finland (translated from Finnish; Ministry of Education and Culture 2016)

#### 4. Research question

During the latest years Finnish ECEC system has undergone a transformation regarding its guiding documents. In this study our aim is to take a closer look at these documents and the role that they give ECEC teachers. From the premises, we have formulated three research question. Our questions were 1) what are the areas of knowledge future teachers should have? 2) how are creativity and active agency stated in the descriptions of a future teachers' professional skills? and 3) how the teachers are understood to develop their skills in the future?

#### 5. Data

As data for this research we use four policy documents published by the different levels of the Finland ECEC system between years 2017-2019 (Table 2). The first document is called the roadmap for early childhood education 2030 (Karila, Kosonen & Järvenkallas 2017), published by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The second one is a document giving guidelines and recommendations for evaluating the quality of early childhood education and care published by the FECC (2018). The last document is published by Finnish Teacher Student Association describing the Quality Standards for Future Teacher Education (2019). All of these documents can be considered as documents describing

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the quality giving guidelines to experts in order to make decision regarding the future teacher education, teachers' duties, and teachers' job descriptions on several levels. They describe the teacher's job from a country perspective, municipal perspective, private/public sector perspective and also from university's perspective.

Table 1. Policy documents used in this research, publisher, year and the intended audience

Name	Publisher	Year	Audience	Online access
The roadmap for early childhood education 2030 (Karila, Kosonen & Järvenkallas 2017)	Ministry of Education and Culture	2017	Municipalities organising ECEC services, Teacher education programs in Universities	<a href="http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/80221/okm30.pdf">http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/80221/okm30.pdf</a>
Guidelines and recommendations for evaluating the quality of early childhood education and care	FINEEC - Finnish Education Evaluation Center*	2018	Municipalities organising ECEC services, Teacher education programs in Universities	<a href="https://karvi.fi/en/early-childhood-education/guidelines-and-recommendations-for-evaluating-the-quality-of-early-childhood-education-and-care/">https://karvi.fi/en/early-childhood-education/guidelines-and-recommendations-for-evaluating-the-quality-of-early-childhood-education-and-care/</a>
The Quality Standards for Future Teacher Education in Finland	Finnish teacher student association SOOL	2019	Teacher education programs at Universities	<a href="https://www.sool.fi/in-english/goals-for-teacher-education/">https://www.sool.fi/in-english/goals-for-teacher-education/</a>

\*) FEEC operates under the Finnish National Board of Education

## 6. Systematic content analysis as method

In this paper we use systematic content analysis. As our content analysis framework we use the latest policy document published by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (2016) describing the goals for all teacher training in Finland. It defines future objectives for both pre-service and in-service training on three levels. These three areas are 1) wide basic knowledge, 2) expertise and acting that creates innovations and 3) both individual and organisational expertise (see Figure 1). Our thematic content analysis was conducted on the basis of these three categories. Leedy and Omrod (2001, 155) describes content analysis as 'a detailed and systematic examination of the content of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes or biases'. Therefore in this study, the content is not steering the analysis, but the framework document from the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (2016) is. The documents were analysed by the research team, exploring any description connected to the three above mentioned areas. These three areas are described closer in the document by the Ministry of Education and culture (2016) as following: The first area of wide basic knowledge in education, teaching and learning requires teachers of the future to have a deep didactical competence, pedagogical expertise, understanding of values, social, and ethical questions in education, understanding about learning environments, and competence to predict future. The second theme of creative expertise and innovative agency consisted of items such as teachers' curriculum



knowledge, creativeness and curiosity to develop new innovations and solutions, as well as reflective and evaluative skills. The third area focused on individual development and organisational expertise and there are competencies such as development of operational and organisational culture, development of professional skills, and co-operational and networking skills and competencies.

The research team then did searchers for ‘chunks of meaning’ within the documents. There were in total 100 sentences identified across the documents considering teachers’ knowledge, skills and future roles. The identified material was then discussed and shared amongst the researchers to define their meaning under the thematic approaches from the document by the Ministry of Education and culture (2016) meanings were further divided in three categories ‘the areas of knowledge’, ‘creative and active agents’ and ‘developmental competence’ as explained above. These were then further divided into sub-categories: teacher’s role, values and future competencies.

Table 2. The analysis framework. Amount of identified sentences in each category and sub-category

	Total number of sentences found across three documents	Sub-categories		
		Teacher’s role(s)	Values of teaching	Future competencies
Teachers’ knowledge	42	22	16	4
Teachers as creative and active agents	34	19	9	6
Teachers’ life-long learning and organisational expertise	24	9	4	11
Mentions in total	100	50	29	21

According to Leedy and Omrod (2001) this type of an approach leads to highest level of objective analysis as the identification of material can be studied and discussed, allowing the quality examined to be mutually agreed upon. This kind of documentary research holds a critical position in the development of both social science and educational practice. When setting up policy documents the politician are not always familiar with different discourses having influence on education and teachers’ work. The policy document level and the day-to-day implementation may not always meet in the way the policy makers have aimed for (see Kangas & al. 2019). Research on document sources has particular applicability in educational sciences, as educational systems consistently produce excessive amounts of documentary data (Punch & Oancea 2014.)

## 7. Results

In the following section we describe our findings divided into the three categories. These three categories are highlighted as objectives for future teacher competency by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland (Ministry of Education and Culture 2016). During the analysis three sub-

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categories emerged. These were connected to a) teacher's role(s), values of teaching and future competencies (see Figure 1 closer). The content in these three sub-categories are described under each objective as following.

### 7.1. Knowledge areas of future teachers

First important are for future teacher's pre- and in-service training according to the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (2016) strategic policy document were teachers' wide basic knowledge. Within this category emerged mentions varied around **teachers' role** as the implementor of educational practices as well as a role model for the children. Teacher were described to have knowledge and skills for scaffolding children skills in socially, cognitive and artistic skills and be experts of wholistic teaching to provide transversal learning experiences. Pedagogical excellency was a key element: Teachers were considered as independent actors whose role was bring together curriculum, children's personal needs, parents wishes and merge all these using pedagogical expertise. Totally 25% of all the mentions in this category had to do with pedagogical expertise. Teacher's role was also to be capable of creating suitable learning environment and being expert of materials and methods, like in the quote from Finnish teacher student association SOOL (2019) "*Teacher education should use different methods and equipment diversely and teach the student how to use them pedagogically.*" Finally, the role of teacher was to scaffold children participation and belonging in the classroom through care and active listening, as the FINEEC - Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (2018) document states: "*teachers ensure that each child thrives in early childhood education and care. The children feel they are heard and valued just as they are.*"

**Values** were mentioned also within this category and teachers are expected to both understand the important role of childhood in human life, but also support children to join and participate in the society from very first years of their life. Teachers were also expected to be role models of sustainable and inclusive society for children and families like stated in The roadmap for early childhood education 2030 (Karila, Kosonen & Järvenkallas 2017) "*...the role of the teacher as a role model in teaching sustainable lifestyles.*"

However, the **future trends** and life-long-learning were rarely mentioned, but the future goals for teachers skills were set for environmental issues and the use of ITC like evident in following quotation from the the roadmap for early childhood education 2030 by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Karila, Kosonen & Järvenkallas 2017) "*Recently, issues such as ICT, early language learning and environmental education have emerged alongside these as areas requiring strong expertise.*"

## 7.2. Teachers as creative and active agents

Second important are for future teacher's pre- and in-service training according to the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (2016) strategic policy document was teacher's as creative and active agents. **Teacher's role** was seen in this category as following. The documents described teachers' agency and interaction skills as important and teachers were expected to be expert in multi-professional co-operation and interaction. The role of teachers in the agency theme was understood to be safe and responsible member of society who could create learning environments and atmosphere in schools warm and positive, and interaction with children but also with parents to be understood wide and holistic, like the document by the Finnish teacher student association SOOL (2019) mentions: *"Teacher education should include the opportunity to study different communication methods that support interaction and speech and alternative communication methods."*

Strong **values** were shaping the teachers' work in this category. Critical understanding of the curriculum together with reflective practices was mentioned in all the documents. Teachers' were expected to understand not only the curricula but also to be critical and shape the values of society to support children to become responsible human beings. This was states as following *"...will also help the teacher see what is essential in growing up and what ultimately are the educational goals, content and methods that can help the child in this process of growing up."* (Karila, Kosonen & Järvenkallas 2017). Further, the life-long-learning and organisational expertise were considering teachers' 'key role' in and their professional values about the changing the society. Teachers were expect to be more research oriented and more critical, like in the next mention from the the the roadmap for early childhood education 2030 pulished by the Ministry of Education on Culture (Karila, Kosonen & Järvenkallas, 2017): *"The rapid increase of the amount of knowledge and the growing research findings in the field of early childhood education require the knowledge processing skills of the teachers. They also involve a critical attitude to knowledge."*

In general the theme of creative and active agents teachers in Finland are expected to be the best experts of the society of multitude themes, topics and also provide excellent learning experiences to children. The statement of the Finnish teacher student association SOOL (2019) describes teachers' agency to cover pretty much every aspect in the society and a bit more **regarding future trends**:

*"Teacher education should give the student the skills to teach the following subjects related to being a societal actor:*

- *emotional skills and communication skills*
- *environment: combating climate change, sustainable development*
- *equality: equality education, language awareness and cultural diversity, democratic education, sex education, gender awareness, social justice*

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- *financial literacy: consumer and entrepreneurship education*
- *multiliteracy*”

### **7.3. Teachers’ life-long learning, individual and organisational expertise**

Third important are for future teacher’s pre- and in-service training according to the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (2016) strategic policy document was teacher’s both individual and organisational expertise including life-long learning. These competencies were strongly depending on both the **role** and the **values** of teachers. In general teachers were stated to need strong multi-professional networking skills as well as competence for assessment based personal development. Teacher’s role in a team of educators was described to be dualistic in the future. Teachers should both be aware and capable of critical evaluation towards the practices, the curriculum and the organisational culture. At the same time teachers should act as a leader for the other working staff like the FINEEC - Finnish Education Evaluation Center (2018) document mentions about both values and roles of the teachers “*[a teacher] is responsible for the goal-oriented and methodical leadership, evaluation and development of their units’ pedagogy and the staff’s opportunities for learning in their work.*”

In the sub-category **future goals and life-long-learning** were the majority of mentions. Three main areas were addressed considering development and future. Firstly the parents’ role in early childhood education should be strengthen. Secondly, the leadership skills (as mentioned also above) were mentioned and thirdly the teachers’ continuous learning skills and their own understanding of their role model of life-long learning as stated in the Finnish teacher student association SOOL’s document about The Quality Standards for Future Teacher Education in Finland (2019) “*Planning the teacher’s professional development should be started during teacher education.*”

## **8. Conclusion**

As described in this chapter the steering documents defining teacher training and early childhood education in Finland has been renewed during the latest years. In this study our aim was to take a closer look at three policy documents that are steering the quality regarding early childhood teacher education. These documents have an impact on individual teacher’s quality and further towards the quality of early childhood services in Finland. As a framework for our analysis we used a strategic policy document regarding teacher training in Finland published by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture (2016). It defines future objectives for both pre-service and in-service training divided into three categories. These are teachers’ wide basic knowledge, expertise, and acting that creates innovations and individual and organisational expertise. From the premises, we investigated the documents through three questions as following: 1) what are the areas of knowledge that the future

teachers should have? 2) How teachers' creativity and active agency is stated in the descriptions of these documents? and 3) How teachers are understood to develop their skills in the future? In the analysis three sub-categories emerged for each question. These were connected to teacher's role(s), values of teaching and future competencies (see Table 2 closer). Even though the strong conceptual base was one of the developmental areas in teacher profession, in fact statements about teachers didactical and subject base knowledge were rarely mentioned. A holistic idea of education through a phenomenon-based approach where substance knowledge of single subject is not anymore required and can be seen as a challenge to teachers' professional competence (Holmqvist 2019). However it can also be seen as an opening for a new educational culture where learning is not anymore about facts but social negotiations and skills to take other peoples conceptions into account and being able to interact and critically develop our society (Lonka 2018).

Our results suggest that teachers are given a large amount of different roles as well as values across the different documents. Teachers are asked to be '*more of everything*' now and in the future. For instance, more research oriented, more critical thinkers, better active agents, better knowledge processors, more digital, stronger multi-professional networkers, and to have a better competency for assessment based personal development (which is not standardised in Finnish educational model). How all of this achieved, is not stated. However, in global perspectives teachers have been reported to become tired and quit in their jobs all around the world. In for instance US, Sweden and in Finland big social movements organised by parents and teachers, making statements about better salaries and improving working conditions (see Allegretto 2019; YLE 2018) while teachers seems to be over exhausted for continuous demands.

According to our results the most mentions (of in total 100 mentions) were placed into *teacher's knowledge* (42 mentions) and *teachers as creative and active agents* (34 mentions) and least into the category of teacher's lifelong learning (22 mentions). Further in the sub-categories called *teacher's role* it was emphasised across the three documents mostly, with 50 mentions. However, least mentions were to be found in the teacher's future competencies. Our results suggest that today's role of teachers is quite well covered. For instance, according to Husu & Toom (2016) the current challenges in a teacher's work include e.g. increasing diversity of students and families, changing working contexts due to the availability and usage of knowledge and digitalisation, and learning focused emphasis in instruction. A challenge emerges when we try to imagine the future. In our study references towards the future and future competencies were made marginally. However the demands and requirements for the future education are stronger than ever before in history and education is seen to have a major role in the supporting the process of students' learning and socialisation into active citizens (See Kangas & al. 2016). As mentioned before one of the important aspects of this future work is to identify most likely challenges that needs on some level to be addressed with the help of teacher education. If we cannot imagine or identify these most likely challenges, it becomes difficult to educate teachers for tomorrow. It is also important that teachers' education and education

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policy in general is contributing actively to the discussion of the future and not only follows the demands of technology experts, politics or social consultant. As states by the Finnish teacher students' association SOOL (2019) our future teachers are already aware of the big changes and challenges in education. They have not remained silent but instead they are taking actively part in the national discussion. We state that in this national and international discussion Finnish teacher education across the country should be more active in contributing to the joint picture of the future teacher. However, with the existing teacher education in Finland and in any other part of the world, we are always educating teachers for the future. Teacher's will be working on the field with their current education for decades. Therefore the overall quality of the teacher education programs and in these different roles and values given to teachers becomes crucial elements of future quality. According to Husu & Toom (2016) in-service teacher education requires significant developments in Finland. This is alarming, since one important way to target today's teacher educational needs and possible future challenges are through in-service training.

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