

Transition From Teacher To Teacher Educator – Teacher Educator’s Perceptions

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to increase our knowledge about the transition from being a classroom teacher to becoming a teacher educator in a university-based teacher education program. The data collection consists of interviews with teachers from compulsory school who have some years of experience as teacher educators. In line with earlier results, the teacher educators felt comfortable with their previous teaching experience and sought credibility as teachers. However, in contrast to earlier studies they did not find the transition troublesome in general, even if they suggested improvements to the support offered. They all perceived themselves as engaged in their own learning, mainly through self-study and seminars rather than through research of their own. Their self-understanding is focused on being a teacher, and to a lesser degree is complemented with research interest or activity. The conclusion is that a group of teacher educators may not develop an expanded self-understanding that includes research. Neither this study nor earlier studies show that sufficient time is devoted during the recruitment process or in-service training of teacher educators to discussing the balance between teaching and research.

Keywords: Higher education, teacher educators, transition, professional development, self-understanding.

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of the paper is to increase our knowledge about the transition from being a classroom teacher to becoming a teacher educator in a university-based initial teacher education program. Just as teachers in different school forms have an induction period (which varies between education systems, but lasts about one year in Sweden with mentoring and less workload) when beginning their job, teachers in higher education go through a beginner’s process [1-3].

This study contributes to a field where previous studies have been carried out but a need for further investigation remains [4-6]. The overarching question dealt with here concerns how classroom teachers perceive their new work as teachers in higher education (hereafter HE), in this case when beginning to teach in a teacher education (hereafter TE) program. The main focus is on their perceptions of how they are socialized into the work and how their professional self-understanding is maintained or changed. Self-understanding is here understood as building a professional identity. Summarizing earlier research, Bukor [7] has found that identity is made up of interconnected parts: knowledge, beliefs, emotions and

professional development. Professional identity has been described as a “continuing site of struggle” [8] and the teacher-educator identity as always changing within a socio-cultural power relationship comprising several contexts [5]. The construction of professional identity could also be perceived as affected by circumstances outside the workplace, including a person’s own emotional and cognitive features and personal life [7]. Professional identity including self-understanding is hereafter understood as a combination of a person’s own and the institutional framework’s perceptions of the knowledge and skills appropriate for a teacher educator and how such knowledge and skills can or should be a basis for the re-construction of identity. As Dinkelman [5] suggests, a teacher educator identity is both claimed and given, and the teacher educator contributes to its construction by means of his or her own agency.

The article continues by discussing earlier studies, after which the method for data collection is presented, followed by the findings. It ends with a discussion and conclusion.

Earlier Studies

Earlier studies have found similar challenges for new teacher educators (hereafter NTEs), but also differences. A change in self-understanding can occur irrespective of whether the shift is from classroom teaching to university teaching or to working with development among teachers in schools. Leading such a development can also be described as teacher education [9]. The change is a process and, according to Williams Ritter and Bullock [10], is influenced by the teacher's own biography, institutional contexts, and development of a personal pedagogy of teacher education.

Prior knowledge and teaching skills can be used, but they are not enough. The NTEs have not found it possible to transfer their prior pedagogical knowledge directly to the TE context [11, 3]. Also, references to earlier experiences are met with mixed feelings by colleagues, who might refer to NTEs as "schoolies" [4]. The transition can be stressful and experienced by NTEs in terms of their being "deskilled" [1]. From having high status in schools, they can feel like they have to start over from the beginning [12].

The induction process when becoming a teacher educator can be perceived as a slow and uncertain process. Most NTEs think that the introduction is inconsistent, and that the support is inadequate. New skills or further development of prior skills are needed concerning how to construct lectures, pace seminars and work with discussion-based learning. The NTEs must also develop skills in lecturing for large groups. As Loughran [13] points out, the predominant model of lectures in TE is driven by a cost structure that leads to large groups, while school-based TE is conducted on an individual level or in smaller groups.

When a comparative study was carried out by van Velzen, van der Klink, Swennen and Yaffe [3] they found that NTEs in different countries brought up similar issues concerning organizational induction and professional induction. Most received some sort of organizational introduction, either formally or from colleagues. Some were also offered courses and workshops, but these were directed at practical skills, such as using information and computer technology, and were not designed for NTEs. Their own experience as teachers was their main strength in their work, according to the respondents, but it was not easy to transfer their skills and knowledge directly to TE. Some were assigned mentors, but how successfully the mentoring functioned depended upon the particular relationship. All respondents encountered challenges in their work with students, but they also handled these challenges with their own knowledge and skills and by interacting with colleagues. Some had a chance to discuss and reflect together with colleagues and found that useful. Neither the organizational nor the professional induction was carried out in a satisfactory

way. It is also noteworthy that few NTEs were expected to carry out research or did so.

When Boyd and Harris [14] studied teachers' transition to being teachers in TE they also studied how the lecturers built their professional identities. They found that tensions could be found between the HE institution, the professional field, the teacher education department and the educational partnerships with the schools where they worked. Documents from the institution show that there is a strategy for professional development concerning teaching, but not so much for research activities. There is also a tension between the institution's interest in formal professional education and its lack of clarity regarding non-formal support. The line managers are positive to organizational knowledge and development of teaching, but place less expectations on the NTEs to do research, which is perceived as an individual interest. First of all, NTEs seek to enter their new role using their knowledge. They focus on students and teaching and maintain their identity as "teachers". NTEs carried out what Boyd and Harris (*ibid*) call "teaching transfer". This means that the NTEs made use of their prior experience, knowledge and skills from school-based teaching in their new role. In the reconstruction of pedagogy, the NTEs found that, although they were now teaching adults, they possessed skills that could still be used. Despite being "good teachers", there was one aspect of the work where the NTEs were not able to rely on earlier skills, namely the assessment process. Assessment and marking in HE were perceived as knowledge and skills they needed to develop. In this case they were offered workshops, but only on a few occasions. The NTEs devoted considerable time to preparing for teaching, but Boyd and Harris noted references to handbooks on teaching more than to research.

As classroom teachers, NTEs are close to colleagues and the headmaster. In academic work they can feel isolated and find it hard to meet people to share ideas with. Some NTEs miss working in teams with colleagues in the same situation. Often NTEs are assigned to a certain course and get a course plan, but find it hard to understand where within the field of TE the course is situated. On the other hand, some receive support from colleagues and their free time and autonomy soon change into a heavy workload. It also takes some time to understand the institutional structures, especially because the academic administration is no longer close by, as in schools [15].

In a context where student evaluations of courses and teachers are becoming more important, the students' expectations about teacher educators can affect promotion prospects. In addition to the actual teaching, the NTEs also must adapt to the research culture of HE [15]. Insight into new research can have more of an effect on getting a permanent position or a promotion than teaching does. Teacher educators are

expected to do well in evaluations concerning research, and not only on an individual level. They will be engaged in the evaluation of the department and the university itself [16]. Their loyalty should not only be with the students, but also with the university. This can be troublesome, as they may perceive that their expertise and credibility are mostly based on their experience as professional teachers [16]. Such a transfer of loyalty along with, for example, getting more involved in research may lead to their not getting the work assignment in which they are most interested, namely encountering the student teachers [16].

When NTEs enter HE they go from teaching children to teaching adults. Martinez [15] argues that NTEs face new expectations, for example because mature adults pay tuition, and their professional relationship is to the students (not parents). Most NTEs are not trained to handle this context and must develop pedagogical skills for teaching adults.

Expectations on teacher educators of today, however, include professional experience, subject knowledge and research. In addition, there is an increasing administrative burden. This expectation includes both those who are based in HE and those based in schools [17, 18]. Willemse and Boei [19] argue that research in TE is important for professional development, improving actual practice, improving the curriculum of TE, the preparation of new teachers and contributing to their body of knowledge. Teacher educators have to be both users and producers of knowledge [17]. One important reason for this is that the teacher educators' own experience may effect their choices regarding research, causing them, for instance, to choose certain types of research, or giving the student teachers a narrow idea of what research comprises. When expected qualifications are raised in TE programs, such as requiring a master's degree for all school forms, then the necessary qualifications for teacher educators can also be raised, for example having a PhD. Important as this may be for academic credibility, Smith [17] raises the question of whether this will distance TE from the reality of schools. However the interest in research can vary among teacher educators [12]. From both an individual and an institutional perspective, Dinkelman [5] asks whether it is realistic that teacher educators should spend a large proportion of their time researching TE rather than actually teaching it.

The importance of the academic perspective can become a part of a discussion on whether TE should be school or university based. In addition there are a variety of fast-tracks to teaching [5, 6]. By focusing less on acquiring academic credibility, TE can shift to providing job training to candidates rather than instilling in them a professional identity and the ability to participate in development of the field [20]. Depending on the university structure, the NTEs may

work in a context where there is a divide between teaching and research, or where there are higher expectations that they will perform research [12]. Even though this latter study concerns teacher educators at university, there is a need to include school-based teacher educators in research, to expand their understanding of the teacher educator role [9]. A design for development for teacher educators does not have to start from a deficit approach; instead the research can be based on their experience – the theory they use in practice. Teacher educators can develop their professionalism by knowing more about students' learning, their own teaching and teacher education in general [21]. Professionalism is not limited to the classroom and teaching subject, as this can lead to a focus on compliance with curriculum and steering directives and getting good results on assessments. It also includes having the agency to discuss policy and educational goals [22].

In summary, NTEs most often rely on their earlier credibility as good schoolteachers who focus on the students, instead of emphasizing getting academic credibility. There is an organizational and professional introduction, but according to the NTEs it is not always adequate. A TE workplace context creates, perhaps unintentionally, a situation where the teacher educators cling to their self-understanding and credibility as teachers instead of seeking to be academics or to combine the two.

Data Collection

To increase our knowledge of what it means to become a teacher in TE, a set of interviews was carried out. The experiences among teacher educators is becoming more and more varied. Some start as university teacher educators when they have their doctorates; others can be based solely in schools. In between, teacher educators can be found in both universities and schools and have different academic backgrounds [12, 6, 21]. The method of selecting teachers, was based on certain criteria. The criteria were that they should have a teaching degree; be lecturers, not doctoral students; and have been working for some time at the university, but not so long that they had "forgotten" what it was like to start out as a teacher in TE. I started by asking one colleague and then the colleague suggested another, a form of snow-ball selection [23, 24] until additional colleagues agreed to participate.

In total, four lecturers were interviewed from the same subject area. They are all working as lecturers in a university-based TE program. All were female, two of whom were in their sixties and two in their forties. All had an initial teacher education degree as primary school teachers, but because of various reforms, the contents of their training and their qualification to teach various subjects and in different school forms varied. The two women in their sixties had a degree where an

early teaching certificate for primary school qualified the teachers to teach pupils between seven and nine years of age in all subjects in that school form. The two teachers in their forties may teach preschool class, ages seven to nine in all subjects, and up to age 13 in subjects within their subject profile. The teachers in this study chose mainly to teach students aged seven to nine years.

The teachers in their sixties had taught for more than 30 years in primary school and had about ten years of experience as teacher educators. The teachers in their forties had taught for almost 20 years in primary school and had three to five years of experience as teacher educators. All of them had been supervisors of student teachers before beginning to work in TE.

Before the interview all informants were informed about the research context for the interview, that participation was voluntary, and that it would not be possible to trace answers to a specific person, all in accordance with standard ethics guidelines [25].

The in-depth, individual interviews were semi-structured and based on a similar framework. The interview guide was semi-structured to make it possible to ask follow-up questions. The questions concerned background factors such as gender, age, prior education and work before HE; their transition to HE and how the socialization into the work functioned; and how their self-understanding has been kept or changed. In summary the following themes were created from the beginning: background, socialization and self-understanding.

The interview guide is one of several limitations of the study. The guide allowed the respondents to talk freely, but it also framed the conversation around the code words transition, socialization and self-understanding. As earlier studies have shown, the respondents might have talked about many other aspects if only a hint had been given, or if they only had been asked an initial question about the transition to TE. Another limitation is that only one interview was carried out with each person. A follow-up interview could have revealed additional information and perceptions. In addition, interviewing colleagues can in itself create a limitation, as the colleagues may not speak freely.

The interviews were all conducted face to face at the university, either in the participant's or the researcher's office. They lasted about one and a half hours and were recorded. In addition, notes were taken. Three recordings were transcribed verbatim, while due to technical problems one recording was not possible to transcribe and only the notes were used. This was a limitation, as the notes were not as detailed as the transcriptions.

The transcripts with answers from the respondents were read several times to get an overview of the answers. A second step was to find similarities and differences [26]. This reading resulted in the finding of meaningful central aspects. The initial themes, created at the outset (background, socialization and self-understanding) were changed and supplemented. Instead of background, the first theme came to comprise the person's main motive for applying and looking for change. Instead of just socialization, the second theme was expanded to include certain important aspects of the socialization, like new routines, putting student teachers at the center, pedagogical challenges and legal issues. Lastly, the theme of self-understanding was changed to "still being a teacher" and was complemented by continuous development and advice to newcomers. From the findings and earlier research it was possible to draw the conclusion that the teacher educators talked about themselves as teachers and teacher educators, and not as academics carrying out research. The balance between teaching and moving ahead into research leaned towards teaching.

Findings

Looking for Change

The respondents entered TE in different ways, but their reasons for applying to work in TE were similar in one respect, namely that they all wanted a change. One way in was having good contact with the practicum team at the university, and all of them had previously worked as school mentors within TE. They all had also participated in further studies of their own. Thus they had experience of student teachers and had developed their own knowledge and skills.

Three of them had taken part in ongoing education to become teachers for pupils with special needs, which leads to a master's degree. When returning to school after receiving the special-needs degree, the respondents worked in this area, but after some time they felt that they wanted a further change. The tempo is slow when working with smaller groups, and sometimes the possibilities for change were limited. Working in a TE program seemed to offer them an opportunity to take part in development activities. Job openings were announced, they applied and were hired. For the two respondents with longer experience of TE, no master's degree was required when they applied, but for the two others, a master's degree was required.

New Routines

All respondents went through a form of introduction to their work, a combination of organizational and professional introduction. One part concerned general information about routines, the other part concerned general information from colleagues about different courses and pedagogical perspectives in the course. The respondents gave examples of how they perceived the introduction. One comment was that it

was disappointing that the head of the department did not check whether there was a need for support. On the other hand there was a shorter introduction course about procedures. A document called *Guidelines for Course Instructors* can be found on the web, but the trick is to know that it exists. A perception was that there was too short introduction to organizational and pedagogical issues for their new role; instead the respondents were expected to “manage on their own”.

In HE they got their own office, which was both positive and negative. To be able to sit and read without being constantly interrupted (by pupils) is positive, but when it causes a feeling of isolation it is negative. In compulsory school (children have to participate from year 7-16 in Sweden), teachers sometimes met every morning and afternoon to keep each other up to date. Even though there is teamwork, one must personally take the initiative to look for people to have a dialogue with. A teacher educator must do a lot of planning, and this is often done alone. The usual talk among teachers and the teaching team during breaks in compulsory school is not built into the HE system. A teacher educator has to feel comfortable with individual planning.

Professional knowledge could also be questioned. Some colleagues in TE were not always supportive in the beginning. A typical comment could be “What are you doing here?” (being a female, primary school teacher), and remarks could be made about methods used, such as that they were more suitable for preschool activities than HE. If the NTE is too interested and asks many questions, there could be comments asking why a lecturer should such an interest in different areas (implying that lecturers should limit themselves).

NTEs can encounter similar vocabulary to that in “school” but with a different meaning. In primary school there is a national curriculum and course plans. These steering documents are not altered very often. In HE there are learning goals for TE on a national level, but course plans and study guides are written by course teachers. They can, and should, be altered more often in response, for example, to students’ course evaluations. Working in TE means that NTEs have to change their perception of guidance documents and be prepared to create some themselves. This can be perceived as a challenge, but also as an opportunity for development.

They all became course teachers and very soon were responsible for courses. Colleagues helped them, but there was no other formal introduction to the role of course leader or being in charge of a course. Even so, they all found that their colleagues were supportive and the administrators took care of them as beginners and presented some of the administrative procedures. All respondents came during a time when TE was

undergoing reform. Because of the changes, extra time was allocated for planning together.

Putting Student Teachers at the Center

All respondents had the perception that their previous experience as teachers in compulsory school was useful in TE. In particular they emphasized that just as the child is of central importance in compulsory school, the student teacher is central in TE. Working with children is not the same as working with adults, but there are some similarities. Just like schoolchildren, the student teachers want to be acknowledged, feel safe and be able to assert themselves.

Because the NTEs already had supervised and participated in seminar groups, they were already familiar with talking about didactics or participating in seminars. What was new to them was instead the lecturing role. In TE they are no longer assigned to a certain group for the whole day over the course of several years. Instead they meet small or very large groups, for part of the day, and may or may not encounter the groups in other course during the TE program.

Especially at the beginning the respondents were eager to read literature about subject didactics and general didactics. In some cases the NTEs knew that a certain method or way of working was supportive for the pupils, but by reading new literature they encountered theories and concepts that gave them a deeper understanding of why they were supportive. Their practical experience was acknowledged.

A comment that came up is that even though there are differences between working in TE and in school, the encounter between teacher and child or adult students is not so different. Both children and adults should be treated with respect and listened to. The adult students are not that independent; they need the course teachers more than might be expected.

Pedagogical Challenges

The respondents also gave examples of some pedagogical challenges. Lecturing in large groups created a feeling of distance to the student teachers. The lectures were content oriented and it was difficult to discern from the expressions on the student teachers’ faces whether or not they had understood. After the latest Teacher Education reform (in 2011), work began to develop learning goals to be introduced early in each course. This also led to increased reflection on how to help the student teachers to reach the goals during lectures. The newly implemented use of learning platforms can also be a help, but takes some time to get acquainted with.

There is also a new examination and grading system, and it can take some time to get familiar with how to assess students’ work as failing, passing or

passing with distinction. Some student teachers are not attentive during the lessons or are absent, but they can fulfill the learning goals anyway by performing well on the exams. In school there is shared responsibility for students' progress, but the teacher educators are not convinced that the shared responsibility in TE is felt by both didactic subject teachers and subject teachers. The question was raised of whether this is mainly an issue for teacher educators, as most of the subject teachers lack experience of working in compulsory school.

Legal Issues

After the TE reform of 2011, there was greater interest in documentation and how the student teachers perceived their education. Compulsory school has checking of sources, but in TE there was a greater demand to check the sources of students' papers to prevent plagiarism.

Sometimes the student teachers could be perceived as grumbling more than pupils at school. Both child and adult students can complain, but in TE the student teachers' complaints are always submitted formally. One example is higher awareness of student teachers' legal rights. The student teachers have been more eager to claim that they are mistreated than the pupils. The complaints could be directed at both teacher educators and other student teachers. Just as in compulsory school, the respondents comment that there are many emotions in TE; the student teachers have different ways of thinking about different topics and relations. However well an NTE thinks he/she has communicated, a "student issue" can appear.

Still Being a Teacher

All the respondents thought that when they started teaching, after receiving their teaching degree, they were "teachers". A comment that came up is that a teaching degree is not just a degree, it implies a particular self-understanding from the very beginning. Another comment is that their self-understanding developed over time. This is also a reason why they feel comfortable working within TE; they contribute their experience of being and working as teachers. They want to be role models, working with the student teachers in the same way that they expect the student teachers to work with the pupils. Sometimes this is difficult, such as when the student teachers (like pupils) are expected to work in groups but then are examined individually. The same goes for discussions; sometimes lectures allow too few opportunities for dialogue. It was commented that many years ago teachers led the class by giving lectures and facilitating group discussions, but after a pedagogical shift classroom work was supposed to be carried out individually. Now, however, the teacher-led lesson has returned, expressed as "teachers should talk about the subject matter".

There is not always a change in teachers' self-understanding, when they transition to working in TE.

They still view themselves as "being a teacher". A quick answer could even be "I am a primary school teacher", as this is related to their degree and also the bulk of their work experience. Working in HE with TE does not necessarily lead to a new degree. NTEs are not "lesser teachers". On the contrary, they can be "teachers" to an even greater extent, as they have more time for planning and reflection, which enables them to think more about how to teach. Even a person taking up administrative work in TE may still have the perception "I am a teacher".

One could also make a deliberate choice to retain one's self-understanding of being a teacher instead of gradually changing to a self-understanding as a researcher; if the self-understanding as a researcher is enforced, the self-understanding as a teacher can become weakened. A comment that arose is that there seem to be at least three different ways of understanding oneself to be a teacher. One group consists of those who still view themselves as teachers in the same way as when they were teachers in compulsory school; others maintain that there is a difference between teaching in compulsory school and in HE; and finally there are some who are always thinking about research. There are excellent researchers and lecturers who present material in a pedagogical way but talk about the research project. The presentation never deals with the didactic situation in a compulsory school classroom. This can have the consequence that the student teachers think that the ideas and concepts presented are directly transferrable to a compulsory school classroom, which they are not. A teacher has to be conscious and make choices when teaching. This is something that both the NTEs and the student teachers have to deal with during TE.

A perception that came up is that some teachers are more interested in or used to working as subject teachers, while others prefer the role of subject-didactic teachers. It would be an advantage if all teachers in TE were prepared to think of the student teachers not as students, but as student teachers who will become teachers. This touches on the question of teaching about teaching. A further question concerns teaching in HE generally – higher education pedagogy. Courses in higher education pedagogy are important, as all teachers in HE have an opportunity to develop their knowledge about learning and teaching, and most importantly, to reflect.

Continuous Development

There is an expectation that NTEs should be interested in recent research results and be open to doing their own research. As presented earlier, there have been several teacher education reforms, and one of the types of programs did not function very well. As an example, not all primary teachers had been taught how to develop reading skills. The vision in the TE was that the student teachers should have a high degree of free

choice, and some of them did not choose to deepen their knowledge in Swedish and mathematics. For this reason, course leaders in TE had to offer extra courses to compensate. As a result, two of the respondents who were appointed earliest had very limited time for engaging in research.

All the respondents had been involved in research but in various ways. One was to become an assistant, especially collecting data, within a project led by experienced researchers. Such activities could last for a while, but did not continue or lead to a further degree. Instead the respondents read research articles; they have a great deal of interest in reading about both teaching subjects and general didactics. Theory has been especially interesting to them, as it usually involves expanding one's vocabulary and becoming acquainted with new concepts. There is time to read and possibilities to test and develop one's own teaching while working. Some useful questions have been: How do we teach this? Why do we do it this way? Where does this method come from? Why is it so hard to get certain knowledge? What are the problems?

Advice to Newcomers

In summary, what does an NTE hope for or have to be prepared for according to the respondents? The NTEs must be prepared for the fact that the work is different from what they are used to, but need not accept all the differences. The NTEs need to have the courage not to accept and copy everything they see. The hours allocated for a course were sometimes negotiable, as was the content. "Free time" at the end of a course is not free; it is for assessing final papers. NTEs have to be prepared for the fact that the allocated number of hours is not enough to complete the work. Because the NTEs are new to lecturing for large groups, it is helpful for everyone that the learning goals are clearly explained from the start. As the dialogue with the student teachers is so limited, and the courses for the course leaders are so short and few in number, there is a need to focus on the learning goals. If there is an opportunity to "shadow" another lecturer, it should be taken.

An NTE has to quickly realize that the student teachers need the course teachers; they are not very independent. A teacher educator always has to reflect and be self-critical and develop his or her teaching. It is important to be open and clear about the learning goals. There is a need for teachers in TE to view student teachers as central, but also as future teachers who will place their own pupils in focus. Finally, the NTEs should engage in the continuing discussion about how to make TE research based.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the paper has been to increase our knowledge of the transition from being a teacher in school to becoming a teacher educator in a university-based initial teacher education program. Previous research has shown that the introduction and induction period in TE could, in the best case, be perceived as professional development, restructuring and strengthening of a professional identity. In the worst case it can be perceived as a de-valuing and de-constructing of a professional identity. In both cases there is a change of the NTE's self perception.

The question of teacher educators' self-understanding and identity is not uncomplicated. The question of acknowledgement can also be discussed in terms of whether teacher educators are oriented more toward teaching and working with issues of practice (role-oriented teaching) or if they also are more or less expected to work with development work and research (university-oriented).

The credibility that Boyd and Harris [14] discussed can be defined by NTEs themselves (in this case, being a good teacher), or defined by policy documents such as standards. Geerdink, Boei, Willemse, Kools and van Vlokhoven [27] argue that there is an increased demand for research in policy documents concerning HE. The earlier requirement of being "a good teacher" has to be complemented with other knowledge and skills. NTEs should be able to participate in research and also introduce research methods and instill an attitude of inquiry in the teacher students.

This research did not result in the finding of teachers understanding themselves as being de-skilled [1] or uncertain [15]; instead it was found that the respondents perceived themselves as skilled and used their skill to manage their work as a teacher educator. The findings also show that they have managed to preserve their earlier teacher identity and complement it with a teacher-educator identity. Although these are parallel identities, the self-understanding is expressed as being teachers above all else. They express being content with being assistants in research and responding to researchers as audience members in seminars. With their access to academic journals and discussions about research-based TE, they find a way to develop their knowledge and teaching.

Such positive answers and content could be perceived as based on a good introduction and adequate adaptation to the TE environment. If a more critical stance were taken, the question could be raised whether a situation is created where some lecturers are only hired to teach and others to teach and do research. This brings us back to the recruitment stage. All the respondents had experience of further studies and research. When they were recruited, the discussion

about work was primarily framed in terms of teaching. From the respondents' descriptions there seems to be a lack of discussion about working in two parallel strands, teaching and research. As a first impression, it may be that when NTEs start working they are in need of discussion and planning to balance teaching with research. On second thought, this issue ought already to be clarified in the job announcement for TE lecturers and in the recruitment process. Otherwise an important group, consisting of experienced and engaged lecturers, may perceive themselves as not included in the construction of new knowledge. Only the "academic group" are entitled to take part in the construction of knowledge, and not the others. In summary, and as a final conclusion, the challenges for NTEs and their introduction to the field of TE do not begin when they are hired, but already during the recruitment process.

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