(Eds.) Göran Fransson & Christina Gustafsson

Newly Qualified Teachers in Northern Europe

– Comparative Perspectives on Promoting Professional Development

**UNIVERSITY
OF GÄVLE**

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In memory of
Sidsel Hauge (1946–2007)
Our Norwegian colleague and friend

Foreword by reviewers

The topic of this book is important. In all industrialised countries, not only in the Nordic countries or Estonia, the challenge how to guarantee the high quality of teaching professionals is increasingly coming into focus. How to compete with other sectors of society for skilled and qualified labour is a key issue when trying to ensure the future of the education system. Otherwise, the foundations of knowledge society are in danger. The EU has estimated that about two million new teachers should be educated within the next 15 years. In many EU countries the proportion of teachers aged between 45 and 64 is over 40 % and the demand for new teachers is enormous. Promoting teachers' professional development in the beginning of their careers is a key factor when trying to improve their professional skills and engagement in the teaching profession.

The teacher's move from the initial training to the reality of the classroom is critical and more demanding than in most other professions. The idea of a "reality shock" is debatable, but many teachers are on their own in facing this reality. Mentoring is a promising method for helping new teachers to analyse and handle the challenges. The chapters in this book give accounts from different countries that deepen our understanding of systems promoting teachers' professional development, what mentoring is and how it functions in different cultural contexts.

In the Communication "Improving the Quality of Teacher Education" (2007), the European Commission stresses continuous professional development as increasingly important. Demands regarding teachers' competence both for running classrooms and understanding the societal context are many, and they are changing faster and faster. That is why systems of education and training need to provide teachers with opportunities for professional development from the beginning to the end of their careers.

In Europe, the lack of coherence and continuity between teachers' initial education, subsequent induction, and in-service training has been recognized. Only half of the European countries offer new teachers any systematic kind of support and promotion of professional development (e.g. induction, mentoring) in their first years of teaching. In addition, frameworks to assist teachers who experience difficulties in performing their duties adequately exist only in a few countries.

When stressing teachers' work as a profession of lifelong learning, the European Commission highlights the following principles, among others, as the rights of all teachers: (a) to take part in effective programs

of induction during their first three years, (b) to have access to structured guidance and mentoring by experienced teachers or other qualified professionals throughout their career, (c) to take part in regular discussions about their training and development needs, in the context of the wider development plan of the institution where they work.

In Europe, there are many processes in the field of teacher education which encourage also researchers to develop new methods for supporting teachers in their lifelong career development. Mentoring new teachers is one of the most promising methods. This is not a new approach, but a research-based international validation of this method, as found in this book, appears to be more effective than projects limited to a national perspective.

Prof. Karl Øyvind Jordell, University of Oslo, Norway

Prof. Per Fiebæk Laursen, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Prof. Staffan Selander, Stockholm University, Sweden

Prof. Jouni Välijärvi, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

*Prof. Peeter Kreitzberg, member of the Estonian parliament
and former minister of Education and research, Estonia*

Foreword by the editors
– about the book and the NQTNE-network

In this book newly qualified teachers' working conditions and systems of support and promotion of professional development are analysed from a variety of perspectives and levels of analysis. The authors are researchers and teacher educators from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. All of them are members of the network *Newly Qualified Teachers in Northern Europe* (NQTNE)[1]. NQTNE is an international network of researchers and teacher educators interested in Newly Qualified Teachers' (NQT) professional development, working conditions, and the development of systems promoting professional development for NQTs. The main aims of the network are to stimulate and co-ordinate international co-operation in research focusing on NQTs in a broad sense as well as in research and development of systems promoting professional development. Matters of importance in the network are comparing perspectives, exchanging experiences, and developing joint research projects. The network is co-ordinated from the University of Gävle by the Induction Research Group.

During the years 2005-2007, the *Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research* (FAS) has supported the network financially. The support from FAS has made it possible to come together physically, face-to-face, to do work together. Modern techniques as e-mail, web platforms, or web-conferences are powerful tools to unite a network. However, as networking is a social process, it is important to meet face-to-face to really get to know each other and to try to understand each other's experiences, perspectives, and national contexts. This book is a summarising report from three years of work, dedicated to one of our network colleagues, and intended authors, Sidsel Hauge, who died some months before the project was finished.

Gävle in October 2008

Göran Fransson   Christina Gustafsson

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1 www.hig.se/p-inst/nqtne

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On the behalf of all the authors of this book

Göran Fransson   *Christina Gustafsson*

Becoming a Teacher
– an Introduction to the Theme and the Book

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Teachers are a professional group whose work and competence have received more attention in the last few years. In a society where issues of globalization, economic competition, and social mobility emphasize skills, values, and learning as important issues of competence, teachers are becoming a strategic group (see for instance OECD, 2005).

In this context, it is logical that newly qualified teachers' professional development and working situation attract attention in policy documents, in research, and in efforts to develop systems promoting professional development. Some of the causes for the growing interest are (1) the knowledge that the initial teacher education more or less requires systems for gradual introduction and support of the new teachers during the first years; (2) the possibilities, and sometimes the need, to promote newly qualified teachers' professional development; (3) the fact that many newly qualified teachers leave the teaching profession early; (4) the risk of shortage of teachers; (5) that teachers often are an over-represented group regarding absence due to sickness, or (6) a mistrust towards initial teacher education. All of these aspects have been noticed in large European projects, and against that background research as well as development work are carried out in order to better understand and promote newly qualified teachers' professional development (Eurydice, 2004; OECD, 2005).

The causes of interest mentioned above is often manifested in media or in reports as "negative" information, with headlines telling how bad the situation is. Even in research, there seems to be a discourse to stress the problems, dilemmas, and shortcomings new teachers could meet. However, the so called "praxis chock" or "reality chock", when newly qualified teachers has to confront with the reality of teaching (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; McCormack & Thomas, 2003), is often, but not always, a fact. To be a newly qualified teacher is often a challenging period, and that is perhaps why hardly any phase in teacher careers re-

ceived more attention in research in proportion to its limited extension in time. Most challenging for new teachers seems the classroom management, the leadership, and discipline (e.g. Wideen et al., 1998; Moran et al., 1999; Fregerslev & Jørgensen, 2000). Prioritisations and meeting pupils different needs (Bergsvik et al., 2005); relations to pupils, colleagues or parents; and to handle stress and uphold self-esteem are other challenges to meet. During the first years, the emotions run high, there is an intense process of discovery, and the learning curve is steep (Grimsæth et al., 2008). To feel insecure, experience uncertainty or lack of competence then more or less becomes normal reactions, not due to imperfect preparation during initial teacher training, but due to the ever-changing nature of the teaching situation and the fact being inexperienced. We will come back to this later on in this chapter.

Newly qualified teachers' experiences and the situations they have to handle, are of interest in many spheres. The six causes of interest mentioned above, are mainly connected to three spheres of interests: (a) the new teachers themselves (who sometimes need support and promotion of their professional development), (b) initial teacher education system (with the interest to learn more about the training they are giving and about teachers professional development), and (c) authorities and employers (who has responsibility for a well functioning educational system and are in a policy making position). These three spheres of interests have one specific core interest in common, that is: how to become a teacher and develop professionally. This could also be seen as the theme for this chapter and the whole book. In the various chapters, these three spheres of interests are addressed and met, however in different extent in the various chapters.

Concepts and perspectives

So far in this chapter, we have used the phrase newly qualified teachers. However, other concepts such as beginning teachers, novice teachers, and new teachers are also commonly used in Anglo-Saxon literature. What kind of concepts one chooses to use is probably a result of contextual, linguistic and ideological factors. For instance, the term novice teacher has a bit of a negative connotation for some in the Nordic countries, as the ideological ambition is to conceptualise newly qualified teachers as fully qualified and fully worthy colleagues, however not yet so experienced. On the other hand, concepts have to be used in a way so that the intended meaning fits the context.

From the beginning we had the intention to elaborate a coherent use of concepts in the various chapters of this book. However, during the

process we found that this resulted in dilemmas related to contextual (national but also personal) ways to conceptualise and give meaning to the phenomena (for similar dilemmas see Britton et al., 2003, p. 14). As a result, the concepts are used in the various chapters in the manner the author(s) finds it most convenient, or to the extent they could compromise with their own personal and contextual perspectives. Consequently, there is no absolute coherent use of concepts between the chapters or even within the chapters. We have chosen to see this as an expression of a strong contextualization and space for personal choice of concepts. This gives the attentive reader an opportunity to analyse the texts and reflect on how this conceptuality appears. As editors, for reasons of convenience, we henceforth in this introduction and in the final chapter use the phrase 'new teacher'. We do that without any intention of reducing the value of the "newly qualified teachers" competence, nor the more experienced teachers' competence.

In the various chapters phrases like "support" and "support system" are used. The conceptualisation of these phrases is to be looked upon from the perspective of promotion of professional development, rather than from a perspective of an "incompetent" or "fragile" person in "need of help to manage". This is an important difference, as we look upon the new teachers as competent, however not yet so experienced, having some specific opportunities to learn and develop professionally. Focus on professional development also implies that it is not primarily a question of incorporating the new teacher in the existing culture, but to contribute to a development of it. In this introduction and in the final chapter we consistently see induction[1], mentoring and "systems" in the perspective of promoting professional development.

One other issue to be discussed in a book like this is *who* the new teachers are. In the Anglo-Saxon literature, new teachers are most often teachers in elementary school and secondary school. However, in Norway and Sweden early childhood teachers are sometimes also included when focusing on systems promoting new teachers' professional development. Another question is *how long a* teacher is expected to be a *new* teacher until he or she is looked upon as an experienced teacher, or at least no longer is regarded as being involved in activities promoting new teachers' professional development. Some authors claim that new teachers should get special attention for at least two year or longer (e.g. Flores, 2006; O'Brian & Christie, 2008). Both of these questions, who the new teacher is and for how long someone is new, are focused in some chapters in this book, but we avoid making a general distinction and let the context in the various chapters speak.

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[1] The concept of induction is sometimes used describing a system for support (induction-system); a time-period (induction-period); a specific phase in teaching (induction-phase), or a process of learning (Britton et al., 2003). For further elaborations, see chapters 2 and 3 in this book.

Becoming a teacher

In a book focusing on new teachers' professional development, one important issue is how to understand new teachers' professional development and the promotion in that process; that is how to become, be and develop as a teacher. Teachers, as every professional, are expected to be involved in learning and professional development activities during their entire professional lives. To become a teacher requires (most often) some kind of education and training. However, the initial teacher education is of different scope and focus in different countries. This is a natural result of the existence of different national, cultural, educational, and ideological settings. It is also a consequence of different views of what kind of education is needed to "be" or "become" a teacher (cf. Dillon & Maguire, 2007; Goodwin, 2008). Irrespective of educational settings, we dare state that there always exists a discussion – certainly different in intensity – focusing both on the process and the product; that is *how* to learn to teach (or to become a teacher) and *what kind* of knowledge, skills, and values a teacher needs. These discussions could lead to questions as: What is to be learnt, and in what way? How should the balance be between academic education and school/preschool based training; or between academic subject matter and pedagogical and didactic skills? What is possible to learn in a "decontextualised" initial teacher education, and what is best learnt on the job? Not all these questions will be answered in this book, some will and for the others a platform for further investigations will be made.

These kinds of questions have to include the very nature of learning, skills, and competence as well as the range of what is possible to learn during initial teacher education. Our conviction is that a prospective teacher cannot be prepared to 100 % without feeling any kind of uncertainty (cf. Munthe, 2003) or lack of competence, due to the ever-changing nature of the teaching situation and the very nature of knowledge, skills, and competence.[2] In initial teacher education one could, for instance, learn about how to handle conflicts, how to help pupils learn, read and write or understand mathematics *to a certain degree* – but to contextualize, develop, and deepen the knowledge, skills, and competence, as well as reduce any anxiety – one has to apply one's knowledge

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[2] Munthe (2003) found that teachers with less than five years' experience of teaching and teachers with more than 20 years' experience felt a greater uncertainty than those who had been teachers for between five and twenty years. The teachers with less than five years' experience were uncertain due to lack of experience, while the uncertainty the teachers with more than 20 years' experience could be explained by the expected difficulties to meet the changing demands and competencies needed.

in real situations (Helsing, 2007).[3] This is as obvious for teachers as for nurses, doctors, and engineers and other professionals. It is also impossible for the initial teacher education to prepare teachers for every challenge they will meet (Grimsæth et al., 2008). We could also add the process of identity formation which McNally et al. (2008) emphasize as an important aspect for new teachers' first years. According to them, the formation of an identity is essential for how new teachers conceive and perform their teaching and thereby the relations with colleagues, parents, pupils, and their own self-image, are essential. In sum, this means that a program of initial teacher education (as any other educational program) has a certain potential, just because of the nature of learning and of the knowledge, skills, values, and competence learnt. To this comes the very task of the initial teacher education, to prepare for a life-long professional development, must be expected that some skills needed as a teacher will not be so well developed as they could due to dilemmas with prioritisation within initial teacher education.

It is especially important to highlight the issues discussed above in times when the teaching profession and the initial teacher educations are questioned and criticized – of a decent cause or just out of ideological preferences (Compton & Weiner, 2008). Thus, focusing on new teachers, highlighting shortcomings, needs, and the promotion of new teachers' professional development does not automatically mean that the initial teacher education has problems, needed to be "fixed" by mentoring and support systems.[4] Instead, doing research or arguing for systems promoting new teachers' professional development could be conceptualised as a way to acknowledge the complexity of learning, as described above, and as a striving force to get the very best teaching professionals possible (whatever that may be). In this way, teacher induction has to be conceptualised in a perspective of life long learning. This is in line with, for instance, Britton et al. (2003) who claim:

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[3] This phenomenon is often manifested when teacher students or new teachers say they have not been learnt how to handle some specific field – however these reflection is often very shallow, but symptomatic of the phenomena. More seldom, we hear someone say:"I would like to know more theory about this field so I better can understand what could happen, and this way be better handle specific situations."

[4] However, sometimes it seems that some politicians or ideologists take every chance to attack the initial teacher education, searching for any argument blaming the educations and that way legitimise their own educational agenda.

Induction is not simply or primary to decrease teacher turnover: instead, in these sites, it stands as a key juncture of learning, growth and support. Induction occupies a special place, looking both backward to preservice teacher preparation and forward to the career of teaching, with its challenges of becoming and being a teacher […] It is not primarily about fixing a problem. It is about building something desirable – a teacher, a teaching force, a profession, a kind of learning for pupils in schools. (Britton et al., 2003, pp. 301–302)

In an international perspective, the research interest and the interest to develop systems promoting new teachers' professional development have been more widespread in the US and in a majority of European countries than in the Nordic and the Baltic countries. For example, various forms of introduction systems have been tried in England since at least 1968 (Jordell, 1986). In the US and New Zealand, organised support to newly qualified teachers has occurred since the beginning and the end of the 1970s, respectively (Ganser, 2002; Britton et al., 2003). It is, however, principally during the 1990s that these activities increased strikingly in scope in these countries, and also in other countries. Since the middle of the 1980s, the interest to promote newly qualified teachers' professional development has improved globally (Gold, 1996, p. 560) and the interest coincides with the listed starting points above.

The interest for new teachers' working situation and professional development has for instance expressed itself in national and international co-operation where experiences are compared and where common projects are implemented. Among others, a number of countries within the framework of ATEE (Association for Teacher Education in Europe) have conducted comparative research about different European countries' systems to support new teachers, to introduce them in the teaching profession and to promote their professional development (cf. Baldassarre, 1998; Fransson & Morberg, 2001; Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 2003). Britton et al. (2003), Dangel (2006), and Moskowitz & Stephens (1997) describe other comparative studies.

In Europe and the US, there has been rather extensive research focusing on newly qualified teachers and their working conditions for several decades. In the Nordic and the Baltic countries, however, research focusing on newly qualified teachers has not received very much attention until the last few years – and the development is uneven. In Norway and Sweden the question appeared on the agenda in the middle of 1990s, while the question in Denmark, Estonia, and Finland became

current somewhat later (see also chapter 3)[5]. In Norway, the question was highlighted in Stortingsmelding no. 48 (1996-97) "On teacher education" with proposals regarding a "candidate year" for new teachers. Since 2001, a national pilot project has been carried out in order to examine various models supporting and promoting new teachers' professional development (see chapter 3). In Finland and Denmark, new teachers' special situation began to be focused at the very end of the 1990s (Välijärvi, 2000; Luukainen, 2001; Bayer & Brinkkjær, 2003). In Estonia, the new approach for initial teacher education launched in 2000 included the basic principals for the national induction system that was implemented in 2003. In Sweden, the focus on new teachers increased in 1995 when an agreement between the teachers' union and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, stated that new teachers had the *right* to be supported by a mentor and to be offered a special program of introduction (ÖLA, 2000), but the results varied between municipalities.

Because of all these activities in the specific countries, the interest in research and development embracing new teachers has increased in these countries. All chapters in this book focus on issues connected to this development. However, the issue has become of great immediate interest in Sweden when a Government Inquiry (SOU 2008:52) in May 2008 proposed a system with registration for teachers. This new proposal is built on the same ideas as the agreement from 1995, however with some important distinctions as; it is a governmental top-down initiative; a probationary year will give possibilities to become registered as a teacher; and, the mentors have to consider if the new teachers have adequate competence to become registered. It is recommended that the Swedish National Agency for Education is given the authority to impose (or withdraw) the registration. If accepted, this reform is intended to be implemented by 2010.

At present, there are rather few studies where teachers' working conditions in the Nordic and the Baltic countries are compared – and in principle, no comparative studies that cover new teachers. However, efforts have been made, in a comparative perspective, to understand the Nordic educational systems (cf. Klette et al., 2002; Antikainen, 2006; Arnesen & Lundahl, 2006; Heiðar Frímannsson, 2006; Oftedal Telhaug et al., 2006; see also chapter 8).

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[5] However, it is delicate to stress these kinds of statements as (of course) some research has been made earlier. For instance have several reports been made both ahead and after the Norwegian project "The first year of teaching" (1980-1982) (e.g. Strømnes, 1980; Jordell, 1986). However, our statement is based on earlier discussions/events initiated having impact until today.

One of the few research projects that compares teachers' working conditions in the Nordic countries, focuses on (experienced) teachers' working conditions in times of change (Klette et al., 2002; Carlgren et al., 2006; Carlgren & Klette, 2008). In this project, teachers' attitudes to work and to the ongoing changes, as well as how Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish teachers show these attitudes, are discussed. For instance, one result is that Swedish teachers seem to be more willing to accept new requirements, but at the same time they see themselves as "victims" of change, whereas Finnish teachers seem to accept the change more quietly and simultaneously appear to stand in their "traditional" teacher role. These and other differences can probably be explained by the fact that teachers of different nations partly have different norms, values, attitudes, conceptions, and behavioural patterns. These (Nordic) differences increase the interest in performing comparative research where new teachers' working conditions and experiences are made visible and are problematised. In a Nordic perspective, the outcome of this kind of research could be of much more importance, than comparisons with research carried out in quite different cultural contexts. Therefore, the work up to now in the NQTNE network, presented in this book, has generated new knowledge, but above all formed the platform and the first step to exciting future research journeys in northern Europe in the area of new teachers.

Aims and audience

The main aim of this book is to offer opportunities for a better understanding of new teachers' working conditions, their professional development, and systems promoting their professional development in the northern European countries, that is: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. However, this could be done in many ways. The way we have chosen throughout this book is to have a comparative perspective in focus and vary the level of the analyses.

The chapters focus on the growth of the systems promoting professional development, the organisation of these systems, detailed analyses of the content of these systems where especially mentoring is highlighted, and the very individual level with personal narratives. In all this, networks and networking are key words and the knowledge created and exchanged through networks. In chapter three induction is focused at the national level, while in chapter four mentoring as a system and activity within an induction system is focused. Chapter five focuses on different approaches like how to conceptualise, organise and "perform" mentoring on a project level, and in chapter six the individual level is

focused by analysing narratives from new teachers. Chapters two and seven deal with the meta-level of the process of networking, both within NQTNE and in other contexts.

This means that the present book does not only display new and unique knowledge concerning new teachers' professional development, their working conditions, and systems promoting professional development, but also knowledge about possibilities and difficulties to organise interactive knowledge systems between individuals, municipalities, and nations, to understand or to promote new teachers' professional development or doing research. However, this is a field under development, and the way to conceptualise and organise things change. Even if we carefully have selected data and given the analysis great attention, we can never avoid the fact that it is impossible to do justice to all nuances and details or possible interpretations to a full extent. This is true especially when having a comparative perspective. To make it even more complicated, the obvious fact that teachers' working conditions and experiences vary depending on the contexts and the interpretations makes it impossible to expect conclusions as: "This is how it is!" From this point of view, the present book gives some perspectives but also opens for further investigations and interventions. Therefore, the audiences of this book are many. We hope that the contents can be of great value for researchers, teacher educators, school leaders, trade unions, municipality administrators, politicians at different levels in the community, and of course, prospective teachers.

The contents of the book

Regarding the seven chapters that follow we want the readers to notice that the authors have composed their chapters in different constellations. One reason for this was that all authors have been "forced" to acquaint themselves with the problems, conditions, and contexts of others. Another reason has been to avoid a biased description and analysis. A consequence of this writing plan is that a small part of information overlaps between chapters. Then, it is important to notice that the information is often presented from new points of view and is interpreted in another context. As editors, we consider this strategy a way to enrich the book. The strategy, however, also draws attention to the complexity of the matters handled in the publication.

In chapter two, Göran Fransson from Sweden highlights and problemise the communicative and interpretative challenges and dilemmas in international co-operation. He analyses the communicative conditions and especially the conditions of interpreting, understanding and

sensemaking when trying to communicate and understand each other's national educational conditions and systems to promote new teachers' professional development. Experiences and challenges from the work within the NQTNE network are analysed and discussed in this perspective. One aspect problematised is the dilemma occurring when trying to acquire a common understanding of the phenomena behind concepts as mentoring or induction. The same phrase could be understood quite differently. This becomes a challenge when communicating in English, as no one in the network has English as a mother tongue and sensemaking has been performed from different national (and personal) frames. However, the same situations occurs when people communicate within national contexts, on their mother tongue, e.g. colleagues, mentors, mentees or headmasters communication. Thus, this chapter brings valuable knowledge about the challenge to communicate, conceptualise and make sense of one others information and knowledge. International co-operation and comparative perspectives are, according to Fransson's conclusions, powerful tools to become aware of assumptions taken for granted and to challenge one's own perspectives. This working procedure is also important to raise new kinds of questions and construct new perspectives and new ways to conceptualise, think, and act.

In chapter three, Eva Bjerkholt from Norway and Egon Hedegaard from Denmark analyse the support to and promotion of new teachers' professional development at a system level in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. The authors begin by clarifying central concepts as induction, induction programs, and induction systems. Based on the definitions, they establish focus on the overall parts and the process of what is called induction systems. Important parts of the system development are partnerships (which means a divided responsibility) and network (which means a relationship between professionals but without shared responsibilities). Central parts of the chapter are clear descriptions of the systems promoting new teachers' professional development in the five countries and the way these have been organised. One major difference between the five countries is that Estonia's system has been implemented at a national level, whereas in the other countries a decentralised model has given locally anchored systems (or no system at all) more priority. One consequence is that in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden the commitment from the municipal school administration and/or from the local teacher union are crucial. The consequences of different intensity of commitment are various solutions: "Those owning the problems also own the solution", seems to be the basic thinking. Based on this statement, the authors highlight both strengths (for instance the integration of the promotion of new teachers' professional

development with other local development processes) and weaknesses in the systems (the continuity cannot be guaranteed). One section of the chapter concerns the teacher training as a partner in the induction system. Furthermore, the authors discuss the outcome of what they call low intensive and high intensive programmes respectively and whether it might be possible to build up some common model in the five countries. The authors' intention is to give an overall and comparable picture from five different countries. Such work always means that one must reduce details, and consequently the "reality" is not always as simple and established as the pictures pretend to be. However, the chapter offers a very good picture of both problems and solutions when it comes to support or promoting new teachers' professional development.

In chapter four, Hannu Jokinen, Åsa Morberg, Katrin Poom-Valickis, and Valdek Rohtma deepen the knowledge about mentoring, mentors, and mentees. Estonia, Finland, and Sweden are in focus in the chapter. There is a short presentation of research about mentoring, and the key concepts mentoring, mentors, and mentees are given meaning according to the authors' understanding and an attempt to place the induction period in a lifelong learning perspective. Based on empirical experiences, the authors show that mentoring can find expression in different ways. In an elucidatory table, similarities and differences between mentoring and the roles of the mentors and mentees in the three countries are illustrated. The analysis focuses on the mentors' characteristics and education, mentoring as professional development, and mentors and mentoring as part of school development. One conclusion is that a mentor requires leadership skills and empathy. It is also established that mentoring should be a dialog. The mentees, however, are not only influenced by their mentors; the work setting will be a base for the professional development. Finally, the authors discuss where mentoring should have a place in the process of developing identity as a teacher. They also discuss the development of the individual versus the community, education of mentors, strengths and weaknesses of the mentoring process, and they have some thoughts and suggestions for the future concerning mentoring and research about mentoring. However, the characteristics of mentoring given in this chapter are challenged in chapter five.

In chapter five, Hannu Heikkinen, Hannu Jokinen and Päivi Tynjälä from Finland describe and analyse mentoring as a relationship between individuals in three Finnish mentoring projects. The authors start with a theoretical discussion about mentoring in relation to newly qualified teachers. The traditional meaning of mentoring, according to the authors, has often been that the mentor is more experienced and the

mentee less experienced. This view of a mentor and a mentee has, however, been questioned lately. Now, the literature describes mentoring as a collaborative collegial relationship influenced from constructivist theories with knowledge and learning in focus using new terms, e.g. co-mentoring, dialog mentoring, peer mentoring. From conceptual changes of mentoring and new approaches of mentoring programs, three empirical research and development projects are discussed. Three mentoring models were studied and analysed, traditional one-to-one mentoring, group mentoring, and peer group mentoring. The first model was introduced in 2000 and the third in 2006. Therefore, research data from the projects differ. There are also differences between the mentoring organisation and the time devoted to meetings. Analyses of the different approaches show both weaknesses and strengths. Paired mentoring discussions were sometimes deeper, more individual, and personal, but the authors found the approach a bit vulnerable due to a lack of mentors and problems organising the activities. The authors argue that organising mentoring in a group is better connected to school development, as it is a more collaborative and collectively oriented approach. Consequently, the authors of the chapter argue that mentoring ought to be conceptualised as collaboration and a dialogue.

In chapter six, Eve Eisenschmidt, Hannu Heikkinen and Wiebke Klages and let us meet the individuals behind the phrase "newly qualified teachers". Using a narrative approach, three teachers from Estonia, Finland, and Norway share their stories and experiences of their first year as teachers. The method Eisenschmidt, Heikkinen and Klages and use is interesting, partly because they produce layers of data and analyses when letting the teachers reflect upon each other's narratives as well as their own first year expressed in the narrative, and partly because they as researchers reflect upon the narratives and the reflections of the narratives given by the teachers. In the analysis themes such as identity, implementing theory into practice, areas of concerns, and questions of support and professional development emerge. The new teachers have to a great extent similar experience, even if there (naturally) are some differences. One result displayed is that both the aspect of competence and the aspect of being in need of a promotive and supportive setting emerge in the narratives.

Since the authors of this book have come together in a network and all the chapters include something about networks as a means of reaching various objectives, we saw reasons to present how the national and international networks grew and how central participants and contributors look upon the network as a form to co-operate. In chapter seven, which has been co-ordinated by Egon Hedegaard from Denmark, there

are such descriptions from each country. The descriptions are very personal, and deviate from the other chapters when it comes to style and stringency. As editors, we have assessed that the chapter's nature gives an unpretentious explanation to the contents of the other chapters and shows, among other things, how chance and "coincidences" can lead to long-lasting co-operation that both broadens and deepens individual researchers' competence. It could be of interest having this in mind when interpreting the whole picture. Thus, the chapter is built upon narratives from central participants. In turn, each contributor presents her/his approach to networks based on some fundamental questions. From Denmark, we may experience that the efforts to establish a national network can be long and winding, but indulgence pays off. In Estonia, the decision to promote new teachers' professional development was taken at a national level. One participant's individual interests in following up this process lead to contacts with Finland and these contacts lead further to NQTNE. From Norway, the networking at the national level is stressed as an important condition for development and learning; the national network generated access to critical friends, stimulation to do research and publish, and especially an operational basis for NQTNE. From Sweden, there are two narratives, one about the requirement of taking an active interest in international networks and the effort to form NQTNE, and one about establishment and the work in a network in co-operation between University of Gävle and the surrounding municipalities, where both parties have needs of the networking. The chapter's ultimate message is an urgent request; do something because otherwise nothing will happen! In the chapter, two main aspects of the network work are emphasised, another reason for this type of personal statements (narratives) to be published. The first aspect concerns how inspiring it can be to participate in networks. The other aspect is the individual experience of networks and its formation. The chapter is a rich map over experiences, and gives some knowledge about the driving forces in networking rather than a recipe for how to initiate or run networks.

In chapter eight, the editors summarise and discuss some aspects highlighted in the various chapters. We give special attention to the Swedish proposal of a system for registration of teachers, and we discuss some critical issues connected to the proposal; such as whether mentors should, as proposed, be involved in the evaluation of new teachers' competence. Beyond that, we give a proposal for an alternative or perhaps complementary model promoting (new) teachers professional development. Finally, we draw some conclusions and propose some areas for further research.

As was established in the introduction above to chapter seven, someone has to act if anything is to happen. There are no automatic solutions. This could also be a message in this book. Teachers are key figures, important actors, in a community. They have the responsibility to handle new generations, promoting learning and individual growth – and in a global learning community, in extension, promote economic growth on a sustainable base. As editors, we are eager to use the above recommendation as a wider message to the readers of this book. Let us in the most optimal way contribute to teachers' professional development. We hope that this book can support such work. Read, learn, react, and let yourself be stimulated by the different ways and models to create networks and promote new teachers' professional development. Even if the main focus is on new teachers, it is also possible to find inspiration and models to promote experienced teachers' professional development as well. We say it again – do something or nothing will happen!

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Chapter 2

International Co–operation and the Challenge of Sensemaking

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ABSTRACT

This chapter highlights and problematise some challenges and dilemmas in international co-operation and in making this book. The focus is on individual and collative processes of communication, interpretation, understanding and sensemaking – processes emerging as challenging when participants have different kinds of frames and contexts of knowledge. These kinds of challenges are ever present, but become more apparent, however, when people from quite different cultural, social, economic and political backgrounds meet in international co-operation. In this chapter, experiences and challenges made within NQTNE are analysed and discussed in this perspective. The chapter orientates the reader to the methodological and linguistic problems when trying to understand e.g. concepts connected to systems promoting new teachers professional development and the process of producing the articles in this book.

Thus, this chapter brings valuable knowledge about the challenge to communicate, conceptualise and make sense of concepts, phenomena and information given. One conclusion is that even if there are communicative and conceptual obstacles that need to be overcome when co-operating internationally, co-operation and comparative perspectives is a powerful tool to become aware of assumptions that are taken for granted; to challenge one's own perspectives; raise new kind of questions and construct new perspectives and new ways to conceptualise, think, and act.

Introduction

Within the academic field international co-operation and contacts has become more and more important and there is a growing trend towards cross-border activities, both within and outside Europe (European Commission, 2005). In the name of globalisation, internationalisation, competition and quality students, teachers and researchers in higher education are expected to be active on the international arena (Fletcher, 2007; Marginson, 2006; Merisotis & Sadlak, 2005; Smeby & Trondal, 2005).

Expectations that some years ago mostly were on high ranked researchers, now seams to be valid for all researchers (SOU 2007:81). Researchers are expected to be active on the international arena; participating in conferences, networking and projecting as well as publishing themselves internationally, preferably in peer-reviewed journals with a good reputation. These kinds of involvements are expected to be favourable when for instance writing applications for research funding, showing that the researcher or the research group has competence to be active on the international arena (Gerlese, 2008). Other important expectations are that co-operation ought to give access to new perspectives, new knowledge, new influences and growing international trends. In addition, this could give opportunities to be the first introducing them on the national arena, giving initiatives and helping to build an ethos of someone being at the cutting edge as a professional.

International co-operation does have a lot of positive effects and opportunities, some mentioned above. However, we must also admit the existence of challenges and dilemmas when co-operating or doing networking. This could be seen as "costs", not just financial costs but also "costs" in time, effort and risk for the wrong kind of prioritizing or jeopardized reputation. These kinds of "costs" are often seen as investments to gain future benefits, but these investments have to pay off, and be seen as worthwhile. The perspective in this chapter is to highlight and problematise the "costs" of international co-operation between individuals. This will be done focusing on individual and collative processes of communication, interpretation, understanding and sensemaking; showing that international co-operation and knowledge transfer does not come easily, but is the result of hard work as well as intellectual, linguistic and pedagogical challenges.

As noted in the introduction of this book, it is a result of work carried out within the NQTNE consisting of participants from five countries. When people meet and start to communicate the aspiration is to try to understand each other. In a conversation we listen to what others say, and try to interpret and understand what kind of message the other

would like to communicate. We hear the words, but do we understand the message as it was intended to be understood? To what extent do we understand another person's story of an experience; descriptions of other countries' initial teacher education unknown to us; systems to promote new teachers' professional development, also unknown to us; or to what extent do we understand another individual's way of conceptualising different concepts? Do mentors and mentees conceptualise the concept of "mentoring" the same way? Do they expect the same thing? Thus, this chapter brings valuable knowledge about the challenge to communicate, conceptualise and make sense of concepts, phenomena and information given. I will use experiences made and situations arised within the NQTNE.

If we share the same or similar experiences it is easier to understand, than if we do not. These kinds of dilemmas are always present when humans communicate. However, it is a specific dilemma when communicating from different social, cultural, economic, historical and national context, as the members of the NQTNE have done when meeting over the years. While trying to learn each other's systems promoting new teachers professional development and to understand each other's perspectives, these kinds of challenges have been highlighted in the process of interpreting, understanding and sensemaking.

In the chapter I will start by giving a theoretical perspective on the processes of communication, interpretation, understanding and sensemaking. I will then discuss a range of challenges experienced within NQTNE during the years of networking, as well as while writing this book. I use real examples from conversations and situations that have occurred within NQTNE. I will problematise the challenges to understand and make sense of phrases and concepts in use and show that phrases and concepts are not used in a consistent way in literature. Finally I will discuss some conclusions.

Communication, interpretation and sensemaking

As mentioned in the introduction, communication could be understood as a struggle to get the grasp of what kind of message others would like to communicate. Historically, metaphors as "senders" and "receivers" or communication as a process of "from–to" have been used to understand communication. However, during the last decades the understanding of communication has shifted, from transfer of information to sensemaking (Linell, 1998). Then, communication is not so much a process of trying to grasp the "sender's message", as a process including a great variety of sources while trying to make sense of what is uttered

and how the communicative situations should (or could) be understood. To see communication as a process of sensemaking gives acknowledgement to the multidimensional character of the communication, as spoken or written language, body language, symbolic language, music and pictures, intonation and so on (Burn & Parker, 2003). As a result, the whole communicative situation becomes important in the process of sensemaking – not just the words spoken. From that perspective communication can be understood as the practice of producing and negotiating meaning, a practice which Schirato and Yell (1996) argue always takes place under specific, cultural, social, economic and political conditions.

What was described in the introduction to the chapter as a dilemma – the process to try to understand each other – is also a forceful aspect of communicative situations. In a dialogue the endeavour to understand the other, leads to the involvement of all participants in helping each other to negotiate meaning and make sense. Essential in these processes is the exposure of one's own understanding and testing of the others (Linell, 1998). Together, these are constantly ongoing processes in a communicative situation and it is a requirement for learning. Hence, these processes give powerful opportunities to widen perspectives, to challenge unquestioned assumptions, to get new knowledge, and to share understandings and meanings. However, to what extent we *really* reach shared understanding and meaning in a dialogue could be limited. Linell (1998) stresses that:

> […] communication does not presuppose or produce total sharedness of meaning; rather it consists in people's *attempts to expose and test their understandings*. […] Indeed, in practice, shared understandings occur only occasionally, if they occur at all. (Linell, 1998, p. 80)

If shared understanding occurs only occasionally, if ever, as Linell stresses, communication embraces a lot of uncertainty that is the very driving force in communication. The endeavour to understand each other gives the dynamics in the communication. From this perspective, we could even stress that it is essential that we cannot understand each other so easily, because we then have to engage in a genuine process of trying to exchange perspectives, to understand each other and to negotiate meanings.

When trying to understand and make sense of for instance the initial teacher education in different countries or systems to promote new teachers' professional development – as we have tried within the

NQTNE and in this book – the main source is spoken or written infor-mation. The communicative situation *itself* has given very limited ac-cess to the specific, cultural, social, economic and political conditions that could help the process of sensemaking. These specific conditions are important clues in the process of sensemaking and provide a frame for interpretation and sensemaking. However, sensemaking and inter-pretation are concepts often (wrongly) used synonymously, so this has to be elaborated a bit further.

Weick (1995) claims that the key distinction between sensemaking and interpretation is that sensemaking "is about the way people gener-ate what they interpret." (p. 13). Interpreting and understanding require particular knowledge or framework in which to place information, and sensemaking could be seen as the process of connecting to the frames or generating them. Weick (1995) sees sensemaking as a process involving three elements: a frame, a cue, and a connection in between. He says:

> Frames tend to be past moments of socialisation and cues tend to be present moments of experiences. If a person can construct a relation between these two moments, meaning is created. This means that the content of sensemaking is to be found in the frames and categories that summarise past experience, in the cue and label that snare specifics of present experience, and in the ways these two settings of experiences are connected. (Weick, 1995, p. 111)

The frames, as I understand Weick, could be seen as emerging out of past experiences in specific, cultural, social, economic and political conditions. We give meaning to events and experiences, which become the process of sensemaking. In this process, when trying to understand a conversation – about for instance other countries' system to promote new teachers' professional development – the "cues" are delivered in the conversation and the frames are already assumed "to be there". However, these frames have emerged out of the specific, cultural, so-cial, economic and political conditions the person has experience of. If no, little or fragmented experience of *other* countries' contexts exist, the frames give little help in the process of sensemaking. When talking about for instance educational systems, school organisations, systems promoting new teachers' professional development in other countries when having "insufficient" frames, the processes of interpretation, un-derstanding and sensemaking become delicate and difficult.

Then, the process of trying to understand each other in a network, each other's concepts or systems to promote new teachers' professional

development, neither ends with interpretation nor with understanding, but has to result in analysing, questioning and developing the very central frames of sensemaking. Hence, the conversations and elaborations of phrases, concepts, perspectives and "stories" within the NQTNE could be understood as a way of negotiating meaning, that is: trying to get a shared way of interpretation, understanding and sensemaking. The distinction between phrase and concept here becomes important, as a phrase is just words, but words given meaning within specific frames of interpretation and sensemaking make concepts, that is how phrases make sense and are interpreted in a context. We will come back to this later. However, trying to achieve a shared way of interpretation, understanding and sensemaking is, as Linell (1998) stresses and as we will see in this chapter, rather limited. This has become obvious not just in conversation but also in the process of writing this book. As one of the authors of another chapter in this book says:

> It's much easier to write with colleagues from my own institution who share my perspectives and my frames, than doing this kind of writing with someone from another country who does not share my frames and perhaps don't understand what I mean while talking or writing, but still does not say anything about it.

However, these have been challenges to overcome and in the allowing and friendly climate within NQTNE, communication has really become a practice of producing and negotiating meaning.

Having rather elaborated "frames", it is possible that the process of sensemaking leads to the construction of more coherent knowledge and frames. Already having some basic knowledge (frames), when for instance a foreign system promoting new teachers' professional development is described, gives the possibility to identify various aspects of the system and other perspectives, not given in the delivered description. If not knowing anything in advance (insufficient frames) we are much in the hands of the storyteller's perspective. Thus, to understand the information and stories provided from one perspective, out of many conceivable, is then essential. Being aware of different perspectives makes it easier to be more critical, to the stories delivered as well as to one's own ways of conceptualising, interpreting and making sense.

As there has been two or more participants from each country in the NQTNE (except from Denmark) this has been quite obvious. Especially as slightly different "stories" have been delivered (and sometimes rather different stories). The presence of many "truths", or fragments of truth,

has sometimes become confusing. The opportunities for complementary explanations from another person with knowledge of the national context have also become possible, as a second person could understand what could be obscurities or simplifications in the information given by the colleague from the same national context. Together, this has contributed to the development and sharing of a more extensive and coherent knowledge for all, than if just one person from each country had participated.

Language and the negations of meaning

An important element in the communicative process and the process of interpretation, understanding and sensemaking is the use of language. The language mediates the elements of sensemaking. In international co-operation, when people with different mother tongues communicate, the communication has to be carried out in a language all can understand. But what happens when you communicate in a foreign language you do not fully master? What happens when Nordic people meet? Research shows that youth in the Nordic countries almost consistently understand English better than the language in their neighbour countries (Delsing & Lundin Åkesson, 2005).[1]

Within the NQTNE English has been used, mainly out of consideration for the Finnish and Estonian participants. However, this has led to some consequences. The communication has not been on equal terms as the skills to communicate and interpret in English differed among the participants. Some felt comfortable and communicated rather fluently in English, others not. Some had a rather good vocabulary in the specific professional field elaborated, others not. Some were given more influence, or took more initiatives, others not.

When communicating in a foreign language, the relationship between thinking and communication becomes essential. In what language do participants think, and to what extent does each of us master the English language? Being unfamiliar with communication and thinking in English, it is easier to think in one's own mother tongue. Communication then also becomes a process of translating what we are thinking.[2] However, being in a context dominated by the English language for a while, you soon even start to think in English. In these kinds of situations it is rather common to think in English, even to dream in English.

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[1] The research included approximately 1 300 young people in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Island, Greenland, the Åland Islands and the Faeroes. The main focus has been in the Scandinavian countries. Of the youths, most participants have been 16 to 19 years old, but some have been up to 25 years. 25% were immigrants, with a non-Scandinavian language as mother tongue.

[2] Is it so that we think in one language, translate it to a foreign language, and do the interpretation of what we actually said (in the foreign language) when we get response in return?

However, the use of the English language is delicate. Misunderstandings, fragmented frames, difficulties to use the most adequate nuances, and lack of concepts in English have sometimes made the communication and the process of producing and negotiating meaning within NQTNE long-winded and sometimes confusing. I will give one example of a dramatized reproduction of a genuine conversation that took place in Estonia in 2006 during a NQTNE meeting.

> A: – When you say supervision, you do talk about mentoring a newly qualified teacher?
>
> B: – Yes.
>
> C: – But supervision? Isn't that a more "offensive" approach than mentors should have? Supervision, isn't that more for a mentor during the initial teacher training?
>
> A: – Mentors during initial teacher training? No, you can have a mentor when you are newly qualified, but during teacher training you will be guided by a local teacher trainer….
>
> C: – Local teacher trainer?

In this dramatization the essence and content of this chapter emerges: confusion about meaning of phrases, concepts and contexts; the challenging processes of communication, interpretation, understanding and sensemaking; the efforts to overcome the lack of appropriate concepts through using "home made" concepts (like local teacher trainer). The exposure and testing of one's own understanding, as Linell (1998) stresses as important in sensemaking, emerge clearly in all its confusedness.

Another way of trying to elaborate, negotiate and produce meanings and some kind of mutual understanding is the use of body language (Knapp & Hall, 2006). Nods, wrinkling of the forehead, eyebrows or lips or the way we use gestures are just some examples of how body language mediates reactions and feelings possible to interpret for others. This way, spoken word and body language interact in the process of meaning making, and this could occur in a subtle way or in a more explicit way. An example of the latter was when the participants from Sweden tried to express their interpretation of the difference between the phenomenon of promoting student teachers' learning in the initial teacher education (when they are teaching pupils in school while supported by qualified teachers) and the promotion of new teachers' professional development is given (or is supposed to be given). This was dramatised as someone standing behind ready to put the hand on the

shoulder to prevent the new teacher from falling ("failing"). The hand (support) was ready in case something would happen, but in general the new teacher was standing on his/her own feet – symbolically responsible for himself/herself. On the other way, the promotion of the student teachers learning was dramatised as someone sometimes had to grasp the student's hand and literally show what direction to take or prevent him/her from falling ("failing"). This dramatisation "visualised" different behaviours and expectations connected to the promotion of teacher students and new teachers professional development. When visualised, it become easier to discuss and make sense of. As a result, the participants come closer to a shared meaning of this rather difficult phenomenon to express.

However, this – what characterise the relationship between mentor and mentee in different educational and cultural settings – has been the most challenging phenomena to make sense of. What kind of expectations, norms, values and actions characterising the relationship in a specific cultural and educational system is difficult to make sense of, if not having a rather good (lived) experience of the settings.

As shown, body language is a powerful tool to communicate meanings, but what happens if the word flow becomes disturbed? Sometimes, in a generally fluent English conversation, someone could hesitate while searching for adequate words. The communicative process producing and negotiating meaning then becomes explicit. Others could then assist by filling in words or completing the sentence. These kind of repair strategies are especially common when non-native speakers talk to native speakers (Plejert, 2004). Within the NQTNE these kinds of phenomena have appeared. Mostly someone has assisted by filling in words, but on a few occasions the sentences have not even been completed, and the whole situation has ended with some kind of common understanding that there is no use lingering on that thread of conversation, since we do not understand each other. In the few situations this has occurred, it has mostly been in informal conversations, where perhaps full attention has not been given to reach a common understanding, for instance due to tiredness, partly focusing on another conversation or some text.

When discussions within the NQTNE situations have occurred where repair strategies, as filling in words or completing sentences, have lead to an illusory feeling of a common understanding. In many situations, as the sentence has been completed, some kind of common understanding *seems* to have occurred due to the "nodding and smiling" that accompanied the utterances. However, sometimes the common understanding has *not been about the content discussed*, but of the sentences elaborated. The producing and negotiation of common mean-

ing has then been about how to complete the sentence, not about how to understand the content discussed. The conclusion then is that repair strategies sometimes, but not always, contribute to a common understanding, but in some cases even obstruct sensemaking.

Repair strategies are not always possible to use, especially not when the medium of communication itself contributes to limitations and confusedness in communication. To communicate via e-mail or in texts (or short comments in text) could be risky as the medium invites to communicate in a "potted way", as there is limited time, space or even patience to express elaborated interpretations or nuances. Little or fragmented information brings the risk of messages and meaning are being understood in "non-intended ways" causing confusion, misunderstandings and even irritation. Especially during the writing of this book e-mails or comments in texts sometimes seem to have caused unnecessary misunderstandings. Another aspect connected to this is that the daily workload has made the process of writing an irregular activity. One author of this book describes this phenomenon out of the experience waiting for co-writers' contributions that do not turn out as expected.

> When people are living in a rush and are short of time, the work [the writing] seems to be lying for a long time until something happens, and then suddenly it [the writing] happens very rapidly. It's then easy to forget the essence of earlier discussions when they [we] met physically.

To remember the "true" essence of earlier discussions and nuances of interpretations and agreements of how a specific sort of information should be presented, interpreted or made sense of, becomes more complicated as time goes by. Especially when one has to recapitulate conversations that have taken place long ago in a language other than your own mother tongue.

As no one in the NQTNE has English as their own mother tongue, the knowledge about the English phrases and concepts in use is not at the same level as a native speaker's. For instance, we do not have the same knowledge as a native speaker about how phrases and concepts could be used, nuanced, conceptualised or interpreted in different contexts. A phrase then tends to be used in an "instrumental way", with vague connections to other possible interpretations or nuances of meaning. Any deeper knowledge of nuances in the language and of the concepts requires a fairly good knowledge of the language and its context. Here the distinction between phrase and concept becomes important, since a phrase could be seen as offers of meanings, while the processes of sensemaking and the "construction" of concepts proceed "within"

(the individual's) specific frames. Hence, the opportunity to use different phrases influences the processes of sensemaking and the interpretation of different concepts, contexts and phenomena.

But how do you develop knowledge about how phrases, concepts and meanings could be used, nuanced, conceptualised or interpreted in a foreign language or in a foreign context? Not everyone has the opportunity to live in another country, learning the language and learning about the context. Most of us in the NQTNE are exposed to English through media and in our professional life as researchers. We interact – but to a varying extent – with other researchers and teacher trainers in the professional field of education, professional development, and learning. Most commonly, we read literature and articles in English within this field. However, this does not give access to a coherent use of phrases and concepts. On the contrary, there is a rich variety of phrases and concepts in use for the same phenomena and in other situations the same phenomena are addressed in different ways.[3] We shall in the next section take a closer look at this and discuss some consequences.

'New teachers' and 'mentoring' in research literature

In this chapter I have used the phrase 'new teacher' in the meaning of a fully qualified teacher with a diploma from initial teacher training and in principle full responsibility in teaching, however often inexperienced. In the literature other phrases as *novice teachers*, *beginning teachers* or *newly qualified teachers* are used, and to a great extent used synonymously. However, in many articles, these phrases are not used consistently. Instead, my research reveals that they are often used simultaneously in a way that appears to be indiscriminate. For instance, Strong & Baron (2004) use the phrase *beginning teachers* (32 times) and *novice teacher* (8 times); McNally & Oberski (2003) use the phrase *new teacher* (41 times), *newly qualified teachers* (3 times), and *beginning teachers* (2 times); and Wang & Odell (2007) use the phrase *novice* teacher (22 times); *new teacher* (10 times) and *beginning teacher* (2 times).[4]

There could be a lot of reasons for the fact that different phrases are in use. However, it is not as simple as to claim that the phrases "newly qualified teacher", "new teacher" or "beginning teacher" are used when, for instance, talking about the "teacher's short experience in schools"; while "novice teacher" is used when relating to competence, knowledge and skills. Nevertheless, "novice" is often used as a contrast to exper-

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[3]   However, it could be discussed if it actually is the same phenomena, as phenomena, out of a constructivist perspective, are constructed in the very process of sensemaking. This philosophical question I do not develop further in this chapter.

[4]   Not even in this book is these phrases used coherently when comparing the different chapters.

tise, experienced teachers or mentors, but also in other contexts where the other phrases mentioned could be in use.

Another reason observed why different phrases are in use, has to do with quotation and references. When making references to other researchers, their phrases and concepts in use are often taken over. Preserving the original phrases and concepts is a way of acting with scientific carefulness, but it could also result in the survival of phrases from "obsolete contexts and discourses" not part of the dominant discourse of today.[5] Other reasons why different phrases are in use could be; a wish to vary the vocabulary in use, that different authors in the same article use different phrases, or – an unreflecting use of the phrases.

I have also used the concepts of *mentor* and *mentoring* in this chapter. I then refer to someone (a mentor) giving "support" to a new teacher. Mentoring is then the process occurring between the new teacher and the mentor. In the literature however, other phrases as "mentoring beginning teachers" (Strong & Baron, 2004), "mentoring novice teachers" (Wang, 2001) or "mentoring new teachers" (Achinstein, 2006; McNally & Oberski, 2003) are in use. All these examples refer to the same phenomenon, and *newly qualified teachers*, *novice teachers*, *beginning teachers* or *new teachers* are largely used synonymously in the referred cases.

The phrases *mentor and mentoring* is – in the context of teachers and teacher training – most often used in the context of new teachers (cf. Strong & Baron, 2004). However, these phrases are also used in another context, i.e. when "*someone" at school promotes the learning of student teachers involved in programmes of initial teacher education*. To mention some other phrases used in this context, Sundli (2007) uses the phrase "mentoring of student teachers"; Leshem (2008) and Hudson (2007) "novice teacher"; Wilson (2005) "beginning teacher"; and Téllez (2008) "co-operating teacher" – all when discussing activities connected to student teachers' teaching practice in schools.

Then, the question emerges how to conceptualise "mentoring" in these different kinds of contextual settings. For certain, it is not the same to be "mentoring" a new teacher and a student teacher (cf. Strong & Baron, 2004). The only conclusion is that the same term is used, but the phenomena – the activities, the relations, the expectations, and the objectives – are not the same. Harrison et al. (2006) take this a bit further when they problematise the concepts of "mentoring" and "coaching" and show the difficulties in understanding them in a common way.

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[5] I will give one example, however with slightly exaggerated formulations, focusing how newly qualified teachers are conceptualised and viewed upon: as some poor, fragile and inexperienced teacher in great need of support – or as a competent colleague, however not experienced.

> The multiple meanings we have already noted in connection with the terms 'mentoring' and 'coaching' highlight how difficult it is to be sure that we are referring to a commonly understood concept. (Harrison et al., 2006, p. 1056)

They discuss "mentoring" and "coaching", but we can neither be sure when referring to commonly understood phrases when discussing, for instance, supervision, tutoring, peer mentoring, group mentoring, co-operative teaching, induction – nor when we try to elaborate differences and borderlines between initial teacher training,   induction and professional development, or when a (former) student teacher becomes a fully qualified and autonomous teacher.

Another complicating dimension to be added is the phenomenon that concepts change meaning and even context over time. If we take mentoring as an example, Wang and Odell (2007) describe the conceptual change as a shift towards constructivism and more collaborative forms of mentoring (see also chapter 5 in this book). To make it even more complicated, Wang and Odell (2007) have identified 16 different types of mentor-novice relationships.[6] This shows that even the "mentoring phenomenon" appears in different ways and could be conceptualised with different meanings.

In general, when reviewing literature there seem to be very few nuances in the concepts of mentoring. Sometimes it seems like there is *one* mentoring process, while a quite plausible assumption is that there are a lot of different processes and approaches present at the same time, depending on what kind of activities and content that is dealt with and of course the variations over time (see also the chapter 4). The complexity of the phenomenon seems to be difficult to capture in text.

Another concepts that could also be understood in different ways is the concept of induction (see also chapter 3). In the Anglo-Saxon literature, the concept of *induction* is commonly used when comparing and describing systematic support to NQT´s. However, the concept is used in different ways and with different meanings in different national contexts. The concept is sometimes used describing a system for support (induction-system); a time-period (induction-period); a specific phase in teaching (induction-phase) or a process of learning (Britton et al., 2003). In countries where the actual classroom experiences during initial teacher training are very limited, induction could be conceptualised as a necessary part of – or something complementary to – the

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[6]   These categorizes emerge dependent on if the mentor and the novice share ideas and views concerning what kind of teaching they believe in and want to practice, and the way they want the process of "learning to teach" to emerge.

initial teacher education. It can be difficult to conceptualise the concept of induction in a comparative perspective, because of the variations between countries and variations in the relationship between initial teacher education, induction and in-service education. Sometimes the induction is to be seen as a part of the teacher education, when the learning to teach is learnt as on-the-job-learning while teaching, sometimes is not. These kinds of questions, and other similar, consequently give the result that, when doing comparative cross-country research, it is a methodical dilemma how to identify and delimit *when* a teacher is to bee seen as new. Britton et al. (2003) claim that "one cannot consider induction without understanding the assumptions, values and orientations of the broader culture it serves" (p. 303).

To conclude, we have seen that the same phrases are used for different phenomena, and vice versa, different phrases are used describing the "same phenomenon". We have also seen that a closer look at a phenomenon, as the mentor-novice relationship, could reveal that the phenomena appear in different ways. It then becomes obvious that it is not possible to fully understand and make sense of what kind of activities and relationships are laying behind a specific phrase, without knowledge about the specific context. This phenomenon does also Kansanen (2002) describe when he analysis the use of the concept "didactics" and alternative concepts connected to "the same phenomenon" in different national settings. As me, he discusses the problems that could emerge when we want to, or believe us to, express the same concept or phenomena out of different national, cultural, educational settings. Returning to the initial discussion, the processes of interpretation, understanding and sensemaking – with the goal to understand other perspectives – are not easy, especially when we communicate using phrases with unclear or ambiguous meanings and when it is difficult to connect to any specific frames of sensemaking.

I have showed that scientific articles (written in English) do not give access to a coherent frame of phrases, concepts, and processes of sensemaking within this topic. Phrases have to be interpreted in connections to its contexts that a foreign reader often has no knowledge about. As a consequence, a non-English speaking person does not get so much help developing coherent concepts from reading articles written in English. Access is given to the phrases, but how to conceptualise and make sense of them, both in the context of the article read and in the context of one's own is more questionable.

Conclusions – Consequences for international co-operation and comparative research

In this chapter, I have showed that international co-operation does not come easily, when trying to communicate, interpret, understand and make sense of different national contexts promoting new teachers professional development. I have mainly focused on the communicative, linguistically and pedagogical challenges in co-operation between individuals, when communicating from different national contexts in English which none of the participants have as their mother tongue.

The main challenge in the process of communication, interpretation, understanding and sensemaking, is to come to the point where the participants share each others perspectives. However, depending on what kind of co-operation going on and what kind of research-focus elaborated, there are different needs of sharing perspectives. When analysing and trying to understand each others systems and approaches to promote new teachers professional development; specific efforts has to be made to consider the cultural, social, economical and political conditions forming the national educational contexts and philosophies. Comparative research will be facilitated if there are a movement towards shared perspectives and understandings in the analysis. This is not only a question of learning, but also a question of quality in research, if different contexts are understood, communicated and analyses on the same premises (or at least as near it is possible to come).

In the kind of research performed within NQTNE, specific efforts has to be made to consider the cultural, social, economical and political conditions forming the national educational contexts and philosophies. When analysing and trying to understand each others systems and approaches to promote new teachers professional development, these conditions emerge on macro-level as well as on a micro-level.

However, during the process of writing this book, discrepancies have emerged between basic materials from different countries, and the draft texts reflecting the countries. It has emerged especially when a "foreigner" has tried to understand another countries contexts or systems promoting new teachers professional development. It then becomes explicit that basic materials in texts only give limited and fragmented information to a complex context. This shows the importance that national experts, as the NQTNE-participants, are involved in the whole process of writing, from, formulating the questions possible to raise (and answer), to the very final choice of what nuances of words will be used in what kind of context.

This also includes an additional review of the very language review. During the process reviewing the language in this book, professional reviewers in different countries preferred different concepts, and even changed concepts resulting in violations of the essential meaning when looking from another national perspective.

Discrepancies between basic materials and draft texts also reveals the phenomenon that contributors (of text) over time seem to develop or even change ways of conceptualising and making sense of their own context. Questions could also be raised to what extent these kind of discrepancies do occur due to misunderstandings, fragmented knowledge or because someone would like "something" to appear on a more pleasant way than a foreigner would perceive it.

In an ideal world, you could believe it is possible to start the writing discussing and agree on how to use and conceptualise phrases and concepts, just to get the writing become a smoothly process. However, in this chapter I have showed that it is in the process of writing different conceptualisations, meanings and ways to make sense are revealed. Someone cannot assume that other interprets, understand and make sense in the same way. On the contrary a more pedagogical (and realistic) approach is to assume that we do not interpret, understand and make sense in the same way.

Finally, some main conclusions could be drawn. First, we have to conclude that, on the one hand, the process of communication, interpretation and sensemaking does not come easy; and on the other hand, that this is a powerful driving force for engaging in a genuine process of exchanging perspectives, to understand each others and to negotiate meanings.

Second, even if there are communicative and conceptual obstacles that have to be overcome, we have to conclude that international co-operation and comparative perspectives is a powerful tool in order to become aware of assumptions that are taken for granted, challenge one's own perspectives, raise new questions and construct new perspectives and new ways to conceptualise, think, and act. The positive aspects of international co-operation are manifold.

The third, and main conclusion, is that co-operation and networking is more demanding and time consuming on the international arena, than on the domestic arena (even if that could be very challenging too). Being active on the international arena (often) demands more recourse in time, efforts and social, cultural, and even economic awareness. It also demands an awareness of the process of communication, interpretation, understanding, and sensemaking that could emerge – or not emerge as expected. Especially the time aspect seems to be underestimated, caused

by, as I have shown, the time consuming processes of communication interpretation and sensmaking. Other aspects, such as partners acting with different timetables or priorities also influence and add to a time consuming co-operation.

All together, this has to be taken in consideration both from the one – individuals, organisations or founders – calling for more international co-operation, and from the one considering to go into international co-operation. However, co-operation could also be seen as an investment and a way of getting access to new perspectives, new knowledge, new influences and growing international trends. In turn this could give opportunities to take initiatives on the national arena. Within NQTNE these kinds of possibilities for national initiatives seem to have been most advantageous in Denmark and Finland, where the promotion of new teachers seems to be a rather new discussion on the agenda, while it is not in Sweden, Denmark and Estonia. However, the development of new perspectives and new knowledge is something everyone shares.

Finally, I believe there is a need for further research focusing on the processes of communication and sensemaking that could emerge when co-operating on the international arena. These intellectual, linguistic and pedagogical challenges deserve further analysis.

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Chapter 3

Systems Promoting
New Teachers' Professional Development

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes a comparative analysis of the systems of support for new teachers in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The findings reported here are the result of co-operation over a period of three years with teacher educators and researchers in this field in these five countries.

In northern European countries, students receiving the teacher diploma are fully certified as teachers. They are employed with the same responsibilities as experienced teachers. Teaching is considered worldwide to be an occupation that "cannibalises its young" (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004, p. 28); these five countries differ in whether they provide special induction programmes, how these induction systems are constructed, and whether they incorporate one or many systems. Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden until now have used a decentralisation strategy for developing induction programmes, while Estonia uses a more centralised strategy. The strategies are complex and sophisticated, because specific partnerships and characteristics are influenced by national conditions, and the quantity and quality of the programmes vary. There are similarities and differences in their approaches, and this article presents analyses regarding the different strategies, their strengths and weaknesses – and recent changes.

Introduction and concepts used in this chapter

This chapter presents a comparative analysis of the systems and contexts of support for new teachers in Danish, Estonian, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish schools[1]. The key questions are the following: How does support to new teachers differ, why does it differ and is it possible to find footprints of a common induction model? There are considerable differences in these countries, e.g., in size and organisation; but as we see in Table 3.1 there are many similarities as well.

Table 3.1: Basic data concerning population, national organisations and BNP.

	Population	Area km²	Regions	Municipalities	BNP per capita
Denmark	5.38 mill.	43,094	5 regions	98	USD 23,800
Estonia	1.42 mill.	45,227	15 counties	241	USD 5,600
Finland	5.18 mill.	304,593	11 *len*	460	USD 21,000
Norway	4.5 mill.	306,253	19 *fylker*	435	USD 25,100
Sweden	8.9 mill.	444,960	21 *län*	289	USD 20,700

(*Den Store Danske Encyklopædi*, 2004; BNP per capita: Wikipedia, 2007).

One similarity is that new teachers in all five countries in principle are employed right from the start with the same responsibilities as more experienced teachers. When a student teacher receives the teacher diploma, she[2] is fully certified as a teacher. New teachers, therefore, start their careers in a phase in which they must face many challenges simultaneously, which usually results in professional learning, but also very often is an overwhelming experience. In English this phase is called an induction period. "Induction" is an Anglo-Saxon term that does not have an equivalent phrase in any of the national languages of concern here. The literal translations of the phrases in use are, e.g., "support to new teachers", "professional competence development for beginners", "supporting novice teachers' adjustment to school as an organisation and to the teaching profession", or we use the phrases describing the actual acts taking place as support for new teachers, such as mentoring, peer-mentoring, group-mentoring, courses for NQTs etc.

The northern European countries need to create terminology in this field, because we need a term in our national languages like "induction", which specifically characterises the phase, the actions taken and

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[1] The term "school" is used commonly to refer to kindergarten, preschool, primary school, secondary and upper secondary schools. In this chapter, the main focus is on the primary and lower secondary levels

[2] We use the personal pronoun she for the NQTs.

the process at the same time. In the NQTNE network, and in this article, we use the term "induction", referring to the definition by Baldassarre.[3] Baldassarre (1998) defines induction as:

> [...] a process of coming to terms with workplace and the profession, that is to say how teachers <u>become aware</u> of and deal with the different factors that are operating in the educational settings, how they integrate the professional <u>knowledge</u> in the daily practice by <u>experiencing</u> and <u>reflecting</u> on these experiences, how they refer to the school context in the widest sense, including all aspects of pedagogical, relational, school-cultural nature. (p. 19)

In this definition of induction, emphasis is placed on induction as a specific learning and development process that new teachers undertake in the beginning of their profession. Induction is also a preferable term because it emphasises the inductive character of the process. Induction in epistemology is defined as a pattern in scientific and sociological research:

> [...] a process by which the truth of a position is made more probable by the accumulation of confirming evidence. [...] It cannot be ultimately valid because there is always the possibility of a disconfirming instance. (Abercrombie et al., 1994, p. 211)

Though the learning process of new teachers is not a scientific research endeavour, this characteristic of an induction process is indeed typical of the experience process of a new teacher.

In this chapter, focusing on activities taking place in and the contexts of these five northern European countries, we define the induction period as the first one to two years employed as a teacher, because the induction activities in these countries actually take place for either one or two years.

Throughout the analysis, we distinguish between high-intensity induction programmes, low-intensity induction programmes (OECD, 2005) and spontaneous buddy support. High-intensity programmes last from at least some months up to one or two years, and are aimed at professional and systematised development, learning and support. Low-intensity programmes are, for example, a shorter introduction to the workplace, organised buddy support in the first months of work etc.

This can be, for example, an experienced teacher giving information, showing the new teachers around and helping them find their place in the organisation and in the team. Usually it is the more experienced

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[3] The term "induction" in the Nordic context has been introduced by researchers at University of Gävle, who have formed The Induction Research Group at the University of Gävle. This group represents the secretariat of the NQTNE, and has taken the initiative to do comparative research in northern Europe.

colleague and the new teacher who determine for themselves how to spend this time. Frequently, time is spent addressing questions such as "How do I find…" and "I have a problem..." Both low- and high-intensity induction programmes can contain courses sponsored by the municipality, the university or the teacher unions. The spontaneous buddy support is what takes place between colleagues at school level without being organised.

Supporting activities in schools for new teachers are internationally described as "induction programmes" or "induction systems". In this article, "induction systems" is chosen because the system metaphor emphasises the recurrent and developmental character of support: the new teachers starting in the profession need support activities. We understand the term *system* as "any collection of interrelated parts, objects, things or organisms" (Abercrombie et al., 1994, p. 392). In practice, when supporting new teachers, this means that we understand an induction system as: the organisation, activities and organisational culture of new teachers' learning process support, which takes place annually and is repeated or developed continually.

In terms of "organisational culture", we are referring to "a pattern of basic assumptions, which are invented, explored or developed by a specific group at the same time as the group learns to tackle problems in relation to external adoption and internal integration, which function well enough to be understood as valid (Schein, 1986, p. 16). With this definition of an "induction system", we also keep in mind Peter Senge's warning: "We tend to focus on the parts rather than seeing the whole, and to fail to see organisation as a dynamic process" (Senge quoted in Smith, 2001). Thus, we focus in the current analysis on:

- The parts: i.e., the activities;
- The wholeness: i.e., induction as a part of activities in schools, municipalities and national educational systems;
- The processes taking place.

The induction period is a crucial time in professional lives, often with very overwhelming challenges; how these challenges are managed influences the teacher's future career (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

The development of induction systems: A partnership and networking development process

The new teachers themselves are not the only ones interested in managing the challenges of the induction period in a positive and productive way. In every national context, there are quite a number of participants

who take part in developing and implementing the induction activities. Examples of such stakeholders are colleagues, school leaders, local authorities, teacher trade unions, initial teacher education institutions and politicians. The stakeholders are found at different levels, including school level, municipality level, regional and national levels, and they may have very different priorities and interests, such as new teachers' working conditions, recruitment, prevention of drop-out and supporting new teachers' professional development (OECD, 2005). Where action is taken, these stakeholders form partnerships based on common interests as well as specific stakeholder interests. These interests can vary from stakeholder to stakeholder, but the partnerships are based on mutually agreed upon joint responsibilities.

The development of induction systems is also fostered by co-operation on a less formal and non-contract basis: networking is apparent everywhere induction systems are developed. Networking is by definition the sharing of knowledge between professionals. Networking often develops from informal activities to more formalised networking activities, though to varying degrees. Networking is different from partnerships, however. While partnerships focus on carrying out tasks in common, networking refers to relations between professionals who share knowledge, although not as partners with a common responsibility. The sharing of knowledge in so-called professional communities is an increasingly common tendency in many fields (Wenger et al., 2002). In some cases, networking and partnerships overlap, and sometimes a network develops into a partnership and vice versa. The distinction is useful, however, in order to clarify what is actually taking place in specific contexts. Table 3.2 below provides a summary of definitions used here.

Table 3.2: Summary of definitions used in this chapter.

Induction	A process of "coming to terms with the workplace and the profession", experienced by every new teacher
Induction period	The first one or two years as a new teacher
Induction system	The organisation, activities and organisational culture of new teachers' learning process support, taking place annually (and repeated or developed continually)
Partnership	Sharing of responsibilities (and possibly knowledge)
Network	Sharing of knowledge (but not necessarily responsibility)

Recognition of support needed for new teachers

There are numerous discourses about new teachers and support for new teachers in the five northern European countries. The focus of these discourses includes: the quality of initial teacher education, shortcomings in competence, registration of teachers, need for support, mechanisms for increasing professional development of teachers in general, discussions related to the results of the PISA investigations, and procedures for improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools (OECD, 2005; Skagen, 2006; OECD, 2007). These discourses are connected to discussions about how to support new teachers and teachers as life-long learners. The discourses are international as well as national; they all have been relevant to the five countries, as well as internationally, though to varying degrees.

There is a common general understanding of professional development behind these discourses. Becoming a teacher is a process, starting with initial education as a student and continuing with the newly qualified teacher starting to practice the profession. This professional knowledge can only be internalised by practising the profession. There is also a growing understanding of the need for supporting new teachers in relation to the understanding of schools as learning organisations. Learning organisations can be described as:

> …organisations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together. (Senge, 1990, p. 3)

New teachers very often have different competencies than experienced teachers. The fact that many new teachers are young and may be more in touch with the youth culture of the day, as well as having more up-to-date academic knowledge, can indicate that their competence and capacities are vital for further professional development of schools. Many young teachers have great assets and potential that benefit the development of their schools (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2007; Hoel et al., 2008). If we stigmatise the new teachers as helpless, we are in danger of missing these strengths (Tickle, 2000; Britton et al., 2003). Therefore, they need to be supported in developing professional competence based on their potential. There is a parallel to the discourse in special needs education: Do we see the learner as one who lacks something – or do we see the learner as one who has potential, and the support needed to develop this potential?

Support for new teachers

Support for new teachers is still developing in all five countries under study here. The importance of supporting the early professional development process has been a focus in these five countries. We are also facing some possible changes in strategies, as is apparent from announced reforms in Sweden (SOU 2008:52) and from signals about reforms in initial teacher education in Norway. Announced reforms do not influence the current strategies for developing these programmes, but rather the direction of further development of programmes.

Nevertheless, the countries differ in whether they have special induction programmes, how they construct the induction systems – or whether they provide one system or many systems.

D E N M A R K :

In Denmark, the conditions for new teachers are different depending on educational levels of teaching appointments. New teachers applying for jobs in municipal primary and lower secondary schools or private independent schools after earning "professional bachelor degrees" will be informed about the possibilities of induction, partly to interest them in the positions. As there is a lack of new teachers and many choose other kinds of jobs after 1–2 years (Bayer & Brinkkjær, 2003), those municipalities and schools with the biggest need have tried to attract and retain teachers by using higher salaries, fewer teaching hours than normal and a variety of low- and high-intensity induction programmes, e.g., introductory courses, experience sharing courses, mentor arrangements and competence development projects (Danmarks Lærerforening, 2003). The purpose of these activities falls on a continuum from easing the start to supporting professional competence development.

The main trend is that new teachers get support through a low-intensity programme from an experienced colleague a limited number of hours during the first year, often 10 to 20. It is often called a "føl ordning", which is a buddy-support arrangement.

A new teacher in upper secondary is offered a combined teacher education and induction programme. After graduating from university with a master's degree (with a major and minor subject), she is offered a job for 2 years in *an educational position*, as a combination of teaching, getting support by mentors, taking part in educational courses, doing 1/2 year further studies in the minor subject, evaluations and exams. In the period when she has this educational position, she has less responsibility and fewer teaching hours than in ordinary positions as a new teacher.

During the first year on the job in kindergarten, primary, secondary or vocational schools, a new teacher takes part in a mandatory nationwide induction year programme organised by a university. The aim is to support new teachers' adjustment to school as an organisation, to develop professional skills and to provide support in solving problems. As part of this programme, every school leader has to appoint a suitable mentor for new teachers in the school, and ensure that mentors have the opportunity to attend special training courses.

Because of this programme, all new teachers get a mentor who works at the same school. The mentor does not have to teach the same subject, but desirably teaches in the same field and at the same school level. Mentoring sessions take place once or twice every week and mentor and mentee visit each other's classrooms. During the induction year, new teachers analyse and develop professional skills in co-operation with the mentor, and they attend four induction seminars conducted by a university.

It is possible to get a diploma after successfully completing the tasks in the induction year, but it is voluntary now. A board for registration was established in the spring of 2006 under the National Examination and Qualification Centre. The board includes practising teachers and representatives from the Teachers' Association, the Union of School Directors and institutions providing initial teacher education. Some have discussed connecting this programme to a process of registration for teachers, but the political decision taken has been not to use the induction process as a control mechanism. Priority, by this decision, is given to support of the early professional development process as a commencement to continuing professional development.

FINLAND:

Finnish schools have no formal statutory system for inducting new teachers. Education providers and individual schools can induct their new teacher as they like. As a result, there are great differences between schools in ways of implementing induction. In some schools, the new teachers are handed an induction folder and brief personal guidance is offered to familiarise the teachers with the practices of the school. Sometimes municipalities organise a joint induction meeting for one or two days, and some municipalities have opened special web pages for the new teachers. Teachers' Union has its own induction programme that emphasises mainly the trade union issues, such as teachers' rights and duties, working time and salary issues.

In the beginning of the 2000s, the issue of supporting new teachers was raised on national level by researchers and the Ministry of Education, and some research and development projects supporting new teachers have also been launched by the Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä. The latest effort is an action research project, "Peer mentoring in teachers' in-service education", funded by the Finnish Work Environment Fund. In the region of Jyväskylä, the mentoring process is clearly conceptualised as reciprocal peer mentoring, and this project is not only for new teachers. The teachers in the groups vary in age and experience; most of them could be described as mid-career teachers, but there are also new teachers as well as experienced teachers who will soon be retiring.

N O R W A Y :

As employers, the municipalities have the formal responsibility of giving all employees the support they need, including new teachers. Most of the schools are public schools, while many kindergartens are private, so the municipality or the private owner (sometimes actually the heads at the school) decides how to support their new teachers. The support therefore varies, but the majority of new teachers only get some sort of "buddy support", such as a low-intensity induction programme and spontaneous buddy support.

In the Norwegian context, however, there is national incentive for the employers to develop a local support system together with initial teacher education institutions. Starting in 2003, the state-funded national development programme Mentoring New Teachers (*Veiledning av nyutdannede lærere*) has supported the development of local systems for teachers at all levels (from kindergarten to upper secondary school). The result is that all over Norway, initial teacher education institutions offer support to the employers in developing mentor training and locally-based induction programmes. The aim is to support new teachers' professional competence development, increase the knowledge of mentoring and improve initial teacher education.

In these municipalities, the new teachers get a mentor who supports them during the first year of practice. The frequency of the mentoring is from 10-20 consultations a year, and includes in some cases individual, peer- and groupmentoring, courses etc. (Bjerkholt & Brokke, 2006). In some of the projects, both experienced teachers within the municipalities and teachers from the teacher education programmes are working in the role as mentors/supervisors.

A government paper on reforms in initial teacher education is due at the turn of the year (2008/09), which may influence the induction programmes in Norway.

<div align="center">S W E D E N :</div>

In 1995, new teachers in Sweden were given a *right* to mentors and programmes of introduction, the aim of which was to support the new teachers. During the first year of teaching, a new teacher shall have a mentor with whom she meets regularly. This right was based on an agreement between the national teachers and employers' organisations. Formally, the local municipality is responsible for developing and providing mentor support to all new teachers in primary as well as lower and upper secondary levels (teachers for children from 6-18 years). In practice, staffs at the municipality level or heads of schools carry out the organisational task. However, not every new teacher does get this kind of support, nor has every municipality developed an organisation for it.

In cases, when new teachers get mentors, these are appointed to the new teachers and they most commonly work at the same school. In some municipalities, new teachers attend a series of seminars with other new teachers. In a few municipalities, new teachers participate in special courses for new teachers run by more experienced teachers, e.g., courses on how to teach basic reading and writing. However, a new national approach has been proposed, and it would be connected to a system of teacher registration (SOU 2008:52).

Two basic approaches to system building in use at least until 2008

The task of supporting new teachers has been conducted in two distinctly different ways. We refer to them as the "local approach" and the "national approach", signifying where the responsibility of system building is placed.

The national approach: System building on the national level

In this approach, action is taken according to a centralisation strategy, which is the case in Estonia. Several stakeholders, who were especially influenced by teacher educators, observed the need for support, and thus created a strategy in Estonia. The Ministry of Education decided to create a nationwide induction system for new teachers. Initially, teacher education institutions took on the responsibility for developing such a

system, and local educational leadership was responsible for specific components.

This is one way of describing the strategy used in Estonia, but it is more complicated than that. Numerous consultations between the different levels have taken place. Estonia is a small country with 1.42 million people and less than 600 comprehensive schools, which makes it possible to combine a centralised approach with direct contact and personal relations between many "actors" across the different levels.

THE ESTONIAN STRATEGY:

The aim of the induction year is to support novice teachers' socialisation to the school as an organisation, develop professional skills acquired during initial training, provide support in solving problems caused by lack of experience, and give feedback to the educational institution on its teacher training curricula and the effectiveness thereof.

Implementation of the induction year is based on the principles set out in the *Framework Requirements for Teacher Education* and *National Development Plan for Teacher Education* (Õpetajate, 2000). These principles were the framework for the implementation of a new approach to teacher education, which is based on continuing professional development. An induction phase is very important in this model.

In 2002/2003, a pilot project of the induction year was implemented at Haapsalu College of Tallinn University, with several Estonian schools contributing to the preparation of induction year implementation principles. A work group, consisting of Tallinn University and Tartu University staff, worked together to prepare for the implementation of the induction year at national level. In 2004/2005, the support for new teachers as an induction year programme was started on national level at the beginning of the academic year based on a new law, and in 2005/2006, kindergarten educators and vocational school teachers were included in the induction year programme.

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the launching and overall coordination of the induction year, and the ministry delegates the actual work related to the induction year to universities and attached colleges. These institutions coordinate new teachers' support programmes for the induction year and training of mentors. The Estonian government finances activities of the induction year. University centres have agreements with the ministry about offering mentor training and support programmes for novice teachers. Financing is similar to that of initial training. Local schools or municipalities have to find extra resources for the mentors' salaries.

Some of the bigger municipalities participated actively in the long development process, but most of the small municipalities took no responsibility for this part of the process. The Teachers' Union did not play a significant role. Only a very small number of teachers are members of the union, and the Teachers' Union focuses mainly on topics such as workloads, salaries etc.

The newly developed group of mentors qualified through the training programmes for mentors have organised a network called "Estonian Mentors Association". The activities are project-based, such as seminars and learning activities.

One of the Estonian initiators said, "We just did it this way because we thought that it was the only way possible." It is possible to interpret the centralised approach as partly influenced by the historic tradition of governing in the republics of the former Soviet Union, which Estonia left in 1991; but it has also been understood as being inspired by educational loans from other partners in the European Union, like England and Ireland. Estonia and the other Baltic states have been fighting hard to move from the traditions of the past; one significant change is that consultations (with, e.g., teachers' unions) and evaluation procedures are being used to communicate between the different members of the induction partnership.

The weakness of this approach is that a centralised initiative does not necessarily develop local ownership and integration into local school development. *The strength* is that continuity of development is guaranteed to a higher degree through co-operation between teacher training institutions (universities in Estonia) and schools. Universities can influence school development and support teachers' continuing professional development, organisation and development strategy. The initial teacher education at the universities might be improved based on experiences from the induction year programme.

The local approach: System building on the municipality level

The partners collaborating to solve problems and develop support for new teachers are basically those responsible for taking care of the new teachers' interests:

- The municipality as the employer, and the leadership of the municipality schools, which has direct responsibility for supporting the new teacher.
- The local teachers' union also has direct interest and a collective responsibility in supporting new members of the profession.

In the Nordic countries, the partnership between these two parties is represented on local community level by the municipal school administration and by the local section of the teachers' union, which usually represents almost 100% of the teachers. The condition of support for new teachers is one of many areas of concern. The issue of support for new teachers is therefore not in focus to the same degree in local negotiations in all municipalities, thus the priority given to this issue varies.

This has been the basic decentralisation strategy used in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The strategies are more complex and sophisticated, though, because reform initiatives and national characteristics influence the strategies and specific partnerships take responsibility for developing solutions.

THE DANISH STRATEGY:[1]

In Denmark, support for new teachers starting in "Folkeskolen" is based on local agreements between the local teachers' union (Danmarks Lærerforening) and the local municipalities. Because of this decentralisation, a number of initiatives have been taken in municipalities, from teacher education institutions and in partnerships. Development project initiatives at teacher training institutions have focused on creating support structures for new teachers, as in-service courses combining a number of elements: regular meetings for sharing experiences, Internet conferences, portfolio writing and individual supervision from teacher educators. The results have been described in reports stressing the need for more of the same, but none of them has resulted until now in permanent support structures, though courses for new teachers are being offered yearly all over the country as in-service courses.

Initiatives have been taken to start networking. A successful national network conference on support for new teachers took place in Copenhagen in November 2007.

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[1] The centralised approach used in upper secondary schools in Denmark is not examined in this chapter because the main focus is on the primary and lower secondary levels. It is worth mentioning, though, that the inspiration for the development of educational positions in upper secondary comes from German, French and earlier Danish experiences in induction programmes for upper secondary teachers. An evaluation report indicated that this approach has many problems, but also great potential when it is further developed (Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut, 2006). Traditionally the combined primary and lower secondary school sector in Denmark has been a local affair, where pupils, teachers and parents have a lot of influence, and the school ethos and the child orientation is very different from upper secondary school. The upper secondary sector has always been much more centralised.

THE FINNISH STRATEGY:

Finland seems to be an exception compared to the four other countries described here; teacher education is much more appreciated in Finland. Teaching is one of the most popular career choices among Finnish students, and only approximately 5% of the applicants are accepted as students in initial teacher education. Certified teachers are also highly respected. Actually, a master's degree is expected for any teacher's vacant post (except bachelor degree level in kindergarten). Finland's high scores in OECD's comparisons of student achievement (PISA) have also strengthened the professional status of teaching, and therefore it has become even more popular to become a teacher (Nummenmaa & Välijärvi, 2006).

Because of this, there has not been much interest in developing the induction phase. In Finnish schools, the emphasis is more often on adaptation to the work community and its modes of action than on the provision of conscious and systematic support for the new teacher's professional development. There are, though, as mentioned, local projects breaking new ground. The awareness of the need for induction provision exists, the knowledge on how to do this is growing, but action on a broad scale in order to improve the situation is still a scenario of the future. Because of the project "Peer mentoring in teachers' in-service education", some national recommendations and alternative models for developing mentoring are expected in 2008.

THE NORWEGIAN STRATEGY:

The awareness of need for support has been publicly expressed by the government since 1997 (OECD, 1990; NOU 1996:22; KUF, 1997) and a pilot project was started in the 1998 academic year (Bjerkholt, 1999; Streitlien, 1999; Hauge, 2001). Since 2003, there has been national funding for initial teacher education in order to offer support to municipalities and to create a number of different support systems and induction programmes.

Since 2003, teacher educators at universities and university colleges working with induction programmes have co-operated in the Norwegian Network for Mentoring Newly Qualified Teachers. This network and the partnership with the Directorate of Education and training on the national level have developed a growth climate, in which all initial teacher education institutes are involved and have improved their competence in training mentors, and in partnership with local authorities developed local induction systems at the municipality level.

Many partners are involved on the national level; the national Network for Mentoring Newly Qualified Teachers, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research and the Directorate of Education and Training are discussing how to support new teachers. The Union of Education, the District Governors and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) are also active participants in developing programmes, both on the local and on the national level. The department of Education and Research has announced reforms in initial teacher education. These reforms may influence registration of teachers and change the decentralised strategy for induction programmes, more in the direction of a national programme for all new teachers.

THE SWEDISH STRATEGY:

In Sweden, support for new teachers was introduced in 1995 through a general national agreement between the two teachers' unions, National Union of Teachers in Sweden (Lärarnas Riksförbund) and the Swedish Teachers' Union (Lärarförbundet), and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities (Kommunförbundet). This agreement had a distinctive school development perspective. The agreement stated that new teachers had the *right* to be supported by a mentor and to be offered a special programme of introduction while probationarily employed in the first year of the job (ÖLA, 2000). In co-operation with the teachers' unions, the municipalities were given the responsibility to renegotiate (with local union branches) at the local level and implement the intentions of the agreement in a locally suitable form. However, the results vary according to the priority given in each case (Lärarnas Riksforbund, 2005). The issue was not given the same priority in negotiations in a later round of centralised negotiations, and as a result, there is no longer a national agreement regarding this matter. However, there are examples of municipality representatives who still think that there is a national agreement which they have to live up to.

The agreement's decentralisation of responsibility was compatible with the high degree of decentralisation in the Swedish governing system, where the state does not take any responsibility for supporting new teachers concerning activities, laws or funding. This means that funding comes from regular municipalities or school budgets.

However, in 2006, Sweden got a centre-right coalition government in which some parties and people in leading positions had the "reformation" of the whole school system at the top of their political agenda. One result is that in May 2008, the inquiry "Registration and stricter qualifying rules" was launched by the government (SOU 2008:52). In

some aspects, the new proposal is built on the same ideas as the agreement from 1995; for instance, an induction year and mentors to promote new teachers' professional development. However, in some major sections, there are some rather important differences. It is a governmental top-down initiative and the state proposal will take responsibility for funding mentors, mentees and the process of registration of teachers. National criteria for the evaluation of the new teachers will be created and the Swedish National Agency for Education is proposed to be given the power to impose (or withdraw) teachers' registration. If this proposal is implemented, it will be difficult to conceptualise the Swedish strategy as a decentralised system.

Summing up this approach

The basic idea seems to be that those owning the problem also own the solution. The result is that there are almost as many systems of induction as the total number of municipalities/communities in these four Scandinavian countries. Preliminary results indicate that in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden there are excellent examples of local system building, while the praxis of municipalities varies on a wide scale from excellent to no priority at all.

The status of support is as follows:

- In Denmark, a survey by the teachers' union (Danmarks Lærerforening, 2003) indicated that three out of four new teachers were offered some kind of induction, of which the most usual was a low-intensity mentor arrangement. Mostly the focus is on introduction and "survival", and it very often fades out when introduction and survival are no longer the main issues, i.e., before the end of the first year. The induction programmes are good for some and not enough for others. Of those not offered any induction, 85% felt they wanted to have the opportunity. Most of those who had support of some kind expressed that it had been rewarding. The induction efforts are developing in Denmark as local municipality initiatives or as initial teacher education institution initiatives (Anthonisen et al., 2006; Hansen, 2007).

- In a recent survey in Finland, answers revealed that arrangements for induction are casual; there is often no induction at all, discussions between the new teacher and colleagues do not develop professional growth and identity, and finding support for induction depends mainly on the new teacher's own initiative (Jokinen & Välijärvi, 2003, 2005). The teachers often reported that the principal or one of the other teachers had acquainted them with the school's

premises, modes of action, teaching aids and everyday routines, albeit rather briefly. In the best cases, the new teacher was guided by an experienced teacher, for example by a colleague teaching a parallel grade, giving the new teacher a good opportunity to find out about the school's action culture and tacit knowledge. The phase of learning to teach seems to be based on learning from practical activity and from the experiences and problems linked to it.

- The findings indicate that teacher education departments at universities and university colleges throughout Norway have developed mentor training and local systems of support in co-operation with the municipalities (high-intensive induction programmes). Only 5% of the new teachers received this high intensity support in 2005/2006 (Dahl et al., 2006), but the numbers increased to about 21% in 2007/2008 (Bjerkholt, 2007). The evaluation of the programme (Dahl et al., 2006) concluded that the project of mentoring new teachers was very successful. The new teachers reported that the mentoring made them reflect on their practice, and it was important for their professional development. As a consequence of this evaluation, the state continues to support the development of programmes for mentoring new teachers. The most common way of supporting new teachers in Norway is still some sort of buddy support (low-intensity induction programmes), which each school organises itself. However, the national aim is to change this through continued local system building and partnership between local municipalities and initial teacher education.

- In Sweden, as of autumn 2004, 59% of new teachers on probationary employment did have a mentor appointed by the school; 36% considered the introduction programmes to be well functioning and 63% think they got the help they needed as new teachers (Lärarnas Riksförbund, 2005).

The systems that build programmes at the municipality level have both strengths and weaknesses:

The approach seems to be efficient when there are local organisers on the bandwagon who are enthusiastic, effective and progressive. It appears to be important that the local leadership in the education sector focus on long-term strategies as well as short-term strategies for supporting professional development. According to our analyses, this strategy has the potential to produce support for new teachers, giving the new teachers room for reflection, and influences positively the school culture and the schools as learning organisations. It is a *vital and impor-*

tant strength that the local ownership of the support system integrates the system within local development structures and thus in the best cases, serves both new teachers and local school development.

The weakness of this approach is that local support structures are not guaranteed a continuous existence. Priorities may change, a key person or two may change or finances may change, and experiences and structures may be lost. This approach seems to be weak when local priorities change, when local municipality budgets suffer from budget cuts, when one or a few enthusiastic people change job functions etc.

Overview of findings on approaches to induction system building at least until 2008

The main difference in terms of how induction systems are built is apparent in the organisation of partnerships. In the local approach, the consolidation and sustainability of solutions are local matters, while in the national approach, the consolidation and sustainability of solutions are national matters. In addition, however, as described, there are very specific differences between the four Scandinavian countries in terms of their focus, which we have characterised as being a local approach to induction system building. The national differences are so varied that although to some degree they have a tradition of decentralisation in common, the analysis has shown that national varieties of practice and strategy are very significant. To analyse why these differences exist, we would have to include historical analyses of political battles fought long ago, as well as recently.

The main similarity is their focus on the importance of local mentors (see also chapter 4). This is the case in most induction programmes worldwide as well. "The role of an appropriate mentor teacher is generally considered crucial in effective induction schemes." (OECD, 2005, p. 107) Another similarity is that in all five countries, teacher education is represented in induction projects. In Estonia and Norway, teacher education has a partnership at the national as well as at the local level. In Denmark, Finland and Sweden, partnerships between teacher education institutions and municipalities are found in *specific cases* where a partnership has developed between a teacher training institution and a municipality. Why partnerships between the employers (the municipalities) and teacher education programmes are important for induction of new teachers is the focus some pages ahead.

Changes concerning induction system building from 2008: A third approach on the horizon

The new Swedish and Norwegian political reform initiatives are not yet in place, and therefore a thorough analysis of strategy is not possible. It is evident, though, that these initiatives are characterised by the same features as those apparent in the general development in public management since the 1980s (Windinge, 2001). This strategy, referred to as New Public Management, combines over-arching strict management (top-down) with decentralisation of problem solving at lower levels of the organisation (bottom-up). In this management strategy, attempts are made to ameliorate the uncertainty of results (i.e., the impossibility of attaining fixed knowledge concerning what works in complex settings) by introducing reforms that stipulate practical initiatives, in order to reach a number of benchmarks, which are descriptions of desired output. The benchmarks are made at the national level, but the detailed planning on how to reach these benchmarks is done locally. From a central administrative perspective, the local implementation has to be controlled by evaluation strategies: because of the uncertainty of what actually works at the local level, options for continual adjustment have to be built into the strategy in some forms of evaluation. Faith in the idea that reforms will produce the desired results has been waning for many years. There are far too many examples of plans that never lead to the desired solutions and only created a new set of problems, new expenditures or other kinds of challenges. Faith in planning has been replaced by faith in the evaluation of existing initiatives, which allows plans to be corrected and new initiatives to be planned, launched and evaluated again (Hedegaard, 2007, p. 116). Evaluation strategies therefore have replaced long-term planning, even though it has been noted that evaluation results are often not used to implement the recommended changes (Dahler-Larsen, 1998).

Seen from an educational point of view it is worth mentioning that the New Public Management strategy and the evaluation focus in public management are not based on an educational perspective (Andersen, 2007, p. 589). The focus of an administrative perspective is on ensuring that reforms result in value for money. "Accountability" is a central concept in reform based on New Public Management strategies. The original meaning of the phrase was "trust", but it has turned into controlling that benchmarks have been reached and thereby have given value for money (Kubow & Fossum, 2006, p. 307).

It is positive when benchmarks are reached. In the Norwegian and Swedish cases, this could lead to an equal provision of support for new

teachers' professional development not dependent on which municipality they are employed in. The problematic issue from an educational perspective is that the controlling may change the nature of relations between those involved. If mentors, for instance, become controllers of the progress of the mentees, then the nature of mentoring is changed (see also chapter 8). As stated earlier, it is not yet possible to see what the positive and/or negative consequences will be. It is, however, important to be aware that there are many examples of reforms based on New Public Management strategies that have suffered from the negative effects of the high priority of control mechanisms and checks concerning whether value for money was created. Such a high priority of centralised aspects leads to reduced priority of local self-determination and control of aims and process (Gjørup et al., 2007).

An example is described in the article "Forgive us – we did not know what we did" (*Tilgiv os – vi vidste ikke hvad vi gjorde*; Gjørup et al., 2007). In this article, former leading officials in the Danish Ministry of Finance conclude that one of the consequences of the implementation of New Public Management strategies has been a sharp increase in formal documentation-relations between central and local levels of management. The intentions were different though. In practice, has what is easy to assess been the focus of these documentation-relations? If so, this has happened at the expense of a focus on the aims, which is actually the most important but more difficult to assess. New teachers' professional development in an induction period is a complex goal, which is difficult to assess through documentation-relations.

Teacher education as a participant in partnerships for induction of new teachers

One of the stakeholders involved in induction programmes in the five northern European countries is teacher education. In Norway and Estonia, teacher education plays an important role in the development of national programmes, but in the other countries teacher education involvement in induction programmes varies from project to project, from community to community and from one municipality to another.

In the partnerships between teacher education and other stakeholders, a number of assumptions on intended outcomes are evident. It is simply impossible to evaluate to what degree these intentions are being fulfilled, because of a lack of single-valued effect-relations. This is parallel to Hopmann's considerations about "the lack of single-valued effect-relations" in comparisons of teacher education in different countries or over time (Hopmann, 2006, p. 111). It is, however, possible to

describe intentions and to seek references to sources describing how those who are involved perceive the realisation of intended outcomes. The intentions of this partnership are described here as four specific intentions and the realisation of these varies in the five countries.

First Intention:
To contribute to the professional development of teachers

This is understood as an ongoing process from initial education through induction to continuing professional development. The way to do this is:

- to bring theoretical knowledge about constructing induction programmes into partnerships
- to give courses and train mentors
- to give special courses for new teachers
- to conduct research projects in co-operation with other stakeholders

Another intention is to improve the culture of learning for the students as well as for the teachers.

Second intention:
To improve initial teacher education

One ongoing discourse in Denmark, Norway and Sweden is that different sectors of society, including the local management and the central authorities, blame the initial teacher education for poor quality of education. Research shows that new teachers have problems. They are insecure (Munthe, 2005), and their competence in teaching is limited (Needels, 1992; Sardo-Brown, 1996; Bayer & Brinkkjær, 2003). The new teachers have some specific problems teaching and collaborating with their colleagues (Kreiner & Mehlbye, 2000), there is a lack of collaboration between initial teacher education and professional practice (Gade, 2004), and the media claims that the initial teacher education is old fashioned and not relevant for children of today's society.

In Denmark, Norway and Sweden, there is much attention in the media that provides students with a negative impression of being a teacher. The number of teacher students is decreasing, so both the teacher educators and the municipalities need to see this as a challenge. The society will need more teachers, and the universities and university colleges have to recruit teacher students. It is important that the initial teacher education make the students believe in themselves and their ability to become good teachers.

Examples and models of how to be a teacher have to be much more in focus in initial teacher education. The student teachers need to see

how teachers cope with different situations in their everyday work and discuss different strategies. They also have to be better prepared for challenging situations as new teachers (Nokut, 2006). Another change needed in initial teacher education is to focus more on the tasks of training children's social behaviour. Some of the new teachers reported they had thought that the development of children's social behaviour was the parents' job; but they have found that a huge part of being a teacher is to raise the children, not only educate them in academic subjects (Bjerkholt, 2002). It is also important to create more active partnerships between the in-service schools and initial teacher education. One component of this partnership is to educate the teacher students' tutors in the schools where teacher students practice teaching, so they can improve their tutoring. It is also important to collaborate in doing research and in developing the school as a learning environment.

Morberg (2005) describes how the municipality and the initial teacher education programmes co-operate in investigating the future need for changes in initial teacher education. In the induction programme, there are some meetings (*samtalsseminarer*) where new teachers, a delegate from the municipality and a researcher from the university discuss how to improve initial teacher education and the conditions for new teachers in the municipality. This is an example of the content in an induction partnership between a municipality and a university. This example shows how a partnership can focus on common interests.

Third intention:
To develop mentoring in quantity and quality of mentors

The intentions of modern mentoring are a complex and multi-dimensional process of guiding, teaching, influencing and supporting a beginning teacher. One assumption is that there is a correlation between the competence of the mentors and the new teachers' competence development. For example, Finnish case studies have shown this correlation (Jokinen & Välijärvi, 2005, 2006; Heikkinen & Jokinen, 2007; Heikkinen, et al., 2007, cf. chapter 4).

The aim of mentoring is to challenge new teachers in their professional development. To do that, teacher education needs to train mentors who, together with the new teachers, are able to reflect on the new teachers' daily challenges. They have to be able to build a confidential atmosphere, create a place for creative thinking and "stupid questions" and recognise the new teachers' needs. Such mentors give new teachers tools for conceptualising their daily challenges; they make the new teachers evaluate their choices, state the reasons for their choices and make them aware of their aims and their learning strategies. The Evalu-

ation of the Norwegian Pilot Project (Streitlien, 1999) showed that mentoring, which is rooted in the new teachers' expressions of their needs, is important because it makes the new teachers believe in their own competence.

Fourth intention: To promote the development of a school culture characterised by diversity

Diversity is the presence of a wide range of variation. It is easy to be ethnocentric and believe that a particular way of doing things is the only way or the right way: "Come as you are and be like us". This is a phenomenon both in schools and in universities. In our work as teacher educators interacting with different new teachers, schools and mentors, we have learned that appreciation of diversity and variation is a very important prerequisite for creating a positive learning environment and supporting the development of new teachers as critical, reflective and professional.

In the partnership between the local mentor and the external mentor from the university, our experience as teacher educators and researchers is that we often have different perspectives. The teacher educators have perspectives in their mentoring of new teachers that are different from a colleague at the same school. The external mentor (here, the teacher educator) often asks about the new teacher's perspectives on existential questions about teaching, ideas and their theoretical knowledge. In that way, they contribute to a meta-perspective on the new teachers' daily challenges.

The mentors and the new teachers report that this external mentoring from teacher educators inspires them to reflect on new questions, and expand their reflection on action and the new teachers' competencies. This mentoring gives the new teachers an opportunity to challenge the values of the culture at the school where they are working, and discuss freely the system that the school takes for granted (Bjerkholt, 2002).

With help from their mentors and sometimes the teacher educators, the new teachers' questions can be brought up for discussions in their schools. These questions can be of great importance to the school. They can improve the way of looking at possibilities, values and the effect of actual routines. They can also be important for valuing diversity in the school: appreciating the different perspectives of the school system and seeing the value of including different behaviours, activities and viewpoints in order to improve the learning environment. This focus on diversity can improve the new teacher's development as a professional teacher and the school culture, as well as improving the value of diversity within initial teacher education. Accepting diversity and part-

nership between stakeholders with different perspectives may create a larger acceptance of diversity in how professional teachers act.

How do those who are involved perceive the realisation of intended outcomes?

Partnerships between new teachers, municipalities and universities can become powerful collaborations for improving both initial teacher education and the schools' learning environments (Fransson & Morberg, 2001; Britton et al., 2003; Dahl et al., 2006). However, this co-operation is not easy. There are no simple answers. New teachers have to deal with daily uncertainty and many problems in the variety of activities of the profession. As mentioned before, the professional knowledge of being a teacher can only be internalised by practising the profession (Britton et al., 2003). This is why the partnership between local management and initial teacher education is of great importance. There are examples from most of the countries studied here of how realisation of these intentions is perceived.

In Norway, the national evaluation of the programme for mentoring new teachers (Dahl et al., 2006) indicates that the school leaders, mentors and the new teachers themselves believe that this mentoring system, initiated from initial teacher education institutions, has great value in terms of helping and challenging the new teachers to be reflective practitioners, believing in themselves and creating learning societies for their students. The evaluation also showed that the support from the universities and university colleges was important. The principals who were interviewed reported that initial teacher education that involves local development of induction is of great value, as they could not have carried out this induction programme as successfully without this collaboration. The mentors themselves reported that they improved their ability as reflective practitioners; they claimed that they learned a great deal both through the mentoring education and through dialogue with the new teachers (Dahl et al., 2006).

Representatives from the municipalities collaborating with initial teacher education on induction programmes report that the new teachers have good basic competencies from their initial teacher education (Morberg, 2005; Dahl et al., 2006). Participating in intensive induction programmes and mentoring gives *teacher educators* the possibility of learning about new teachers' learning process, as well as getting feedback on initial teacher education.

Lessons learned

This chapter started by outlining three key questions: How does support for new teachers differ, why does it differ, and is it possible to find footprints of a common induction model? We have tried to answer the first part of the question by highlighting the different local and national approaches and the value of complementary approaches.

Local approach: The value of interaction in partnerships and interaction between different levels of partnerships

In this chapter, we have shown that support for new teachers can be developed in local partnerships, based on the idea of "who owns the problems also owns the solutions". We have also shown that these solutions vary in quantity and quality when they are supported from teacher educators backed up by partnerships on the national level. Furthermore, the system building at the municipal level is only ensured to be on the agenda when intentions of partnership are agreed on at the national level between municipalities and teacher unions, as we have seen in the Estonian and Swedish cases until 2008.

National approach: A lesson from Estonia – national priority creates national results

Estonia is, as demonstrated, an example of a country in which induction is a national priority, resulting in the development of a unified national system. The weakness of this system is described above. The strength of the national priority turned into a nationwide system is evident: the system for continued development does not disappear locally in cases of disengaged local leaders, because the system is driven from the central level. Thus, the focus on induction as a high priority may be kept on the local agenda by a national priority, even when the whole endeavour is only being organised by a few.

Estonia is a small country, with about 1.4 million people and about 45,000 km². It is not one of the wealthiest countries (though in the top-third of all nations in the UN). However, high priority is given to induction even though state budgets are much lower than in the other countries described here. It is a good example of political priority given to factors that are essential when a state wants to focus on high quality in basic education, as a prerequisite for the state doing well in a globalised world based on a knowledge economy. The zeal and the competence – and the continued development – of teachers are vital for developing a high quality education system.

The Estonians do not claim to have a perfect system, but they are continuously developing it, changing components not working as

planned (e.g., registration of teachers based on a portfolio approach), and in a small country with very many small municipalities without initiatives to build local induction systems, they are developing a national system.

Complementary approaches?

The analyses of the local and national approaches have shown the importance of partnership on both levels, because there are strengths and weaknesses in both of these approaches. We have also seen how important it is for the development of an early critical professional competence that these induction programmes give the new teachers a space for critical questions and creative thought outside their daily responsibilities. We have seen that such space improves the possibility for reflecting on the system and on actions taking place. Therefore, partnerships that also include universities and teacher educators can improve this sort of critical reflection (Dahl et al., 2006).

Results of low- and high-intensity programmes

The second component of the key question is how the induction programmes differ. As previously described, induction is designed and implemented in the five countries both as low- and high-intensity support programmes for new teachers. Low-intensity programmes provide a formal orientation in "one-shot" or low frequency events in Denmark and Norway as buddy support. Some of the municipalities' implementation of the right to have a mentor in Sweden may be described as low-intensity support programmes. The same is true for some of the Finnish projects mentioned. We find cases of high-intensity support programmes involving mentoring over an extended period, combined with training and release time for both the mentors and new teachers, in the Norwegian developmental programme, in the mandatory programme in Estonia, and in some cases in Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

The OECD concludes that although low-intensity programmes cost less, they have much poorer results than do high-intensity support programmes involving mentoring over an extended period combined with training and release time for both the mentors and new teachers (OECD, 2005, p. 107). It is probably also a question of quality, which is not necessarily linked to quantity. The question of quality is also connected closely to a discussion of what discourse is intended to be the basis of action. Is the emphasis on adaptation to the work community and its modes of action, or is it on the provision of conscious and systematic support for the new teacher's professional development?

There is evidence, though, from evaluations of the Estonian and Norwegian high-intensity programmes of how the young teachers and

other professionals involved experience the results. In both evaluations, the programmes are in general experienced as making a substantial and positive difference for the new teachers in the first year (Eisenschmidt, 2005; Dahl et al., 2006).

System building resulting in a common model in the five northern European countries?

The third component of the key question was: Do we have the same aims? We have a common general understanding of professional development as a process, which starts with initial education as student and continues with the new teachers starting to practice the profession. The five countries' initial teacher education policy is to create reflective professional teachers. Their claimed goal is to develop new teachers to become reflective professional practitioners, who ask critical questions concerning the learning environment and take part in developing the school. We have explained how different stakeholders may have different aims regarding this topic. The official aims may differ from the operative aims, so in practice it can be to recruit teachers, prevent sick leave or make the new teachers effectively adapt to the school culture. You will find such differences between the different stakeholders' aims in all five countries. The general answer to this question is nevertheless *that our generic aims are the same, though the specifics vary between different stakeholders inside the national contexts.*

The last part of the key question is: "Are there footprints of a common induction model?" The present answer is *Yes*; the programmes contain some of the same activities, such as courses for mentors, courses for new teachers and a different mentoring system for new teachers; but *No*, there is not a common model.

When we look at the differences, we find that comparative analyses of strengths and weaknesses may inspire further development of local and national partnerships.

It is possible, though, to identify a number of characteristics of a well-functioning national intensive induction system for new teachers, based on the aim of supporting professional development:

– Local responsibility for implementing induction for early professional development (carried out in partnership with stakeholders on other levels: initial teacher education, ministries of education, teachers' unions, school leaders, colleges etc.)
– Local system building through co-operation in partnerships
– High quality of mentoring as a vital component of induction systems

- An induction programme that cares for the new teachers' expressed needs and gives space for critical questions, developing the new teachers' competencies on the basis of their personal resources

- Active partnerships between central levels of administration, initial teacher education institutions, the municipality and schools.

Networking is vital for the sustainability and the continued development of the quality of *all* models of induction systems. Every system needs critical friends and dialog with outsiders, and networking and partnerships on different levels can improve induction models and the quality of induction both on the local and on the national level.

It is also evident that a national strategy is needed to support the development of local induction systems for all new teachers and to avoid the weaknesses of the local approaches analysed earlier in this article. How to develop a national strategy without taking away the initiative and ownership of problems and solutions on the local level is an important new question.

It will be interesting to investigate the coming changes in strategy in Estonia, Norway and Sweden. It appears that the Estonian national approach is giving more power to the local partnerships so that the programmes are developing as partnerships between stakeholders. Norway and Sweden seem to be moving towards a more centralised national strategy for induction of new teachers. In Denmark and Finland, which have a local-based approach, these questions about induction are not on the national political agenda to the same degree, or perhaps we may say not yet.

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Chapter 4

Mentoring of Newly Qualified Teachers in Estonia, Finland, and Sweden

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with mentoring in Estonia, Finland, and Sweden in a comparative perspective. It analyses similarities and differences between mentoring in the three countries and describes various approaches to mentoring. Mentoring is the main strategy in the three countries' support programs, varying, however, in terms of application, length, nature, organisation, and purpose, as well as ideology and strategy. The Estonian induction system differs from that of Finland and Sweden mainly because it is a national and centralized system. In Finland and Sweden local municipalities are responsible for induction and mentoring arrangements, differing from each other on the local level. Newly qualified teachers' professionalism today involves more collegial collaboration, more sharing of different practices, and more mutual support than before. As mentoring can be conceptualised as a dialogue between colleagues, it is essential for the newly qualified teachers to be ready to acknowledge their needs for development and receive feedback. Mentoring can be used as a tool to address innovatively the issues and problems that challenge new teachers. Mentoring programs can also be seen as tools for reforming schools' action culture.

Introduction

Promotion of Newly Qualified Teachers' (NQTs) professional development by mentors is common in many countries worldwide. Mentoring is an important part of the support system offered to NQTs. The teaching task is nowadays more complicated than before. Moreover, classrooms tend to be much more diverse than in the past and the range of expectations that the surrounding has for school and teachers grows. The skills teachers need to develop are both complex and demanding. Initial teacher education programs give the basics of being a professional teacher, but professional development needs to continue across the induction phase and become lifelong learning.

A central aim of lifelong learning is to support a continuous growth in human potential both at the individual and community level. Lifelong learning is a comprehensive process lasting all one's life where the aim is both developing as a human being and growing as a citizen within one's community and achieving educational objectives (Bennetts, 2001). Teachers are expected to participate in the processes of continuing learning on the basis of their own and their colleagues' experiences and observations. Interacting with colleagues gives teachers an opportunity to develop their thinking and revise their aims on the basis of feedback and collaboration. A school's professional operations and activities can be influenced only by developing the capacity of the teaching staff and all of its members, reflected in school activities as new principles of action, internal assessments and various leadership roles (Day, 1999; Jokinen & Välijärvi, 2003).

Before we go further on in this article, there is a need to define the concepts mentoring, mentor and mentee. *Mentoring* processes foreground collaborative partnerships and teachers' reflections on educational issues linked with theory and practice (Bey, 1995). Mentoring involves intensive interaction where the parties discuss issues, such as teaching and learning, ways of supporting and encouraging a new teacher, counselling and role models. Mentoring is intended to promote novice teachers' flexible and efficient transition to the culture of teaching, help to reduce their exhaustion, and help them to construct and develop their own teaching practices and the culture of teaching (Tillman 2003, pp. 226–233). *Mentors* are experienced colleagues from the same or another school, who support new teachers professionally and emotionally during the induction phase. Mentors can be internal experts (experienced teachers at the same school as the mentee) or external experts (experienced teachers form other schools or other institutions). *Mentees* are newly qualified (new or beginning) teachers who are willing to con-

tribute to their own professional development. So far, these are common definitions in the three countries. The relationship between a mentor and a mentee aims at a temporary learning partnership and has to do with several concepts, for instance sharing professional experience and professional development, reflection, dialogue and interaction, communication, caring, guidance, counselling, coaching and different modes of mutual empowerment (Bey, 1995; Tillman, 2003; Lindgren, 2003).

This article is built on tested experiences, experiments of mentoring and research data on mentoring. The system of mentor programs varies from one country to another and the aim of the article is to analyse, compare and discuss the systems to support NQTs by mentors in Estonia, Finland and Sweden out of a professional development perspective. Comparing the mentor programs in these three countries helps to highlight similarities and differences and understand mentor programs in their different contexts.

Mentoring during the induction phase in the perspective of earlier models

In this section we discuss our findings on mentoring as a tool for professional development.

Models of mentoring

As Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005) have noted, most induction programs rely on mentoring as the main strategy. The support programs for novice teachers vary greatly in terms of their length, nature, organisation and purpose, as well as their ideology and strategy (Eurydice, 2002; OECD, 2005; Krull, 2005; Villani, 2002). But all mentor programs are based on the understanding that learning to teach is best accomplished under assisted performance rather than an individual sink or swim set of conditions (Conway & Clark, 2003; Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

Mentoring as a learning partnership has to do with several concepts, such as sharing professional experience and professional development, reflection, dialogue and interaction, communication, caring, guidance, counselling, coaching and different modes of mutual empowerment (Bey, 1995; Tillman, 2003; Lindgren, 2003). The relationship between mentor and novice teacher is complex and will vary to some extent according to the design and structure of the particular program in which the participants are enrolled. Programs may focus to different degrees on emotional and pedagogical support, and the mentor may or may not have a formal evaluative role (Strong & Baron, 2004, p. 48).

Nicholls (2007, p.163) presents three models of mentoring: *the apprenticeships model, the competency model* and *the reflective model.* In the apprenticeships model the trainee works alongside the mentor taking responsibility for a small part of the work, gradually gaining confidence and skill so that the reliance on the mentor becomes less as the mentee becomes more competent. The competency model is based on the idea that the skills that have to be learnt for a given profession are a set of pre-defined competencies that each individual has to master and show competence in. The mentor's role is to support the mentee in gaining these competencies through observation and feedback. In the reflective model, to facilitate the process of reflection the mentor needs to be able to move from being a model and instructor to being a co-enquirer. Other aspects of their role as described in the two other models may well continue, but promoting critical reflection demands open-mindedness and involves confronting beliefs and values.

At the same time it is important to note that the impact of mentoring not only depends on time and training, and appropriate matches between mentors and novice teachers, but also on the expectations that the mentor and novices hold for each another and what they actually do together. The mentoring relationship is not static. It varies according to the demands made of the student or novice teacher and their changing confidence levels (Rippon & Martin, 2006, p. 86). No two relationships are identical due to the individuals involved in the mentoring process. Because of this highly individual nature of mentoring, the models of mentoring vary not only according to the educational context or system but also within a system or context.

To summarise, the relationship between a mentor and a mentee has to do with professional development, but the way they interact is different, depending on the national or local mentoring programs but also on the relationship and expectations that the mentor and new teacher hold for one another.

Mentoring in the school context

The success of mentorship within the induction program depends, among other factors, on the school context because a new teacher's induction is part of a process of socialisation which takes place in any organisation. In education, this process aids the assimilation of new teachers into the culture of the school (Rippon & Martin, 2006). Recent studies show that the professional culture in schools, the blend of values, norms and modes of professional practice that develop among teachers, has a strong impact on new teachers and their work with mentors

(Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005, p.696). According to research, mentoring programs seem to have little effect unless they are integrated with other principles and practices adopted in development projects as preconditions for a reorganisation of the teaching profession (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000).

It is possible to conceptualise and design mentoring programs in ways that involve seeing them as tools for reforming schools' action culture. In this way, mentoring becomes not only a way helping individual teachers but also a means of contributing to the construction of strong teaching cultures in schools that have made a commitment to the promotion of teaching, learning and caring (Jokinen, Heikkinen & Välijärvi, 2005). This type of mentoring program becomes not only a way of helping individual teachers to professional development, but also a way of contributing to the construction of a strong teaching culture in the school development.

Newly qualified teachers often find themselves compelled to deal with technical shortcomings related to their work and with conceptual conflicts associated with existing norms and culture of teaching. Stress and technical shortcomings can have a direct link with teachers' exhaustion. Conceptual conflicts inside the school community between colleagues are more immediately related to the development of methods for teaching. Little attention has been paid to how newly qualified teachers could be taught to handle conceptual conflicts and supported in learning how to teach. Mentoring can be a means by which teachers can brake down their isolation and find support in ways that focus on the daily work of teachers and teaching learning situations. As Nicholls (2007, p.165) notes, mentoring can play a fundamental role in institutions and organisations, which aim to be professional learning communities.

Characteristics of mentors

The experience of a mentee is always personal and individualistic, and therefore a mentor needs to be very flexible. Personal dimensions that support professional dialogue, effective role modelling and pedagogical knowledge are important aspects of the mentoring process. Being made to feel welcome, accepted and included, feeling supported in learning and in attempts to develop own identity as a teacher have been seen as important aspects of good mentor practice (Maynard, 2000, p.26).

The skills and personal characteristics necessary for work as mentors have been described in detail (Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005; Rippon & Martin, 2006; Duffy & Forgan, 2005; Evertson & Smithey, 2000). Based on James B. Rowley (1999, pp. 20–22), we present the

following six basic qualities of a good mentor as an example of mentor qualities. A good mentor is committed to the role of mentor, accepts the beginning teacher, is skilled in providing instructional (or collaborative and constructive) support, is effective in interpersonal contexts, is a model of a continuous learner and communicates hope and optimism.

Effective mentoring is a difficult and demanding task and those performing the role need time and training in order to perfect their mentoring skills. Mentoring can be thought of as a multi-faceted concept incorporating personal support and the more rigorous notion of professional development leading to enhanced competence (Nicholls, 2007, p. 164).

To summarise, being a mentor requires leadership and analysis skills and empathy. Therefore, mentors are often selected not only based on their professionalism but also on their supervision skills and personal qualities. As mentoring should be a dialogue between two colleagues, it is essential for the novice teacher to be ready to acknowledge his/her needs for development and receive feedback. But at the same time it should be kept in mind that the school community and the values of its members have a substantial effect on novices' learning and attitude towards reflection as well as researching and developing their practice.

Mentoring as a part of teachers' continuing professional development

At the same time, however, there have been fears that mentoring practices may never become efficient or that adequate methods will never be found. This lack of confidence stems not from scepticism about the effective principles of mentoring programs or about the plans that support them, but from worries that we will fail to integrate mentoring with our conception of teaching and professionalism (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). Mentoring and induction year need to be integrated, which is shown in the figure below, with initial teacher education, the continuum of professional development, and continuous school development. (Fransson & Morberg, 2001; Jokinen & Välijärvi, 2003; Commission of the European Communities, 2007)
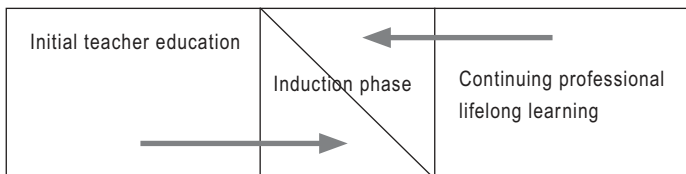

Figure 4.1: The continuum of NQTs professional development.

Figure 4.1 above shows three important phases for mentees: initial teacher education, induction phase and continuing professional lifelong learning. We argue that it is important to look at these three phases together, like in a continuum (see also chapter 8). What needs to be dealt with during the initial teacher education and what can be postponed to be dealt with later on during the induction phase or in the lifelong professional development? That is an important question to actors involved in the three phases.

At the same time teacher educators also have to be aware of the specific experiences and beliefs student teachers bring to the initial teacher education program. Every future teacher has been a primary and a secondary school student and these memories have shaped their deeply-rooted beliefs and conceptions of instruction, learning and teaching. Our conclusion is that there is a need for a discussion about the basic content in the two phases, initial teacher education and induction phase, from the perspective of continuing professional lifelong learning. The universities responsible for teacher education need to co-operate with schools and take part in their development activities. Instead of being considered merely an internal development project of a school, mentoring should be seen as an integral element of the educational and development system operating outside individual schools. Hargreaves and Fullan (2000) emphasise that mentoring offers an important opportunity to reshape the profession of teaching. Based on the relevant research literature we could say that the mentor's task can be carried out in many different ways and the process of mentoring does not involve only supporting the mentee, but also influencing the development of the whole school community.

Mentoring in national contexts

This section describes mentoring in Estonia, Finland and Sweden. The focus is on national characteristics of induction, mentoring arrangements, mentoring process and mentees and mentors. It is an overview of activities and organisation concerning mentoring in supporting NQTs professional development.

Mentoring in Estonia

In 2002/2003, a pilot project was implemented at Haapsalu College of Tallinn University in co-operation with several schools of the West County. In 2003/2004, a working group consisting of Tallinn University and University of Tartu staff made joint efforts to make preparations for the implementation of the induction year at national level.

To support comprehensive school novice teachers, the induction year program was started at national level in 2004/2005 and a year later, i.e. 2005/2006, kindergarten educators and vocational school teachers were included. Implementation of the induction year in Estonia is based on the principles set out in the *Framework Requirements for Teacher Education (2000)* and the *National Development Plan for Teacher Education (2003).*

The aim of the induction year is to support novice teachers as they adapt to the school culture and to facilitate their professional growth as teachers. Novice teachers can get support during the induction year in different ways: they have personal mentors at their school, they have group sessions with university faculty, and they get support material/information through internet resources designed for this program. In addition, induction year centres at universities offer information and consultations for novice teachers throughout the year.

In Estonia, it is the duty of the school headmaster to appoint a mentor for novice teachers participating in the induction program. The mentor does not have to be a teacher of the same subject, but preferably one who is teaching in the same field and at the same school stage. To help headmasters choose and select mentors, the guidelines for selecting mentors, forming part of the induction program materials sent to schools, were supplemented with respective recommendations.

The mentor's task in the induction program implemented in Estonia is to support a novice teacher's professional growth and adaptation to school as an organisation. Competent mentors are of great help to the school administration in other areas of school improvement as well. The induction year begins with novice teachers' self-analyses of the completed teacher training and of their readiness to start work as teachers based on the teacher competencies described in the teacher's professional standard (Õpetaja V, 2005). The teacher's professional standard includes a description of the requirements for the teacher's profession as well as professional knowledge and skills. The description of professional skills provided in the teacher's standard, which is also the basis for the analysis of a novice teacher's work during the induction year, is organised into eight sections: planning and leadership, developing the learning environment, supervising learning, motivating students, co-operation, socialising, analysing and assessing the student's development and learning process, self-analysis and professional development.

As the result of the self-analyses based on the teacher competencies, teachers will find out both their strengths and areas that need to

be developed. The results of the self-analyses are shared with mentors and in co-operation with mentors novices agree upon the goals and action plans for the coming term. During the induction year, the task of a mentor is to observe the lessons of the novice teacher at least twice each academic term (8 observations in total) and conduct observation analyses. In addition to the assistance provided by mentors whose main task is to support novice teachers' adjustment to school as an organisation, their reflection, and learning through work, university faculty members organise group sessions for novice teachers during school holidays (four times a year). In essence, the seminars are group counselling sessions that focus on professional issues and questions coming from the novice teachers. In the group sessions, novice teachers share their successes and failures. Together, teachers discuss the problems that have emerged, analyse them and offer solutions. The analysis is based on the novice teachers' own experiences and their cases of everyday school life. Joint analysis and discussion of cases in group sessions promotes novice teachers' skills of analysing the roots of problems, understanding them and seeking solutions together. At the same time the analysis of problems arising from the work of the first year offers valuable feedback also to teacher education institutions for the improvement of initial education.

The induction year concludes with a consolidated evaluation of the success of the novice teacher's performance during the induction year according to the teacher competencies described in the teacher's professional standard (Õpetaja V, 2005). The consolidated evaluation is appended to the novice teacher's application to obtain professional qualification. The evaluation is the responsibility of the head of the school. At the same time it must be recognized that the social context of the school and the personal and professional qualities of the mentor as well as the headmaster's attitudes substantially affect the actual organisation of the induction year program in any given school. In Estonia, alongside with the implementation of the induction year, monitoring was organised for novice teachers. The aim of monitoring is to get feedback on the program from different participants and, relying on the feedback, to develop the activities of the induction year program. This process is still ongoing.

Mentoring in Finland

In Finland there is no formal induction system. The arrangement of NQTs induction is the responsibility of local schools. As a result, there are great differences between schools in the ways how induction is implemented. The arrangements for induction are random and often

schools fail to provide any induction at all. During induction, discussions on issues preparing the ground for the new teacher's professional growth and the development of a professional identity are rare (Jokinen & Välijärvi, 2006, p.93). According to the report on Teacher Education 2020, the induction phase should be a part of the continuum with initial and in-service education. Mentoring should be developed as a main tool for supporting new teachers (Ministry of Education, 2007).

In Finland the experiments bring together experiences from three mentoring projects: Kokkola, Helsinki and Jyväskylä project (see also chapter 5). In the Kokkola project, launched autumn 2003, five separate teams were formed. Three teams consisted of new primary and secondary school teachers, one team of new special education teachers and one team of new upper secondary school teachers. The teams consisted of 2-5 teachers, in most cases from different schools, and one mentor, with the exception of one primary and secondary school teachers' team which had three mentors. Altogether there were 20 newly qualified teachers taking part in the project, involving years 1-3, mentored by seven experienced teachers. The new special education teachers met with their mentors usually in pairs. In the other teams mentoring was organised as group discussions. Over the years, teams can vary in the number of mentees. During a school year the teams had 6-7 mentoring meetings. Most of the new teachers considered this a suitable number. Some of them would have also liked personal meetings with their mentor.

In Helsinki mentoring project, the activities were organised as paired mentoring (one mentee and one mentor). In the region of Jyväskylä, the action research project was launched in fall 2006 in the 12 municipalities. In this project, the mentoring process is clearly conceptualised as reciprocal peer mentoring. In each group, some of the teachers hold a key role as a practical organiser of the program, but this person is not expected to be an expert unlike with the traditional concept of mentoring. The groups outline their own program throughout the academic year. In some of the meetings, narrative and co-operative methods as well as expert lectures are also used so as to promote reflective dialogue. The teachers in the groups vary in age and experience; most of them could be described as mid-career teachers but there are also newly qualified teachers as well as experienced teachers who will soon retire on pension. The project aims at organising peer mentoring within teachers' in-service education in the region of Jyväskylä. In both group and paired mentoring, the mentors saw their roles as being primarily about listening to the new teachers and sharing their experiences and problems.

The mentors in these three projects are experienced teachers usually from other schools than the newly qualified teachers. There are no special requirements to the mentors as to the number of years worked as teacher or special education or certificates. However, they have knowledge and skills needed in mentoring. There is no official electing system for mentors. Usually local educational authorities ask school principles to appoint suitable persons as mentors. In some municipalities there are coordinators who seek for mentors. In Finland there is no common system for recruiting mentors, it varies from one local municipality to another.

Mentors are expected to support NQTs' decisions, but at the same time they also consider it important that new teachers learn to evaluate their decisions themselves. Mentors do not want to provide ready-made solutions; rather, their aim is to collaborate with the new teachers in finding alternative approaches or solving problems. Paired mentoring has made possible a more detailed and individualised examination of the problems that emerge during the sessions than in group mentoring. Group mentoring was seen as a form of peer support. Group mentoring provided NQTs with experiences and hints from other new teachers, which gave them alternative choices to their problems. The mentoring group consisting of special education teachers discussed particular pupil cases and the methods associated with them more frequently than the other groups.

The topics discussed during the mentoring sessions were mainly issues raised by the new teachers. Everyday problems and challenges, such as the so called "problem pupils", pupils' behavioural disturbances, interaction with parents and co-operation with fellow teachers, were frequent topics during the group discussions. The discussions brought up alternative solutions to the problems that the new teachers had faced. The process of developing as teacher was considered in terms of the newcomers' own strengths and their personal development targets. Mentoring sessions rarely considered pedagogical or didactic decisions or arrangements directly related to the classroom, such as issues regarding how some specific content should be taught to particular pupils. These topics emerged more often among upper secondary school and secondary school subject teachers. The subjects raised during the discussions, such as "problem pupils", co-operation with parents and working with colleagues seem to be linked with the areas that had in the new teachers' opinion been given too little attention in teacher education.

Mentoring in Sweden

In Sweden mentors have supported NQTs as part of the local school development since about 1998. In Sweden there is no formally decided induction-system for NQTs, but in 1995 a general national agreement (ÖLA 2000) was reached between the two teachers' unions (the National Union of Teachers in Sweden (Lärarnas Riksförbund) and the Swedish Teachers Union (Lärarförbundet)) and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities (Kommunförbundet), entitling all NQTs to take part in 'introduction' to the profession and the workplace in schools. The agreement was an invitation to the NQTs to take part in the introduction program. The national agreement has not been renewed after 31 March 2005, but some local agreements on the municipality level have remained in force. However, in May 2008, a Government Inquiry proposed a system for registration of teachers, which includes mentors promoting new teachers' professional development but also being involved in the evaluation of NQTs (SOU 2008:52). If this proposal is accepted, it will become compulsory being a mentee and having a mentor if someone wants to be registered as a teacher. In some aspect this proposal is built on the same ideas as the agreement from 1995, but in some major sections there are some important distinctions. For instance, the state will finance the mentor and the mentee; new teachers will be evaluated; national criteria for the evaluation will be developed; new teachers will have the right to apply for registration as teachers; and the Swedish National Agency for Education will have the power to accept (or deny) registrations. If accepted, the proposal will be implemented in 2010. However, as the proposal is further discussed in chapter three and eight we will not continue to discuss this possible scenario here, but focus on the state of art up till now resulting from the (former) national agreement.

A part of the 'introduction' nowadays is a mentoring program, but there are other support systems as well, for instance workplace introduction given by a "work place introducer" (Morberg & Gustafsson, 2007). The mentor supports the professional development and the "work place introducer" supports the NQT's entrance to the workplace, i.e. the school. The municipalities rely very much on the teaching team to support the NQTs. If an NQT enters a teaching team, the NQT is likely to get the daily support they need during the induction phase.

The main policies concerning school management in Sweden can be characterised by the word decentralization. The mentor program is locally decided, locally planned, locally carried out and locally evaluated and therefore differs from one municipality to another. Many

different models are in use, depending on the local conditions in the municipalities. The objectives of mentoring in Sweden are: to improve the NQTs' teaching performance, to promote personal and professional growth and well-being, to transmit the culture and tacit knowledge of the school, and give guidance to the NQT to cope in school as developing organisation. NQTs are also expected to actively take part in the local school development, and the government stresses the importance for NQTs to contribute to the school development and to develop the teaching tradition (Morberg, 2005).

The mentor program in Sweden is not a system aimed at supervising NQTs, and the mentors are not supposed to evaluate the mentees (However, if the proposal is accepted, this could become their task SOU 2008:52). Evaluation is a responsibility of the headmaster of the school. Some mentors do evaluate, but that is not in accordance with neither the system in force nor the intentions outlined in the national agreement. Mentors are appointed to NQTs under the national agreement mentioned above. However, not all NQTs get this offer of support in Sweden. For example, the situation in autumn 2004 was that 59 % of NQTs on a probationary employment did have a mentor appointed by the school; 36 % believed that there were well-functioning introduction-programs and 63 % did think they got the help they needed as newly qualified (Lärarnas Riksförbund, 2005). At the moment, i.e. in 2008, according to both of the teacher unions the number of NQTs who have mentors is decreasing. The reasons for that are not quite clear, but one explanation might be that there are too many teachers educated in some categories and there are, in fact, many NQTs available. Municipalities may not be providing the necessary support because there are many teachers to employ if some teachers leave their position. Many municipalities support NQTs by fostering their professional development, and they do not (primarily) take mentoring as a tool to maintain NQTs in schools.

In Sweden, a mentor is an experienced teacher at the school where the NQT works, or from another school in the same municipality. There is the "distance" issue, i.e. how distant the mentor needs to be to be able to support the mentee in case of e.g. problems in the mentee's teaching team. It can be problematic to deal with problems within the teaching team when the mentor is a member of the team. The level of experience of the mentor varies from one mentor to another and from one municipality to another. Some municipalities may appoint mentors with only some years of experience, because they assume that a mentor with just a few years' experience in teaching understands the NQT better, having

freshly acquired the experience of starting work at school. Other municipalities on the other hand appoint only very experienced colleagues, or seniors, as mentors. Still other municipalities may appoint mentors with various levels of experience.

The persons bearing responsibility for the mentor program in Sweden differ from one municipality to another. Most often it is the headmaster of the school, but it can also be the local boards of schools, which are the central school organisations in the municipality. The mentor is often appointed by the head of the school or by the local board of schools. Especially smaller municipalities often use the central model for organising the introduction period and especially for selection of mentors. It seems that a very strong central organisation in municipalities is very efficient (cf. Morberg & Gustafsson, 2007). The mentor and the mentee can be matched in different ways based on different criteria, e.g. school stage, subject and school, depending on the local objectives and the local school development (Fransson & Morberg, 2001; Morberg & Gustafsson, 2007).

Often mentoring lasts for one year, as set forth in the former national agreement, but the introduction can be prolonged if needed. The mentor and the mentee often meet regularly during the introduction year, but the number of meetings may vary from only a few meetings to one meeting per fortnight during the whole introduction year. If the NQT needs a mentor for a longer period than one year, it can often be arranged. One mentor could also have a small group of NQTs. For instance, three NQTs may be supported by one mentor. In some municipalities it has been decided that the mentoring system must consist in group mentoring. It is not a very common method yet, but gaining more popularity. Mentors may receive payment for their work as mentor, and being a mentor may foster their career (Morberg & Gustafsson, 2007). In some municipalities mentors are appointed for the first two years, but some municipalities provide a mentor for NQTs starting from their second year at work (ibid). Municipalities often consider mentor support as an investment into the future and prioritise mentor programs in terms of funding.

To summarise: every municipality in Sweden decides about mentoring, its organisation and the education of mentors locally. The programs, if any, are therefore different from each other across different municipalities. Mentors are expected to meet very different needs and they are trained under local training programs, consisting of a single informative session to a course on mentoring of varying length and content organised locally. Some municipalities do not educate mentors at all.

Comparative analysis of mentees, mentors and mentoring

The national descriptions above show that although the systems of mentoring are different, all three countries have positive experiences of supporting NQTs. Table 4.1 below is a summary of the main characteristics of mentoring arrangements in Estonia, Finland and Sweden presented in the national descriptions.

Table 4.1: Summary of main characteristics of mentoring in Estonia, Finland and Sweden.

	ESTONIA	FINLAND	SWEDEN
Supporting NQTs: why and how	Lack of teachers. NQTs' problems and challenges. Formal and national induction program: mentoring. Pilot project started in 2002/2003, and national program for comprehensive school teachers started in 2004/2005 and a year later, 2005/2006, program for kindergarten and vocational school teachers	NQTs' problems and challenges. developing teachers' in-service training. No formal or national program. Local arrangements: mentoring	NQTs' problems and challenges and lack of teachers. National agreement from 1995 until 2005-03-31. No national program. Local arrangements: mentoring.
Why mentoring	Good national and international examples from teacher education as well as from other fields of life. To give good start to novices.	Good national and international examples from other fields of life, need for a flexible and personal tool.	Good national and international examples from other fields of life.
Responsibility for mentoring arrangements	Ministry of Education, universities. Local schools.	Local municipalities.	Local municipalities and schools.
Mentoring arrangements	Mixed model: paired mentoring at schools and group mentoring in universities (4 meetings a year).	Paired mentoring, 6-7 times a year. Group mentoring, 6-7 times a year, 2-6 NQTs in a group. Peer mentoring, 8 times a year, 2-10 teachers in a group.	Locally decided different types of mentoring, e.g. once a fortnight.
Duration of mentoring	1 year.	Mostly 1 year.	Mostly 1 year.
Mentoring meetings	Individual and collaborative support. Reflective discussions aimed at self-analysis were NQTs suggest the topics.	Individual and collaborative support. Reflective discussions where NQTs suggest the topics.	Individual and collaborative support. Reflective discussions NQTs suggest the topics.

	ESTONIA	FINLAND	SWEDEN
Mentor's role	Listener. Asking questions. Colleague support. Critical friend. Reflective partner. Enculturator. Learner.	Listener. Asking questions. Colleague support. Critical friend. Reflective partner. Learner. Individual differences.	Listener. Asking questions. Colleague support. Critical friend. Reflective partner. Learner. Extra local tasks and individual differences.
Mentee	First year teachers. Recommended but not obligatory. Interested in self development and professional growth.	1st-3rd year teachers. Voluntary. Interested in self development and professional growth.	1st-3rd year teachers. Voluntary. Interested in self development and professional growth.
Recruiting of mentors	Headmasters are responsible. Experienced teachers. Personal characteristics.	Local educational authorities are responsible. Experienced teachers. Personal characteristics.	Local educational authorities and headmasters are responsible. Experienced teachers. Personal characteristics.
Mentor education	Formal mentor education and courses. Guiding websites and materials.	No formal education. Some local seminars. University courses for persons from all fields.	No formal education. Some local seminars or local courses. University courses.
Results and experiences	Good experience. Simultaneously with implementation, monitoring of the induction year was organised and the development of induction year activities is based on feedback.	Good experience. NQTs feel that they have got excellent support in their professional growth. Research made on results.	Good experience. Difficult to know how it works, as there are rather many and different arrangements. Research on some of the results.

In the following comparative analysis we concentrate on some interesting basic characteristics of mentoring, highlighting the differences between Estonia, Finland and Sweden. Mentoring is analysed and discussed below from three perspectives: characteristics and education of mentors, mentoring as a tool for mentees' and mentors' professional development and mentoring as part of school development.

Characteristics and education of mentors

If we want mentors to be able to support new teachers as they learn to teach, it is of paramount importance to pay attention to what mentors know and how they support novice teachers' practice (Hagger et al., 1995; Evertson & Smithey, 2000). Therefore, despite all the arguments pro and contra mentor preparation programs, there is the prevailing understanding among teacher educators that applying appropriate selection criteria alone does not completely cover the demands on the mentors' expertise, which are frequently far greater than a prospective mentor may anticipate and, therefore, a special preparation program is needed (Gold, 1996, p.575). Further, Evertson and Smithey (2000, p. 302) claim that training for mentors is crucial because without a critical approach to teaching, mentoring may have a conservative effect on new teachers' practice, introducing and helping to support the status quo instead of encouraging new teachers to explore innovative practice. Research also shows that mentors who have completed a special training are more efficient supporters for novice teachers both in terms of teaching and the process of analysis (Evertson & Smithey, 2000, p. 302). Krull (2005, p. 155), relying on Kajs (2002), while analysing different mentor training programs brought out the following topics that the preparation for mentoring should be based on: (1) stages of teacher development; (2) adult learning principles; (3) professional development assessments; (4) interpersonal skills to assist in formative assessment and coaching; and (5) relevant knowledge and skills to assist classroom students to succeed.

Estonian induction system differs from that of Finland and Sweden mainly because it is a national and centralized system, and education of mentors is one part of the induction system in Estonia. The mentor's task in the induction program implemented in Estonia is to support a novice teacher's professional growth and adaptation to school as an organisation. Competent (educated) mentors are of great help to the school administration in other areas of school improvement as well. In Estonia, all mentors who had no special preparation, had the opportunity to participate in a training course parallel to mentoring novice teachers. The mentor training was financed by the Ministry of Education and Research. The first course for mentors was comprised of the following modules: school as a learning organisation – novice teacher in organisation; supporting novice teacher professional development – mentoring; mentoring as dialogue; and contemporary learning approach.

The aim of the mentor training was to facilitate the formation of counselling competences and attitudes necessary for the analysis and

development of pedagogical practice, and to acquire skills necessary for supporting teachers' professional growth and a culture of co-operation. The basis for compiling the mentors' training course was a perception of novice teachers' development and their concerns and needs at the beginning of their teaching careers, but also a mentor's attitudes and skills necessary for supporting a novice teacher's learning process. According to research, 99 % (n = 164) of the novice teachers who participated in the induction program in school year 2004/2005 in Estonia found that their mentors mastered the skill of guiding (Eisenschmidt, 2006). The guiding tended to be technical assistance and guidance of local customs and policies as well as emotional support, which is important but forms only one aspect of support to novice teachers. It appeared from the interviews that novices saw mentors mostly as "local guides" and mentors themselves valued and assessed their skill of facilitating adjustment to the school culture the highest. It seems to be much more complicated to implement activities that support novice teachers' learning and professional growth. Further, mentors themselves gave the lowest evaluation to their skill of documenting their activities and supporting novices' self-reflection. The mentors, who were experienced teachers, found it most difficult to avoid "teaching" and to find the delicate balance between "telling what to do" and "assisting" or "guiding" the new teacher to construct his or her own knowledge about teaching (Eisenschmidt, 2006). Based on the research findings, changes were made in the mentor training program. The training became more focused on the mentors' beliefs of their role, and on reflective practice so as to enable mentors to critically analyse their own work and learn from it as well as support novice teachers' reflection processes. This kind of research has not yet been done in Finland and Sweden.

In Finland and Sweden, local municipalities are responsible for induction and mentoring arrangements. Thus, municipalities take care of mentor education if they consider it necessary. Generally municipalities arrange only some courses for their mentors. In Finland, the Open University at the University of Finland has organised mentor education courses for persons from different kinds of occupational areas. In Sweden, the models include shorter informative sessions or shorter or longer courses for mentors. The content is very different, but the municipalities try to satisfy the mentors' need for education. In some municipalities they use a seminar model for education (Fransson & Morberg, 2001). In the seminar model, a group of mentors reflects on the mentor's task. In Finland and Sweden, the issues to be discussed at mentoring meetings are usually determined by the mentees. In Estonia there are national aims and issues for mentoring set up by the educational

authorities. The different types of mentor education in Estonia, Finland and Sweden depend on the number of novices as well as on how the induction program is organised (national program or local initiative). In Estonia, only about 150-200 novice teachers start their career in schools every year. As the number of novices in schools is the biggest in Tallinn and Tartu, it is reasonable to concentrate mentor training in the two big cities. Novice teachers get their initial education at the two major universities: Tallinn University and Tartu University. As both of the universities are also actively involved in in-service teacher education, they are interested in participating in the induction year program to be able to get feedback for improving their initial as well in-service education programs. According to the induction year monitoring results, in Estonia the universities are the initiators as well as the main developers of the induction year program.

Mentoring as a tool for mentors' and mentees' professional development

New teacher professionalism means more collegial collaboration, more sharing of different practises and more mutual support than before. The results of the Finnish experiments demonstrated that schools need mentoring as a tool to support new teachers' professional development because teacher professionalism increasingly involves mastery of extra-curriculum knowledge and skills (Jokinen & Välijärvi, 2006). Mentoring offers new teachers practical stimuli and a collaborative opportunity to enter into partnerships and, what may be called, a therapeutic discussion on topics around teaching and the functioning of the school community.

During the mentoring process mentors learn how they can support mentees to integrate their reflection with general principles of teaching and learning how to teach. By this dialogue mentors engage mentees in processes that concern events central to their own teaching. This way, mentees are challenged by looking at the events from the perspective of teaching development. The mentoring process makes alternative interpretations available. This is achieved by modelling, on the one hand, reflective processes and, on the other hand, decision-making activities essential for solving the problems encountered in development work (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000).

Mentors of Estonian novice teachers noted that being a mentor is a good opportunity to learn and develop. Mentoring offers experienced teachers challenges and opens new learning roads. Novices have pointed out that mentoring helped them to reflect more critically on their own teaching, as well as their personal values and theories about teaching

and learning (Eisenschmidt, 2006). Mentoring can be used as a tool to address innovatively issues and problems that challenge new teachers. Here mentors contribute to the conceptualisation of everyday phenomena brought up by new teachers. This could be looked upon as a dialogue between the experiential world and theory. Mentoring, both group and peer mentoring, seems to consist of contextual, constructive and emotional support for learning to teach and for identity development. Mutual reflection among the mentees promoted their learning to teach process and helped them to build their own professional identity. Peer support and the varying experiences of the new teachers and practises of different school communities offered tools for conceptualising the phenomena of everyday life. In all the three countries, mentors stressed that there was a need to learn how to help to combine the newcomers' own questions with reflection on the central factors affecting the process of learning to teach.

Mentoring provides a vehicle for mentors and mentees, both alone and together, to reflect on their practice, reconsider what they are doing and why, and work towards improving their practice. Schön (1987) called this process "reflection-in-action" and considers this process a powerful mechanism for changing work practices and/or personal beliefs. Mentoring is a professional relationship that can engage two or more and bring benefits to both.

Mentoring as a part of school development

Promoting NQTs professional development is a guarantee that NQTs will be able to contribute to school development earlier than they would without such support. In Sweden newly qualified teachers with their more scientific initial education are important in the promotion of school development (Morberg, 2005). The Swedish government has prepared several documents setting out their expectations to newly qualified teachers. NQTs are important and they are expected to contribute to the local school development on different levels, from just being a critical friend to initiating different kinds of projects (Fransson & Morberg, 2001).

A development-oriented school supports the professional development of its teachers and it is described as a collaborative organisation where members work collegially trusting each other. They have the same aims, high expectations toward themselves and students, and the highest priorities of such school are teaching and learning (Glatthorn, 1995). The social context of the school substantially affects teachers' professional growth and here the headmasters have an essential role to play. A survey carried out among headmasters in Estonia showed that

the induction year is an important factor in supporting the adaptation of beginner teachers to their profession (Kutseaasta seire, 2005). The most valuable elements of the induction year brought out by headmasters were the increase in collaboration between teachers and identifying NQTs' problems.

According to many Finnish headmasters, at mentoring meetings mentees get support, answers to their questions, new ideas and more courage to express their opinion in the schools. New teachers are more able to reflect on their own teaching and actions with help of experienced colleagues. And also they relay on the experience of other novice teachers in the mentoring group. Some principals said that the effects of mentoring depended on the attitude and personality of new teachers. Usually the feedback of the school community was positive to mentees. New teachers bring new things with them to school communities. (Jokinen, Heikkinen & Välijärvi, 2005).

Mentoring meetings have served novice teachers as a useful interaction situation that supported them in their work and enabled them to learn from each other and from an experienced mentor. However, has mentoring been seen too often as an isolated interaction process between a mentor and a new teacher? It appears for instance in Finland that new teachers perceive mentoring as an individual process taking place outside their own school organisation rather than as an internal process. Most of the mentees and mentors interviewed in course of the study wanted and considered it important to hold mentoring meetings outside their schools and that the mentor and mentee were from different schools (Jokinen, Heikkinen & Välijärvi, 2005). At the same time, most of the headmasters interviewed pointed out that mentoring should be organised by novice teachers' own schools. Organising mentoring inside the mentees' owns school could help the whole school community. Feedback from new teachers and their mentors would also be a good basis for developing the school culture and activities. It is also possible to use teachers' collaboration, 'natural mentoring', between parallel classrooms.

Mentoring programs seem to have little effect unless they have been integrated with other principles and practices adopted in development projects as preconditions for a reorganisation of the teaching profession (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). It is possible to conceptualise and design mentoring programs in ways that involve seeing them as tools for reforming schools' action culture. In this way, mentoring becomes not only a way of helping individual teachers but also a means of contributing to the construction of strong teaching cultures in schools that have

made a commitment to the promotion of teaching, learning and caring. Teachers play the key role in developing school communities. Newly qualified teachers have to challenge to interpret and reconstruct the implications of essential events and situations in the context of teaching. In Estonia, Finland and Sweden it has been found that the mentoring process makes alternative interpretations of teaching and school practices available. This is achieved by modelling, reflective processes and decision-making activities necessary for solving the problems emerged in development work. In many other fields, there is an opinion that mentors help not only to support new practitioners but also to develop their skills and deal with their work-related stress.

Discussion and concluding remarks for the future

In this section we summarise some of our findings and discuss them in the perspective of remarks for the future. Mentoring has now been practiced for some time and there are various possibilities to develop it. Will mentoring remain an important part of professional development and school development? How will mentoring develop in the future? What can now be seen as possible scenarios?

Mentoring as a part of the induction program and teachers' in-service education?

In all the three countries, it has been noticed that mentoring alone cannot substitute new teachers' induction to their school community; however, it can be a central activity in teacher induction. Mentoring can make teachers' in-service education more individual and flexible. Organising mentoring locally in Finland and Sweden does not require large financial outlays or extra resources as much as traditional in-service education. According to Estonian experience, the headmasters' role and support is very important in making mentoring possible and successful. Because mentoring takes time and effort, it should be a part of regular work load or paid for extra. Nevertheless, Estonia's experience shows that feedback and support from headmasters and colleagues is even more valued than extra pay. Mentoring is viewed as a confidential, collaborative, professionally and emotionally supportive mutual learning process for both the mentees and mentors. Much of its popularity depends on natural and personal discussions of NQTs' problems in daily work held in mentoring meetings. This way, NQTs have an opportunity to ask questions and get answers to their important issues. As the result, mentors and mentees benefit mutually from such co-operative communication.

In Estonia, there is a centralised induction system for mentoring new teachers. Universities in Estonia play a central role in the implementation of the induction program. As a result, initial teacher education is closely connected with teachers' in-service education and induction plays an important part in teachers' future professional development. Is it possible in Finland and Sweden to find resources needed for organising mentoring by exploiting and reallocating the means that already exist in the budgets of municipalities and schools? To achieve this, it is necessary that all parties concerned accept shared responsibility for the new teachers' induction phase. On the other hand, the proposed system of registration of teachers in Sweden (SOU 2008:52), where the state finances mentoring, may solve the financial issue in Sweden, but may perhaps bring out other complications, such as issues related to mentors participating in the evaluation of the new teachers? In our opinion the induction system in Finland and Sweden must be created in co-operation between teachers, schools, education providers, trade unions and teacher education departments. It has to be a well-defined stage of a continuum of the teacher's professional development that starts with teacher education and continues throughout the teaching career (see also chapter 8). The induction phase could also make it possible to use those rich resources that newly qualified teachers can offer to their school communities. Implementing the induction system in a way that supports new teachers' professional development and their role in developing school community is important and should replace the attempts of assimilating them into the existing practises of the school culture.

Individual versus school community development

In the Finnish experiments, new teachers preferred to discuss their concerns and problems with outsiders (teachers from other schools) rather than with colleagues from their own school. They felt that in their own school community they were unable to bring up questions linked with their own competence and problems because they were afraid that this would affect their position and future within the school community. The new teachers found it helpful that they were mentored by people from outside their own school community. A session organised in a neutral space made possible open interaction based on trust. An atmosphere of mutual respect and reciprocal dialogue gave the new teachers the courage to speak frankly about their own experiences and, simultaneously, interact with other new teachers and school cultures (Jokinen & Välijärvi, 2006).

Is mentoring too often conceptualised as an interaction and learning process between a NQT and a mentor separate from the school community, as it seems to be in Finland? The teacher community is constrained by a rooted and powerful myth of individual competence, one of the factors that make it difficult for teachers to share their burdens and success with colleagues. However, the biggest problem will be that organising mentoring in the novice teachers' own schools is a question of time and resources. Is it possible to relieve new teachers and their mentors from the teaching duties during the school day for mentoring meetings a couple of times in the month? Are there in the schools resources available which could be used in mentoring? (Jokinen, Heikkinen & Välijärvi, 2005) New teacher professionalism means also increased overall responsibility. Valuable knowledge is transmitted in functional contexts, in joint meetings between mentors and new teachers. Teacher mentoring makes it possible to find disturbances in school and discover solutions best suited to support the functioning of a today's school. Will mentoring evolve into a tool for communal change or will it remain a means of supporting the development of the individual teacher?

How to educate mentors

Is it really necessary to educate mentors? This is an important but rather difficult question answers to which differ greatly. For instance, mentors in private companies in Finland and Sweden are hardly ever educated, but the mentees are prepared how to use a mentor efficiently. Mentors in the school system supporting NQTs may have completed a special training; however, often municipalities decide that any teacher, including those without special mentor education, can be appointed as a mentor. Some mentors complete a course that lasts only a couple of hours others are trained in several weeks. There are also examples in between these two types of training. Mentor education can involve education on, for instance, the mentoring processes, professional development, school development in the perspective of NQTs, how to support a younger colleague, how to plan for talks and how to talk with a mentee and, above all, how to listen to NQT.

The education can be arranged by the municipalities, but it can also be arranged by the universities. If the education is arranged by the municipality, there is often a local profile for the educational program. In Sweden, the municipalities decide the content of the mentor education in accordance with the local needs and local goals for the mentoring programs. Municipalities can locally arrange the education on their own, but they can also engage experts for the task. The courses can take place in the municipality or elsewhere. Some municipalities have a con-

tinuing program for mentor education, so that mentors can study in different levels. Universities can also arrange courses for mentors in different ways. There are ordinary courses at campus or distance courses of 5 – 20 weeks. In such case, university teachers conduct the courses. If teachers are appointed as mentors when they are fairly new at work and rather young, they may require longer and perhaps more thorough courses. Educational programs also provide information on what it is like to be an NQT and how young teachers can develop teacher competences.

To summarise, the key requirements for a mentor are that he/she should be a good teacher and have good personal abilities (motivation and reflective skills). Education provided to mentors may vary from just a very short instruction to longer courses. Mentors have often expressed their need of mentor education. However, the content of education may vary from one municipality to another or from one university to another.

Strengths and weaknesses of mentoring

As we have seen in this chapter, mentoring can be arranged in many ways. In Estonia, generally paired mentoring is in use at school level and group mentoring in university support programs, but in Finland and Sweden paired and group mentoring are both used at school level. In Finland and Sweden, municipalities are responsible for taking care of new teachers. Because of this, there are big differences between municipalities and schools in organising the induction phase and mentoring. It seems that management of induction of NQTs depends (too) much on the capability, knowledge and interest of the municipality. In our opinion, in Finland and Sweden there should be a central legislation or agreements on NQTs' induction and mentoring.

The strength of group mentoring is that it is easy to arrange. There is often one mentor leading a group of NQTs (2-6 persons). This helps to avoid the problem of finding suitable pairs or a 'right mentor' to the mentee. Furthermore, this way it is probably easier to involve nearly all NQTs in the municipality. The main strength of group mentoring is the support of peers, newly qualified teachers sharing the same position. Group members can share experiences, give and receive hints and advice from each other. Peers are the reflective mirror to one's thoughts and ideas. However, compared to pair mentoring, it is not so easy to share and discuss one's personal problems in a bigger group. In pairs, teachers tend to go deeper behind the problems. It would sometimes be useful to arrange paired mentoring sessions in bigger groups as well. The most significant weakness in all the three countries seems to be how to exploit mentoring as a part of developing the school community.

Headmasters need knowledge and skills to involve teachers who have completed mentorship training in school development projects. This resource remains unused in several schools at present. Trained mentors have skills and knowledge whose effective implementation would support co-operation and learning among the teaching staff of schools. In Estonia the aspects that need further closer attention are connected with recognising and reimbursing the work done by mentors. Effective mentoring requires additional time and effort. Mentoring must either fit into the general working time schedule of teachers or be done for extra pay. At the moment the area is not properly regulated, and it largely depends on the school headmaster whether or not mentoring and supporting novice teachers is important in his/her opinion.

Mentoring as a phenomenon is a very good way of supporting NQTs' professional development. The outcome of mentoring depends on many personal factors which are difficult to change and to affect. It also depends on the frames, such as financial frames, implemented in the municipalities. If the municipality looks at mentoring as an important investment, then they are likely to prioritise mentoring, if not, then they will provide little or no support to mentoring.

Main issues considering arranging, implementing and developing mentoring in the future

Based on this comparative study, we want to emphasise some crucial issues concerning the arrangement and implementation of mentoring during the induction phase of newly qualified teachers. Even if mentoring seems to be a quite powerful and positive tool in supporting newly qualified teachers, it is only one of many other ways of supporting teachers' professional development. We have to clarify what the special aims of mentoring are, so that we are able to use the best qualities (characteristics) of mentoring. Mentoring meetings should be arranged flexibly, involving different models of mentoring – paired group and peer mentoring, based on the local context. If the municipality is responsible for arranging mentoring, there should be some kind of a formal program with agreements on the schedule, number of meetings, duration of meetings and possible financial decisions.

Mentoring is a demanding and challenging process for mentors. They need to have a number of skills and abilities. It is important to both engage mentors in the mentoring process and educate them by, for example, 'mentoring mentors'. The development of the school community and mentoring seem to be too separated from each other. This disadvantage has to be overcome, and then the role of headmasters once again becomes important when implementing mentoring.

Mentors have a significant role in conducting the mentoring meetings. It appears that mentoring discussions tend to be superficial, focusing on daily issues – spending time together and having a little 'chat'. The main task of the mentor is to lead the dialogue and guide mentees to reflect on important issues. Instead of applying an individualistic approach, we need to support mentees' and mentors' collaborative learning. That way, mentees and mentors are able to transfer the experiences and issues they have learned to their daily work in the classrooms. It might be a good idea to urge NQTs to write reflective journals or diaries and compile portfolios, as it is done in Estonia, to foster their professional learning and changes in their own teaching.

Further research needed to develop mentoring newly qualified teachers

In the last 10-15 years, studies have been conducted to research mentoring in many areas of life. We have noticed that mentoring has been implemented in different forms and in different contexts across countries, schools and occupations. Considering only schools, even though school systems vary a lot, in some countries mentoring can be a formal part of initial teacher education, in induction phase with assessment of student teachers or a tool for professional growth of newly qualified or mid career teachers. One of the most important problems with mentoring research is that there exist so many loose concepts of mentoring (see also chapter 2). There are numerous meanings behind mentoring and we speak of different issues using the same name. Therefore it is rather difficult to apply the results of mentoring research in practice and transfer research results from one context to another. Some of these differences have been discussed in this article, too. A careful critical analysis of research is always necessary . We need to clarify the objectives and essence of mentoring as compared to other concepts close to it: counselling, guiding, coaching and supervision. In recent years research has focused on reconceptualizing mentoring (see also chapter 5) to discover the common ground of mentoring practices and their research.

We would like to highlight some research objectives based on our analysis of mentoring. The organisation of the induction phase is based on co-operation and shared responsibility between teachers, schools, education providers, labour market organisations and teacher education departments. Research could focus on how representatives of different organisations (for instance municipalities, trade unions, universities) see mentoring of newly qualified teachers and its role during their induction phase. Research must ascertain whether mentoring delivered in a new teacher's own school makes it possible to discuss their prob-

lems in an atmosphere solidly based on trust, as in mentoring delivered outside school. Is it possible to develop mentoring as an explicit tool of school development as well? In the future we need more knowledge of how to educate mentors and how to take care of their well being. Do we need mentoring of mentors, too?

What is the role of headmasters in arranging induction and mentoring and in recruiting mentors in different contexts? What kind of school culture would support teachers' learning, co-operation and inquiry? What is the extent of a mentor's impact on a novice teacher's learning? What can be achieved by the novices themselves and which aspects depend on the school environment? Also, there is the question what mentors should do, what they actually do, and what the novices learn as a result? What is the content and quality of the dialogue between a mentor and novice in our North-European contexts? How supportive are the feedback discussions between mentors and novices for the development of a self-analysing and reflecting practitioner?

Mentoring has become popular and its effects proved to be positive. However, there is a danger that meetings on mentoring are held on a superficial level. We need more knowledge of how to move from the processing of day-to-day problems to supporting teachers' professional development and professional identity (see also chapter 8). There might also be different paradigms in initial teacher education and in schools, where the mentoring takes place. This, in its turn, is an another important area for the future research. Co-operation between the institutions of initial teacher education and the schools in municipalities is a crucial question to make the induction of novice teachers more reasonable and fruitful. We have to develop many different ways to strengthen effects of mentoring on newly qualified teachers' own daily teaching as well as on school development. It seems that the mentoring process includes special characteristics of reflective and collaborative mutual learning process. We need research on in-depth studies of mentoring to find out if there are some important issues to transfer to daily classroom teaching and to initial teacher education.

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Chapter 5

Reconceptualising Mentoring as a Dialogue

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ABSTRACT

This article illustrates an idea of mentoring as a dialogue, and it reflects some of the changes in the latest theoretical conceptualisations of mentoring. The study is based on empirical and theoretical research work on mentoring at the Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä, Finland, in 2001–2008. The traditional understanding of the concept 'mentoring' refers to an experienced authority, in terms of knowledge, who guides a novice. Today, the concept is increasingly used to refer to conversation and collaboration between equals, which reflects a transition towards constructivism and dialogue. Mentoring is increasingly being carried out in groups with both experienced and new employees. The empirical part of this article compares experiences gained from paired mentoring, group mentoring and peer group mentoring. Organising mentoring in a group was found to be the most vital alternative.

First teaching years: the bridge over troubled waters

During the first years of their career, newly qualified teachers meet challenges for which they have not been prepared to in their initial teacher education (e.g. Bess, 2007; Jokinen & Välijärvi, 2006). However well-qualified the new teachers are, their pre-service education cannot provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary for a life-time. Therefore, teacher education and professional development needs to be seen as a lifelong project, and be structured and resourced accordingly.

The importance of the induction phase of a teacher has lately been recognised at many levels of teacher education policy, both nationally and more widely in Europe. According to the report "Improving the Quality of Teacher Education" assigned from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament.

> (…) provision for teacher education and development will be more effective if it is coordinated as a coherent system at national level, and is adequately funded. The ideal approach would be to set up a seamless continuum of provision embracing initial teacher education, induction into the profession, and career-long continuing professional development that includes formal, informal and non-formal learning opportunities. This would mean that all teachers:
>
> – take part in an effective programme of induction during their first three years in post / in the profession;
>
> – have access to structured guidance and mentoring by experienced teachers or other relevant professionals throughout their career;
>
> – take part in regular discussions of their training and development needs, in the context of the wider development plan of the institution where they work.
>
> (Commission of the European Communities, 2007, pp. 12–13)

Today, mentoring is regarded as a promising way to promote teachers' professional development in the induction phase. However, there seems to be various definitions and understandings of the concept of mentoring. Traditionally, mentoring has been referred to as a process whereby a more experienced teacher gives advice to less experienced ones. The aim is to provide the novice teachers with the necessary skills and understanding for their work. Usually mentoring has been considered as a means of supporting newly qualified teachers. In the literature of the field of teacher education, the concept *mentoring* is often associated with teaching training, replacing the concept of *supervision*, which holds somewhat behaviouristic connotations. In this meaning,

the concept of mentoring seems to have become a new global mantra in teacher education (Sundli, 2007). Sarcastically speaking, we could claim that this fashionable word in many areas of working life has been lately adapted to teaching practice so as to make it sound better and more modern.

The traditional understanding of mentoring is based on an assumption that a more experienced professional counsels a less experienced one (Roberts, 2000). According to the classic definition (Murray, 2001, xiii): "*Mentoring is a deliberate pairing of a more skilled or a more experienced person with a less skilled or less experienced one, with the mutually agreed goal of having the less skilled person grow and develop specific competences.*" The origin of the concept strongly emphasises the extensive experience and social prestige of the mentor. According to a myth dated back to ancient Greece, *Mentor* was a friend of *King Ulysses* who was responsible for the upbringing of his son *Telemachus* when the King departed for the Trojan War. The goddess *Pallas Athene* was guised as *Mentor*. The myth shows why mature and intellectual authority, even a divine wisdom, are related to the concept of mentor.

This traditional idea of mentoring has lately been challenged by a number of authors (e.g. Roberts, 2000; Jokinen & Välijärvi, 2006). The latest conceptualisations of mentoring question the assumption that the mentor knows best. There has been a recent shift in the literature to reconceptualise mentoring as much more of a collaborative collegial relationship (Bokeno & Vernon, 2000; Musanti, 2004; Le Cornu, 2005; Wang & Odell, 2007; Chaliés et al., 2008).

On a general level, the ongoing change can be described as a transition towards constructivist assumptions on knowledge and learning. Mentoring does not always follow the traditional model in which the mentor is experienced and in this respect a superior – usually an older person who is socially and professionally renowned. The focus is shifting from classic one-to-one conversation to forms where mentoring is considered as collegial collaboration. The applications of mentoring do not only concern the supporting of the work of newly qualified teachers but also professional dialogue between teachers of different ages in which both new and more experienced teachers can learn something new. The shift away from the mentor as a hierarchical, one-way view to a more reciprocal relationship has been conceptualised in terms such as *co-mentoring, mutual mentoring, collaborative mentoring, peer collaboration, critical constructivist mentoring, dialogic mentoring, reciprocal mentoring* and *peer mentoring* (Bokeno & Vernon, 2000; Musanti, 2004; Le Cornu, 2005; Wang & Odell, 2007; Schmidt, 2008; Chaliés et al., 2008). Instead of the traditional expert–novice relationship in the induction

phase, mentoring has lately been regarded as a process of developing teachers' professional capacities throughout their teaching careers. In a broad sense, mentoring can be regarded as a narrative process of achieving professional identity as a teacher through a dialogical process (Heikkinen, 2002).

This article discusses the opportunities of mentoring in the light of three related research and development projects carried out in Helsinki, Kokkola and the Jyväskylä region in Finland. Our methodological framework is that of action research: the objective is not only to produce information and knowledge, but also to influence and participate in the improvement of the position of newly qualified teachers (Heikkinen, Huttunen & Syrjälä, 2007).

Mentoring as collaboration

A number of studies show that mentoring is not valuable for the less experienced persons only but that the more experienced employees can also find a new perspective for their work (Jokinen & Välijärvi 2006; Wang & Odell 2007). Mentors themselves emphasise that they learn from the conversations. The most fruitful conversations seem to take place in groups of newly qualified teachers and more experienced ones. The participants of the group bring multiple perspectives to teachers' work. Consequently, along with the shift towards more collaborative forms of mentoring, the terms *peer mentoring* and *peer group mentoring* have become more common (see Cross, 1998; Kutilek & Earnest, 2001; Angelique, Kyle & Taylor, 2002). Good experiences have been gained, for example, from the peer mentoring of nurses (Glass & Walter, 2000) and newly qualified teachers (Boreen & Niday, 2000).

The conceptual change of mentoring has been described as a shift towards constructivism. Wang and Odell (2002; 2007) recognised three approaches prevailing in mentoring programmes: *humanistic*, *situated apprentice* and *critical constructivist* approaches.

The objective of the *humanistic perspective* to mentoring is to help novice teachers overcome and anticipate personal problems and feel comfortable in their profession. According to Rogers (1982), learning is related to learner's personal competence in the physical and social environment, depending on the attitude the person takes to his or her own learning. The development of the person's self-esteem and confidence in learning is important to solve problems. A close and confidential relationship between the mentor and the person being mentored plays a central role in the humanistic approach. Thus, the objective of mentoring is shifted to supporting the novice teachers in such a way

that they develop confidence in themselves and their abilities, which in turn should help them succeed in teaching. The focus is on the personal development of the teacher rather than on the contents and practices of teaching or the social dimension of the school environment. The humanistic approach assumes mentors to be first and foremost warm and open, trustworthy, safe and helpful personalities; good listeners who give emotional and motivational support (Wang & Odell, 2007, p. 476; Schmidt 2008, p. 646).

According to *the situated apprentice perspective,* all knowledge and learning depend on the context and learning through apprenticeships in a professional community (Lave & Wenger, 1991; see also Rogoff, 1984). The situated apprentice perspective focuses on helping novice teachers adjust to the prevailing culture and norms of teaching; to understand the contexts and cultures of teaching. Novice teachers should develop practical knowledge, including teaching techniques and skills. The process of developing as a teacher is seen from the viewpoint of the community: it is considered as gradual socialisation into the tribe of teachers. The mentor's task is to help novice teachers adapt themselves to the prevailing local school culture and find a meaningful place in it. Mentors are experts with a strong practical and contextualised knowledge of teaching (Wang & Odell, 2007, p. 476.) This perspective emphasises the transfer of tacit social knowledge to the younger generation. The situated apprentice perspective thus emphasises the transfer of the school traditions. In this traditional understanding of mentoring, the behaviouristic idea of transferring knowledge is emphasized (Roehrig et al. 2008, p. 686).

The *critical constructivist perspective* is based on two theoretic backgrounds. The first is critical theory, according to which the objective is to learn how to deconstruct and reconstruct existing knowledge (Noffke, 1997). Prevailing concepts and practices are evaluated from the viewpoint of the domineering use of power and therefore the underlying goals are not only to recognise such prevailing hegemonies but also emancipate, free oneself from them. The second theoretical background is the basic assumption in constructivism according to which knowledge is actively built based on previous knowledge and experiences (von Glasersfeld, 1995). The formation of knowledge is continuous alternation of assimilation and accommodation, which leads to reformation of the learners' original perceptions. The starting point in the process of formation of knowledge is the learner's own experiences and perceptions, and learning is seen as gradual transformation of these perceptions in social interaction. The main features of these approaches are listed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Approaches on mentoring (adapted from Wang & Odell, 2007).

	Humanistic perspective	Situated apprentice perspective	Critical constructivist perspective
General aims	The development of the teacher's self-esteem and confidence through a counselling process	A process of socialisation in the practices of a professional community through apprenticeship	To reflect and critique the existing knowledge, practices and social structures within the prevailing culture of teaching through reflective conversation
Assumptions of knowledge and expertise	Personal knowing and professional growth emphasised	Contextual knowledge; socialisation to the community emphasised	Critical view on the social reproduction of knowledge and practices emphasised
Appreciated features of a mentor	A warm, helpful and supportive personality	An expert with a strong practical and contextualised knowledge of teaching	A change agent and a challenger of perspectives

This conceptual shift towards constructivism in mentoring is parallel to the general change in the concept of learning: mentoring practices seem to change towards the same direction as the conceptions of knowledge and learning. Learning is thus no longer understood as merely transferring completed information but as being confronted by different conceptions and challenging old ones with new information.

Practically speaking, the critical constructivist perspective in mentoring means that novice teachers are encouraged to pose questions and challenge existing teaching practices as well as to change the way of being a teacher. The focus is on their relevant dispositions for and commitment to reforming teaching, aiming at teaching in the existing culture with a reform-minded vision. The mentor's role has been conceptualised as "a change agent" by Wang and Odell (2007, p. 477).

The traditional conception of mentoring is in line with the assumptions related to the approaches emphasising the humanistic or situated apprenticeship perspective. These approaches give emotional and psychological support or technical assistance to novice teachers in their first attempts to cope with and adopt the existing system. Mentoring is thus an opportunity to help novice teachers combine theories learnt in teacher education with everyday practice (Wang & Odell 2002, 2007).

The turn towards constructivism and dialogue

As Wang and Odell (2007, p. 485) put it, *"(…) moving away from prevailing teaching practice to a different kind of teaching that is more reform minded makes the traditional function of mentoring, supporting novice teachers' smooth transition into the existing teaching culture, questionable and problematic."* Thus, the newly qualified teachers should reconstruct their previous perceptions of teaching and learning.

The question of power is also raised in conversations. It is therefore only natural that mentoring is not considered as one-way counselling; instead, it is increasingly considered as conversation or dialogue. Mentoring is reciprocal exchange of thoughts and joint creation of knowledge, in which both the mentor and the mentee can learn. Both parties in the mentoring dialogue participate in the expression of knowledge from their own starting points, on the basis of their previous experiences. Dialogic mentoring is socio-constructive by nature: knowledge is construed on the participants' previous experiences in their social interaction.

The socio-constructive perspective on the information process can be seen in the etymology of the word 'dialogue'. The concept of dialogism is derived from the Greek words *dia* and *Logos*. The root *dia* is a prefix meaning 'through, throughout, across'. The word '*Logos*' means word or speech, but it also incorporates wider meanings such as law, order, conversation, meaning and science. The word *Logos* can even be linked with the meaning of life and origin of the universe. In the Bible, *Logos* can be found, for example, in the so called *Logos Hymn* at the beginning of the Gospel of John "In the beginning was the Word [Logos], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1–3).

Therefore, dialogue in the broad sense of the word is conversation to create new – people create meaning, purpose or understanding (*Logos*) by means of conversation, and seek for the purpose or interpretation of their lives and world. In dialogue, this understanding, *Logos,* is created in an intermediary state (*dia*) – through, between and across people – which means that it is not owned by anyone. In addition, *Logos* is never completed; it flows and alters as people converse with each other.

According to a dictionary of etymology (Harper, 2001), it is a common misconception to consider dialogue as conversation between two participants. The misconception is attributed to the fact that the prefix *dia* and the prefix *di* are phonetically similar. '*Di*' means 'two' and *logos* means 'word or speech', in which case dialogue would mean speech between two people.

Dialogue means being on the move: it is dynamic and flows forward. It is like a game not fully controlled by the players. The participants in a dialogue do not fully understand themselves how their dialogue proceeds, but their conversation absorbs them into new ideas and mental landscapes in a seemingly random manner. In this kind of a relationship neither party sees the other as an object or tool of his or her actions, unlike in a monologic relationship in which the other person is used as an instrument or an object (Buber, 1962, pp. 25–27).

In dialogue, meanings and interpretations are created in a common intermediary state – in a sphere of confrontation owned by any of the parties. Dialogue flows, one floats in the flow and any of the participants controls the flow by his or her own will. They simply let themselves be floated by the flow that takes them towards new horizons. The metaphor of dialogue as a game or play (in German *Spiel*) describes this autopoietic dimension of dialogue – growth in one's own terms. Dialogue is seen as a play into which the players throw themselves. A true play proceeds in its own terms and none of the participants can fully control its course (Gadamer, 1975, pp. 97–98; Huttunen, 2003, pp. 132–133).

From this perspective, the mentor does not "transfer" the correct understanding or knowledge to the other; instead, the mentor builds the meaning and interpretation together with the other person, through a play of sharing ideas and thoughts with the others. Mentors do not have answers for the fundamental questions but are humble when confronted by life. They avoid putting themselves in a role in which they would have to set the solutions and beliefs of their own respective lives as the starting points of the good life of someone else. In a true dialogue, the mentor also learns when discussing with the person to be mentored. In a dialogic relationship no-one's view of the reality is better or more competent than that of the other party. Instead, the parties acknowledge the incompleteness and propositionary nature of their conceptions. In a dialogical relationship, the autonomy of the other party is respected (Buber, 1962, pp. 25–27).

How to do it: three models studied

In this article, we study the shift of mentoring through three examples in the Finnish context: the Helsinki, Kokkola and Jyväskylä mentoring models. In the light of international research literature, the Helsinki model can best be described with terms such as *paired mentoring, one-to-one mentoring* or *dyadic mentoring*. The main form of the model was based on face-to-face meetings between two people. The Kokkola model was clearly based on an idea of *group mentoring,* and the

Jyväskylä project could best be described as *peer group mentoring.* The main difference between the Kokkola and Jyväskylä models was that the participants of the mentoring group in Kokkola were newly qualified teachers whereas the participants of the groups in the Jyväskylä region were from different stages of their careers (see Table 5.2.). The research results of Kokkola and Helsinki models have already been reported by Hannu Jokinen and Jouni Välijärvi (2006). Therefore, in this article, the emphasis is more on the experiences of the Jyväskylä model.

Table 5.2: The comparative research setting of three mentoring models.

	PAIRED MENTORING	GROUP MENTORING	PEER GROUP MENTORING
Location	City of Helsinki	City of Kokkola	City of Jyväskylä and 12 municipalities of the region
Project period	2000–2006	2003 onwards	2006 onwards
Organising principles	1 experienced teacher + 1 novice teacher (10-20 pairs yearly)	1 experienced teacher + group of novice teachers (4-6 groups/yearly)	1 experienced teacher + group of both novice and experienced teachers (5 groups/year)
Meeting frequency and time allocated	6-7 meetings/year; 1-2 hours/meeting	6-7 meetings/year; 1,5 hours/meeting	8 meetings/year; 3 hours/meeting
Issues discussed	Issues raised by the mentee	Issues raised by the mentees	Each group gathered around a pedagogical theme issue (mathematical thinking, multiculturalism etc.)

The role of the researchers was slightly different in each project. The employees of the Department of Education of the City of Helsinki planned the paired mentoring system used in Helsinki in a rather independent manner. However, they had completed the multidisciplinary studies of mentoring at the Open University of Jyväskylä, organised by Hannu Heikkinen who later transferred to this research project. Researcher Hannu Jokinen participated actively in group mentoring arranged in

Kokkola by organising training and network meetings together with the authorities of the City of Kokkola. The planning of peer group mentoring in the Jyväskylä region network municipalities was also carried out as co-operation between the school authorities and the researchers.

The study is partly based on research materials collected since 2002 in the Teachership – Lifelong Learning (TeLL) research projects funded by the Academy of Finland. In addition, data were collected from the groups in the Jyväskylä region as well as from the experiences of the group leaders and the participants of the groups. The methods used were interviews, e-mail feedback and focus group interviews. In addition, a researcher participated in the meetings of one group during the entire school year 2006–2007 and documented the actions by means of photography and a research diary. Finally, the three mentoring models were assessed by organising a focus group seminar with invited representatives from Helsinki, Kokkola and Jyväskylä, in addition to the representatives of the most important co-operation partners such as the Ministry of Education and the Teachers' Union.

The first thing to take into consideration when comparing the three different methods of mentoring is that there were certain differences both in their goals and starting points. The objective in the Helsinki model was clearly to support newly qualified teachers in the beginning of their careers, similar to group mentoring in Kokkola. The Jyväskylä project differed from the two other projects, since the objective was not only to support new employees but also to develop an extension education model based on peer mentoring to benefit teachers at all stages of their careers. A special goal was to link the mentoring process into the in-service education of teachers.

There were significant differences in practical arrangements as well. The classical model of one-to-one mentoring conversation between a more and less experienced teacher was utilised in Helsinki. The participants agreed upon the time and place for the meetings to be held about once a month, lasting one to two hours. There were often less or no meetings in the spring term. In Kokkola, the group meetings were often organised outside the school building, for example, in facilities offered by the City. The duration of these meetings was about 90 minutes. Clearly most time for meetings was reserved in Jyväskylä: the meetings lasted three hours and there were a total of eight meetings during the school year. Pedagogic themes for the meetings were decided in advance. The groups agreed on the themes in the first meeting when making the annual plan. The meetings took place at different schools, the university, Department of Education and sometimes also in a café. The groups met approximately once a month from October to May.

Peer group mentoring was carried out in the Jyväskylä region in 12 municipalities. Before the actual project commenced, there was a period of preparatory work of about a year and a half. Operation models, compensation arrangements and other details were agreed upon in advance with the Jyväskylä region network municipalities and the Central Finland section of the Teachers' Union. The network municipalities funded the operations in compliance with the agreed model on the basis of the number of participants. The project thus created new forms of co-operation, not only between employers and employees, but also between the departments of education of different municipalities. Negotiations on the division of costs and development of calculation models were thus integral parts of the project.

In the Jyväskylä region, recruiting the members of the groups was based on a pedagogic theme issue from the very beginning. The themes – learning languages, mathematical and scientific thinking, multiculturalism, special education and ethical subjects (religion, philosophy and health education) – were announced when marketing the groups for the teachers in the region. The group planned its programme on the basis of the pedagogic themes in such a way that the theme was approached from different perspectives in every meeting. Experiences were shared in the meetings, and the participants discussed the challenges faced both in the work community and in teaching the subject or theme. The group had a chance to utilise visiting external specialists, whose fees were paid from the funds of the in-service teacher education. The group leaders, who also were teachers, were paid per hour and participation in the group for one year (8 x 3 h = 24 h).

In Jyväskylä region, the information on the groups was disseminated to the teachers during spring and early autumn 2006. The objective was also to develop methods for supporting and training the peer group mentoring leaders. Therefore, four common training meetings were organised for group leaders during the year to introduce group work methods based on action and narration as well as to share experiences. The group leader training was launched in September 2006 with a one-day training meeting to study narrative and action-based methods. Experiences gained from mentoring in Helsinki and Kokkola were also utilised in the start-up of the peer group mentoring. The research setting allows for parallel evaluation of the advantages and opportunities of these three mentoring models.

Empirical findings

The newly qualified teachers in Kokkola (group mentoring) and Helsinki (one-to-one-mentoring) emphasised that the mentoring sessions had offered them an opportunity to talk about their experiences and problems in an atmosphere of trust (Jokinen, 2006; Jokinen & Välijärvi, 2006). They were able to discuss their problems and ask their questions without fearing that these would affect their future in the school community. The mentors saw their roles as listeners to the new teachers and sharing their experiences and problems. Experienced teachers wished to support novices' decisions, but they also found important that new teachers learn to assess their decisions themselves. Their aim was to collaborate with the new teachers in finding alternative approaches or solving a problem. The mentors emphasised that they themselves also learned from the discussions and the new teachers' views.

Group and paired mentoring offered new teachers support and encouragement in the choices they had made and were making at school. The mentors' questions and comments helped the new teachers analyse and critically assess their own teaching activity. Mentors thought that their task was to guide the discussion towards important issues in professional development as a teacher.

The new teachers saw the mentoring groups in Kokkola as a form of peer support. The discussions conducted within the groups provided experiences and hints for their own work and a chance to learn from the choices of other new teachers in the groups. Those discussions brought up alternative solutions to the problems that the new teachers had faced. Compared to the mentoring pairs, the mentoring groups developed more action models for solving acute problem situations. In the mentoring groups new teachers were given an opportunity to look at conflicts involved in the work at school from new constructive perspectives.

> Yes, there you get to hear from other people's experiences, which I've liked a lot. I've always been the youngest and most inexperienced one in the group. Now in this group it has been nice that there are actually some who have graduated after me and are now working. It's nice to reflect their ideas against your own. And then, even as a young teacher, I've been perhaps able to give something to them as well, so that "hey, I too did pull through this situation" … (A newly qualified class teacher)

There were no big differences between group and paired mentoring in the topics discussed. The topics were mainly raised by the new teachers. Everyday problems and challenges, such as problem pupils, pupils' be-

havioural disturbances, interaction with their parents and co-operation with fellow teachers, were frequent topics during the group discussions. Paired mentoring discussions were sometimes deeper, more individual and personal. Paired mentoring made possible a more detailed and individualised examination of the problems that emerged during the sessions.

In the Helsinki model (one-to-one-mentoring) there were more problems in organising the mentoring. They could only reach a small part of the personnel due to difficulties to find proper mentors. They also found it difficult to find proper pairs of mentors and mentees. There were no formal schedules for the meetings. So it depended too much on the mentee's actual motivation, whether they had the mentoring meeting. Furthermore, organising mentoring in Helsinki was based on the activeness of a couple of interested local educational authorities and when they moved to another jobs, the whole mentoring activities faded away.

In Kokkola almost all the novice teachers of the town were reached. Mentoring groups had schedules for their meetings and the flexible system also allowed for one-to-one mentoring as a part of the process.

Both mentoring models were arranged outside mentees' schools after the school hours. Headmasters were not taking part in the process and sometimes felt themselves outsiders. This choice of approach means that mentoring lays more emphasis on individuals than on the problems of the school community. It seemed to be difficult to utilise mentoring in the development of the school community.

In Jyväskylä, the peer mentoring groups were gathered around given pedagogical themes, introduced by the coordination group of the in-service teacher education in the region of Jyväskylä. In the group meetings, however, the initial themes were followed in different ways. In the group dedicated to mathematical thinking, for instance, the theme issue was more visible throughout the period of meetings, whereas the group of multicultural education and special education put more emphasis on sharing everyday experiences and feelings through peer discussion. One of the best advantages of the Jyväskylä region groups was that both the mentors and group members were appropriately resourced. The mentors were paid properly, and the teachers could allocate their in-service education hours for the group meetings. In the steering group of the Jyväskylä region project there was a local representative of the Teachers' Union. Thus, it was confirmed that the resources were appropriately allocated for both the mentor teachers and group members. Another advantage, compared to the other two models, was that the meeting time was sufficient. The three-hour meetings in the afternoons

made it possible both to share current feelings and happenings, and to have more analytical and thematical reflection around the theme issue. A general finding was that it was fruitful to both share the current experiences and to discuss at more general level. As one of the mentors described it:

> Those people [teachers of the group] come from amidst of a peculiar turbulence. Perhaps some pupils have been sitting on them or some have spat on them, or some have listened to parents screaming and yelling at them and things like that. Every time it takes the first half of the meeting to share those big feelings, and then, the rest of the time, the last hour and a half, we talk more generally; more on the issue so to say.

Discussion: what is the best way to organise mentoring?

In the present study we examined three different models of organising mentoring for teachers: 1) traditional paired mentoring between an expert and a novice teacher (Helsinki model), 2) group mentoring with an experienced teacher and group of beginning teachers (Kokkola model), and 3) peer group mentoring with an experienced teacher and a group of teachers in different phases in their career (Jyväskylä model). Our analyses indicated that there are both differences and similarities between the mentoring models. First, common to all models is that they make it possible to transcend teachers' conventional individualistic working culture and to move towards more collegial ways of working (see e.g., Hargreaves, 1994). Mentoring provides teachers with a forum for discussion, sharing of experiences, getting feedback and participating in a dialogue concerning important issues in their work. However, collegiality shared through mentoring is confined to the mentoring pair or group, and mentoring activities do not seem to contribute much to the development of the work community as a whole. Therefore, one important question for further improvement is how to make use of mentoring in the development of wider contexts and working cultures of schools.

Second, it is common to all three mentoring models that establishing and maintaining mentoring activities require well-defined structures, management and coordination. The experiment in Helsinki showed that organising mentoring cannot be dependent on the interest of few individual persons because if these persons move to another job, for instance, it may end the whole activity. It is also necessary to make an agreement about wages and the use of working hours for mentoring.

Third, in all models of mentoring the idea of dialogue – construction of meaning in a common intermediary state and reciprocal interaction – came true. Thus, in any of the cases the mentoring relationship was not perceived as one-way guidance but rather as conversation and sharing of thoughts for mutual benefit. Young teachers may bring to conversation new perspectives and new knowledge that experienced teachers may not have. Thus, the mentoring relationship provides a tool for reflection to experienced teachers as well. In a group mentoring and peer group mentoring the variety of perspectives grows wider than in one-to-one discussions in traditional paired mentoring.

Fourth, common to the three models of mentoring was that both the participants and the organisers of the mentoring activities considered mentoring a very worthwhile form of teachers' professional development. Especially the newly qualified teachers in their induction phase felt that mentoring helps them commit themselves more strongly to their profession. More experienced teachers appreciated the genuine collegiality and peer support that mentoring interaction created between the teachers.

The biggest differences between the mentoring models seem to relate to the interpretation of the mentoring concept itself and, consequently, to the practical implementation of mentoring. In the background of the model of paired mentoring there seems to be a traditional idea of mentor as a more experienced and wiser colleague who advises the novice, close to the situated-apprenticeship perspective, whereas the notion of reciprocal creation of knowledge expressed in critical constructivism is more visible in the practices of group mentoring and peer group mentoring. It is worth mentioning, however, that the models are not pure applications of these theoretical and philosophical ideas but, rather, the disparities between the models concern different emphases.

There were also differences between the mentoring practices as to how and to what extent mentoring involves boundary-crossing. For example, should the mentor and the mentee come from the same school or from different schools? Do mentors and mentees visit each other's classes or schools? Should participants represent the same school subjects? Can class teachers, subject teachers and vocational teachers participate in the same groups? There seems to be no unambiguous answers to these questions. Participants often prefer homogeneous groups because then the problems faced by the participants are similar. However, from the point of view of generating new ideas and perspectives, boundary-crossing and heterogeneous groups may prove more fruitful.

As we have seen, each mentoring model has its own strengths and risks. All these models are feasible and can be successful, and the best solution is always dependent on the local context. However, on the basis of our study it seems that a group-based solution is the most vital form of mentoring. The findings concerning paired mentoring indicate that the participants perceive it as useful, but also that it is vulnerable to lack of mentors and problems of organising the activities. In any case, it is important that there are sufficient resources to organise mentoring because otherwise teachers and mentors do not commit themselves to it. In our cases, the schools, teachers and local authorities managed to make local agreements about the terms of mentoring activities, we also encountered the idea that local school administration would prefer to promote some other kind of activity than mentoring. Therefore, it is important that provision of mentoring is dealt with in national discussions of educational policy.

A main challenge for the future is to establish mentoring as an integral part of teachers' professional development. This requires arrangements in allocation of teachers' working hours at the level of collective labour agreement. The results of the three case studies indicate that whatever the model of mentoring is, the mentors also need training and support.

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Chapter 6

Strong, Competent, and Vulnerable
– Experiences of the First Year as a Teacher

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ABSTRACT

This article is based on the narratives of three beginning teachers from Estonia, Finland and Norway. Methodologically, the study has been a mixture of a traditional strategy applied to qualitative research and a more interactive approach. We have developed the interpretation with the participant-storytellers and let them detect interesting points in each others' stories. The stories and the reflections on these stories make visible the aspect of newly qualified teachers' competence and the aspect of their being in need of support. A teacher's professional growth is an integral component of school culture and related to school development. School culture, social, economical and political contexts influence a teacher's effectiveness and motivation to work and learn. The stories highlight different ways of mentoring and add the importance of the school community and support of colleagues.

The second school was horrible. I felt I couldn't go back. It was so awful that I never want to experience anything like that again as long as I live. (Esta, Estonia)

During the first year, I had no courage to propose anything new personally, but sometimes I succeeded in bringing out my ideas by circulating them through my mentor. (Frida, Finland)

Working with the first year experiences within a narrative framework

In this chapter, the focus is on experiences during the first year as a teacher in Estonia, Finland and Norway. The data consists of three narratives of newly qualified teachers and comments on their own and their peers' narratives. Through these three cases, the experiences of the first year as teacher in the three countries are highlighted.

Being involved with the challenge of how to support newly qualified teachers, we became interested in the mutual elements of the experiences of novice teachers in our countries. As has been pointed out in the previous chapter by Eva Bjerkholt and Egon Hedegaard (chapter 3), there are differences in the educational systems and support for novice teachers between countries, but in terms of newly qualified teachers' individual experiences, there seemed to be much in common. Thus we decided to study more closely the experiences of novice teachers.

Our research questions are:

1. How do newly qualified teachers experience their first year as teachers?

2. Are there differences or similarities in their experiences?

3. What kind of support do the newly qualified teachers experience/receive?

4. What kind of support do the novice teachers need/want?

Our research design was a comparative case study within a narrative framework. We started the research by agreeing on a mutual interview question which was rather broad and open-ended: "Tell me about your first year as a teacher; what were the most significant experiences during the first year"? In the three countries, the interviews took place in May and June 2006. Two of the interviews, the ones in Norway and Estonia, were tape recorded, but the Finnish novice teacher replied by e-mail. The Estonian and Norwegian interviews were first transcribed and then translated into English, but the Finnish one was directly translated into English. Thus the methods of acquiring the data differed slightly, which meant that the Finnish narrative was more condensed and coherent as a story than the other two. However, we decided to analyse the research narratives in the same manner, despite the difference in the method of producing them. Certain mutual elements were found despite the different methods of production.

Another difference in the data was that the informants represented slightly different educational contexts and were not the same age. The Estonian teacher was about 25 years old, a second year primary school teacher. The Finnish teacher was about 30, and likewise a second year primary school teacher. The Norwegian teacher differed from the other two in age and context: she was about 50 years old and an early childhood teacher.

The next step was what we call a thematic analysis of narratives. We read the narratives thoroughly and discussed what they had in common. What we found were five common themes, which we shall introduce later.

The Norwegian and Estonian narratives were condensed and "smoothed" as they were translated into English. This means that non-relevant and repetitive parts of the interview were cut out of the final narrative. We went on with the narratives through a thematic analysis so as to "restory" the narratives. The phase of "retelling" or "restorying" is characteristic of narrative analysis (Creswell 2005, p. 485). In this study, however, our emphasis was not on sequencing the story elements in terms of time and plot as typically in narrative studies, but on the mutual experiences we could distinguish in the narratives. Based on the thematic findings, we condensed the stories into about 1.5 A4-sheets each so that the five common themes were retained, and much of the material was omitted (Creswell 2005, pp. 483–486).

Next, all three narratives were discussed with the participant-storytellers so that every one of them read the others' texts. This phase has often been called "member checking" in traditional qualitative research, but within a narrative framework, this kind of collaboration has a broader meaning. The focus is not only on validating the accuracy of the report, but on a more comprehensive notion of participation in terms of what Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2005a, pp. x–xi) among others have called "couterhegemonic, decolonizing methods which aspire to letting the voice of the research participants be heard.

Within the narrative research framework, we are aware of the social construction of knowledge; in other words how we produce knowledge through social interaction between the participant-storytellers and the community of researchers. Narrative research is participatory in nature; narrative studies are typically based on dialogue and negotiation between the researchers and the subjects of research (Chase, 2005; Creswell 2005; Heikkinen, Huttunen & Syrjälä, 2007). Thus, we are aware that it would be naïve to expect that our voices as researchers were not echoed in the narratives. Rather we see the outcome as being formed in collaboration and dialogue.

The most active part of collaboration with the participant-storytellers was when we showed the condensed version of the narratives to the teachers in January 2007 and asked each individual whether there was something she could recognize, and if there was something to add or to take away. As the result of the discussion, the final version of the narrative was produced. Simultaneously, the participants had a chance to comment on the two stories from the other counties: we asked the teachers whether the other two narratives brought some reflections to their minds.

In our process we may find out similarities – as well as differences – with John W. Creswell's (2005) description of a typical narrative research design. He has reduced narrative research process to seven steps, illustrated in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: The phases of this study (cf. Creswell, 2005)

	The steps of narrative research process (Creswell, 2005)	Realization in this study	Time
1	Identify a phenomenon	novice teachers' experiences of their first year as a teacher	March 06
2	Purposefully select an individual from whom you can learn about the phenomenon	three newly qualified teachers, one from each country: Estonia, Finland, Norway	May 06
3	Collect stories from that individual that reflect personal and social experiences	three narratives based on a mutual interview question: "Tell me about your first year as a teacher; what were the most significant experiences during the first year?"	May – June 06
4	Restory or retell the individual's story	the narratives were – smoothed, translated into English – analysed through a thematic analysis – condensed	June 06 Aug 06 Jan 07
5	Collaborate with the participant-storyteller	all three narratives were discussed with the informants in the three countries	Jan – Feb 07
6	Write a story about the participant's experiences	the reactions of the participant-storytellers were taken into account in revising the final versions	Feb – March 07
7	Validate the accuracy of the report: member checking, triangulation or external audit	the participants read the narratives, previous research findings were taken into account, the article was commented on by other members of the NQTNE network	Oct 06 – March 07

Three narratives of first year experiences

In this section we present the stories from the three teachers. As many studies have shown earlier, the first year experience is for all teachers an important transition, with similar challenges across countries and institutional context, such as for instance the challenges connected with the transition from student to teacher, and certain themes like classroom management (see e.g. chapters 2 and 4). On the other hand these teachers show both individual differences and differences in the context of the school/pre-school climate and leadership style and how these factors influence the first year experience. In the narratives we will see that the newly qualified teacher gradually evolves her professional identity through a process of socialisation and what areas of concerns are expressed.

Esta – An Estonian first-year primary school teacher.

The Estonian novice teacher was a primary school teacher who graduated from a class teacher (grades 1-6) education programme on the bachelor level at university and worked in a large urban school for the second year. She was about 25 years old when she was interviewed. She taught in the first grade (pupils in ages 7-8). In January 2006 there was an in-service training course at school to improve teachers' teaching competences. It was a good opportunity to get to know other teachers.

I went to school really naive. I went to school naively thinking that with my generous and sincere heart I can influence my pupils and lead them onto the right path. I was thinking I would just go in front of the class, as I had heard before that kids can sense if you are a good person and then they are on your side.

The second school was horrible. And then I felt that I couldn't go back. It was so awful that I never want to experience anything like that again as long as I live. Luckily I got help from my mentor. **But the problem is I didn't ask for help a lot, you see. Up to this point I didn't want it a lot.** *I don't want to talk about things I can't cope with and all these problems, but I'm not in denial either. I experience all these problems inside me even more seriously.*

My mentor still keeps telling me that I was too lenient, too kind, but tell me how can I go into the classroom when no one has ever told you what to do when it's your first time? And I told my mentor about it and she supported me a lot. She even interfered sometimes, not really interfered, but once she gave them a lesson, replaced me and did some explaining to them, she did something . . . And the mentor supported me; she had been supportive earlier too, but probably I had more courage to ask her questions now.

*The first half of the school year was a vague time. But in the second term when I turned to my mentor, she told me to be strict. When you've decided to become more persistent and confident, you have nothing to fall back on but raising your voice. You have to be strict and scold them if necessary. Actually it's awful, **but you have to be like that. In the beginning you are over lenient; it will change later.***

During my university years I had heard that I should assert myself (create discipline in the classroom and co-operation with students) but what exactly that meant, I didn't know. I had heard from my mentor that I shouldn't smile, but why not? What exactly was I supposed to do?

When I think back to my first year, how things were, how I made them read so that I invited one of them to come to me to assess his reading, while I gave independent work to the others, it was impossible. It was absolutely impossible. I don't know, maybe I didn't explain it to them, or the words 'silence' and 'quiet!' didn't mean anything to them. But seeing finally in spring that they could do this, that they could be quiet and I could invite them to read next to me, not to mention the present time, then I saw this progress which was actually the result of terribly hard work.

Every day I got more familiar with other teachers. This was very important for me. And a team was formed: this happened during the second term, in January when we started to have special training. There were five young people in our group, we are still an incredible team, and now some more people have joined us. And really we are still a wonderful group. Also the older teachers, our colleagues, supported us a lot. So I felt I meant something to them and this moves me a lot. In the beginning I had this feeling that they were right about everything, whatever they said was pure gold and I did everything wrong.

I have thought about what I would have liked my mentor to do even at the very beginning, or what I would have done if I had been the mentor. She actually offered help several times, she said come and talk, but you see, she has her own work and how can I bother her constantly? Yes, I mentioned that it was hard and she came to observe my lessons, and then it was quite OK. And the kids, I don't know how, behaved well. So she didn't see any problems. They say that you have to manage on your own; you have to arrive at all these things alone, why should an outsider interfere? But if she had done something at the very beginning . . . I would have liked exact guidelines from my mentor.

Frida – a Finnish primary school teacher

The Finnish teacher taught in primary school and had started her working career in a large urban school. She was about 30 years old when she was interviewed. She taught in the fifth grade, and had just started her doctoral studies.

I came to the job at mid-term, being then the third teacher for this class. I had just completed my final practice period in pre-service teacher education, and had no previous work experience except for some temporary posts of a few weeks. The class I was to teach was a first-grade class with 23 pupils.

My first months were a kind of showing off. I was monitoring and evaluating myself. Through my actions, I was trying to prove – to myself, to my colleagues, and to the parents of my pupils – that I knew my job as a teacher although this was my first post.

I was under the impression that a teacher must not bring out his personality in the teaching work but serve as a neutral educator and supplier of knowledge. For the first weeks I tried to follow this approach, but then by the Christmas holidays I realized that this kind of teacher image had made me anxious. When starting my work, I felt my head was full of theories, but putting them into practice wasn't that easy, after all. I was wondering at that point why we never dealt with these situations in teacher education and how I was supposed to act in that situation.

The further the first year at work went on, the more I gathered up courage to experiment with some co-operative learning methods, and I also felt that this approach was yielding some of the best learning achievements.

The biggest mistake I made was when I criticized another teacher's teaching in front of a pupil. I didn't realize that this pupil would go and tell the other teacher what I had said, which then caused bad feelings for everybody involved. For me this was an unforgettable lesson that all teachers have stronger and weaker areas, and so do I, and every classroom teacher is bound to teach sometimes something "incorrectly".

But the most difficult thing in the first year was facing the parents. I remember vividly the moment when I had to call a pupil's parents for the first time due to an incident at school. I sat in the phone booth, hands trembling, for several minutes before I built up enough courage to make that call. By the same token, the first parent meetings, as a group and individually, invoked lots of feelings of this kind. In neither case had I any idea what I was supposed to do in those situations.

Many times I would have needed a mentor, to turn to even with simple questions. My first year passed more or less relying on a search-and-find mind-set. In retrospect, there was actually no orientation for the new employee in my case. They showed me the classroom, the gym, and the canteen, handed me the keys and welcomed me aboard.

But I was lucky as the parents of my first pupils were very open-hearted people and welcomed me as their children's teacher. They also gave a lot of encouraging feedback, which was of great importance to my growth as a teacher. Another important thing in my first year at work was that I felt accepted and respected in my school community both as a person and as a teacher. These experiences of being appreciated were important in developing my own teacher identity, which process started back then and is continuing in one way or another from year to year.

Nora – a Norwegian early childhood teacher

This Norwegian teacher, an early childhood teacher, is employed in a suburban pre-school centre, and is working with 18 children 3 to 6 years old. Before she enrolled in the teacher education programme she was employed in the position of pre-school assistant, and for one year in the position of teacher without formal education[1]. She was about 50 years old when she was interviewed.

Nora has a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, which qualifies her to "teach" children age 0 to 6. In a pre-school centre, the teacher works with two assistants without a formal pedagogical education, which means she has leadership responsibilities.

I thought it was strange that I should be in the position of a pedagogical leader. I had worked a year in this pre-school centre earlier (in the position of assistant) – and now it turned out to be a little difficult, almost embarrassing, to present myself as the pedagogical leader to the parents and my colleagues.

Maybe it has to do with bragging, that I felt that I was bragging about my education. And it was a "mechanism", a process I had to go through – from being a pre-school assistant to being a teacher. I needed to take some time on this issue. I had given it some thought ahead of time – but still it was following me for the first six months.

Before I started my pre-service education as a teacher, I was employed in the position of teacher due to lack of applicants with formal education. At that time I didn't know how to use planning time. I knew what I had to do with the children on a daily basis. But it was difficult

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[1] Due to lack of teachers with formal education in certain areas of Norway people are hired in the position of both early childhood and school teachers without any higher education.

for me to fill the planning time. I planned in collaboration with my colleagues. I often used the planning time in the group with the children when there was need for an extra pair of hands in the group. This time it was different – very soon for instance I had to contact the pedagogical support center². That was a very new experience for me; I had never written a report to get support for a child with special needs. I had never participated in such meetings; this was entirely new for me.

I acquired a lot of theory from the teacher education: that made a very important difference for me. Therefore when I started in my first year as a teacher I was in quite a different place from where I was earlier. And, I changed, if not my view of children, the way I act and how I talk with children. For instance, there is one of the boys who is very challenging. My colleagues claim that the answer to our and his problems are that we be stricter with this boy, that we tell what he did "wrong": they (and I earlier) think that the problem was that the boy was behaving badly. And before I had finished teacher education, I just would have done as they wished: I would have thought it was the right thing to do. I didn't have the qualifications to help him. Now I see that the boy needs support from us to control his impulses, to behave decently. Teacher education has given me different ways of understanding this boy's actions. The mentoring has helped too. I can meet the pressure of my colleagues because I know what I want.

And related to the children, I think more in longer perspective. I'm a very practical person – often I just do what I need to do because it suits me. Sometimes I do that with the children, especially when I'm under a lot of pressure. But now I don't just consider what is good now, this moment; it is easier for me to consider a broader perspective. For instance I proposed changing the routines in our group and developed a "better" way of organising the day. And, due to my formal education, I had arguments for these changes.

I participated in a peer mentoring group for newly qualified teachers in this community and at my former college. That has been a great help for me, a personal help. I got courage. But it has been a help for the parents too. And for my work. Maybe I could have managed without the groups, but I got some new thoughts and some feedback. That way I knew that my own ideas weren't far out and that was helpful.

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2   A pedagogical support centre employs educators/teachers who have specialised in special or multicultural education or psychologists. They offer mentoring/counselling for teachers in pre-school or school who experience special challenges with the group or individual children.

The participants' voices: reflecting the narratives reciprocally

We wanted to validate our interpretation and give the teachers an opportunity to add or delete parts through letting them read and comment on the edited and shortened versions of their own narratives. Within narrative research, however hard we try to push the narrator's voice into limelight, it would be naïve to assume that anybody could write so that the narrator's voice is pure and genuine. In this study, we do not even try to give an impression of that. Instead, we see that the new understanding emerges through an interaction and collaboration between the researchers and the participants. Our approach seems to be close to the one Susan E. Chase (2005, p. 666) calls "researcher's interactive voice". This narrative strategy, as Chase puts it, "displays the complex interaction – the intersubjectivity – between the researcher's and the narrators' voices".

But in this study, there is still one element more than the collaboration between the participants and the researchers: the interaction between the narrators themselves, the three teachers who live in three different countries. Specifically, in addition to the teachers reading their own narratives, we asked them to comment on their peers' stories. Thus, the teachers became in a way co-researchers with us. This reading seemed to make the three teachers aware of similarities and differences between them. Some themes like the importance of collegial support and the importance of the organisational climate and differences in the formal support of newly qualified teachers are spoken about in more detail in these comments.

Esta's comments (the Estonian teacher, age 25):

For me it was a bit awkward to read about my first year at work. A good thing is that the beginning is over, it will never come back (that sounded as if it was the scariest . . . but it was). All kinds of memories come to my mind when I read my "story". Not only things I experienced, but emotions also. It isn't hard any more to look back and remember the confusion, pain, even disappointments. I'm still convinced that it was a very, very hard time. But as experienced teachers say, you have to take a challenge to build up something.

I would have liked to hear advice from my mentor before I stepped into the classroom. I would have wanted to know how to ask. At least now I know how and what to ask. These two and a half years have taught me what my weaknesses are as a teacher. I have to work on my skills. I noticed my weak points thanks to the self-analysis. But sometimes I think that I analyse myself too much.

The tasks that life throws in our path should not be that hard, because eventually there comes a question: what price should I pay to become a good teacher? But overall, I like my job and I have always been proud of saying that I'm a teacher.

I would like to comment on the Finnish story. I had a lot of things in common with that teacher. Before starting our teaching career we were both afraid of working with parents. There was no reason to be afraid, but imagination did its job.

The Finnish teacher had the same fears. For me it was hard to teach because I was younger than my students' parents. But like the Finnish teacher I can also say that most of the parents really accepted me. They were polite and respectful.

I think that it is quite impossible to make good and working relationships with all the parents in a big school. It can be very natural in small places. Respecting each other and being polite is very important wherever you teach.

A major thing is to remember that a colleague's work should not be criticized in front of students, parents or other colleagues (in my opinion, nobody should hear the critique). Maybe if I had never experienced teacher training I wouldn't have known that.

My first year advantage was the support from my mentor. My mentor was a person I could go to, to get help, support. She gave me advice and suggestions, opened my eyes about many things. It is important that somebody looks at your work from a different angle. The main process was, of course, in my hands. I had to find a solution to problems myself.

The Finnish teacher's story was more familiar to me than the Norwegian teacher's story. I believe it is true what the Norwegian teacher said – after finishing studies and becoming a real worker, in some way everyone's point of view changes. Small pieces make a whole if a person knows how to put them together. I have talked to people who say that their attitude and views have been changed through the years and they can feel it themselves.

The pedagogical studies give you, besides psychological background, many major and minor skills for practical work. For example, you learn how to use your time. And this is one of the most important things in any job, especially teachers'. I have realized that there is a certain pattern, structure – for children too, because they need it. It becomes a habit.

One more thing, it is a very nice feeling to be on the same level with colleagues – to understand their views, share terminology, talk about goals. This is easier for people who have the same educational back-

ground. The theoretical base gives you the opportunity to use knowledge in practice. You can find solutions to different cases.

Frida's comments (The Finnish teacher, age 32)

I read both the Estonian and the Norwegian stories twice. In the Norwegian narrative, I recognized a somewhat a similar reluctance to call myself a professional teacher. In my first year as a teacher some of the parents were twice my age. I still feel how uncertain I was to say aloud that I am the one who is responsible for the pedagogical decisions in the classroom. Another thing which I could share in the narrative was how difficult it was to handle the problems of children with special needs. The first meeting of the special education board of the school was really scary for me; I was so nervous to meet the headmaster, the special needs teacher, the psychologist and the parents at the same time. The most challenging was to express my difference of opinion about how the child's problems should be dealt with.

But I found also remarkable differences of my experiences from the Norwegian teacher. One of them was the feeling that I actually could not change anything at all in the school routines. The teacher community was so grounded in old school traditions, and I felt I was on my knees in front of them. I remember vividly how I tried to start up a school tennis project, funded by EU project money, but the head resisted it. During the first year, I had no courage to propose anything new personally, but sometimes I succeeded in bringing out my ideas by circulating them through my mentor.

The Estonian narrative reminded me of the importance of a personal mentor. There was no formal mentoring system offered, but informally I was lucky to find a more experienced "soul mate" who was much older than me. Besides I got remarkable peer support from another teacher of my age. Her pupils were much more challenging than mine, and there were severe discipline problems in her classroom. So we established an arrangement of collaboration and assistance so that every now and then one of her pupils who had severe emotional and behaviour problems was sent to my classroom to calm down. We also planned together other arrangements to settle her pupils down to the issue. This experience reminded me of the significance of peer support of a team of young teachers, which was one of the best memories of the first year. And there was a third thing in the Estonian narrative I felt familiar with: how important it was to deserve your place in the school community. In a similar way I felt that the better I become acquainted with the pupils and the teachers the more I enjoyed both the classroom and the staffroom, and the more I liked both the teachers and the students.

But there were also some differences in my experience from that of the Estonian teacher. I never hungered for any dos and don'ts, direct instructions how to do or not to do things. For me the best thing in my mentor was that I found a listener who encouraged me to use my own reason. She was always eager to share ideas and solve practical problems together, but I could never imagine her observing my lessons in my classroom.

Nora's comments (Norwegian teacher, 52):

I find my own text quite recognizable, and don't have anything to add or change. But I have reactions to the other stories. There are especially two issues that are on my mind when I read these stories, peer mentoring is useful and this theme of "being strict".

The first impression I had when I read the stories of the Finnish and Estonian teacher was that they have one issue in common. Both miss either partial or complete mentoring. I think that shows that it can be helpful for mentoring to be put into the system for newly qualified teachers.

I think that in your first year you often feel that you are a burden. And you are young, and new and insecure. And when you are such a young teacher as the Estonian teacher, I think it must be difficult to have to ask for a meeting with you mentor. It should just be the rule that you have meetings with your mentor/supervisor.

I think there should be an offer to participate in group mentoring, not just individual mentoring. I think it is important to listen to the experiences and concerns of other newly qualified teachers in the group – you could meet similar situations later on. And you get several points of view in group mentoring. I think it would be "poor" mentoring to be just on your own with the mentor/supervisor.

I wonder about differences in the formal education when I read: "teacher education is filling heads with theories". I think I heard that before from Norwegian school teachers. In Norway there seems to be a difference in the formal education of school and early childhood teachers which I recognize in these quotes. I only felt that theories were a strength (a resource) for my work. Now I'm able to give reasons for my work and I can give reasons for what I don't want to do. And that is a strength when I meet my colleagues.

I wonder when I read these narratives. Don't they have any periods of practice at all? What did they do in their periods of practice? I experienced the periods of practice as very important. I was able to get to know different institutions and that was important even for me who had been working for many years.

And then I wonder about "being strict" and "neutral". I understand that it is challenging to meet children who don't accept your adult

authority. They say that they have learned to be strict and to establish discipline – but WHY? Why is it supposed to be that way? I mean I don't see that they give any reasons for why that should be important.

The researchers' voices: a half step back to authority

In this study we take still another perspective or "narrative strategy" which could be called, in the words of Susan E. Chase (2005, pp. 663–665) "a researcher's authoritative voice". Here we take a somewhat more traditional angle on qualitative research as we separate our voices from the narrators' voices through our interpretations. First, we sum up some similarities and differences between these three teachers. Each of them is a newly qualified teacher, and they are women. Besides that they represent three different countries, with different teacher education and school systems. In addition they are working in different levels of the educational system: the Norwegian teacher is employed in a daycare centre (children aged from 0 to 6 years) the two others teach children in grade 1 and grade 5. The Norwegian teacher is the most experienced in life – she is 50 years old and a mother – and in work (she worked as a pre-school assistant earlier). The Finnish teacher has the "highest" preparation/education at the university level – she has started doctoral studies. The Estonian teacher is the youngest and has no earlier work experience. These differences are the personal data which can give a background to understanding similarities and differences.

Reading the beginning teachers' stories, some common themes arise from narratives. All three novice teachers spoke about developing the teacher's professional identity. They were concerned about how to implement learned theories in practice, to socialise in school context and co-operate with colleagues. From the researchers' point of view it is important to analyse the support novice teachers feel during their first year of teaching.

Developing an identity as a teacher

All three teachers mention the awkwardness of having to think of themselves as "TEACHER". They are struggling to feel familiar with a new identity. The teachers talked about it as "reluctance to call myself a professional teacher". Each of them states that they changed their understanding of being a teacher during the first year. Esta, the Estonian teacher, started with an idealistic phase (she calls herself naïve) in believing that "with my generous and sincere heart I can influence my pupils and lead them onto the right path". And after a week she felt "it was horrible. And then I felt that I couldn't go back. It was so awful that I never want to experience anything like that again as long as I live".

This picture is described in several studies. Usually novice teachers leave pre-service education and enter the profession believing that teaching is not particularly difficult. In the first phase, called the period of fantasy and illusion, teachers are idealistic, excited and anxious (Gold 1996, Levin 2003). The "reality shock" follows, when novice teachers first deal with the demands of teaching. This transition period into teaching is the most difficult aspect of their teaching career. Teachers experience it as a period with great difficulties and have anxiety and feelings of isolation and loneliness (Fullan 1991). Beginning teachers are focused on their own performance as a teacher, and not so much on the pupils' learning.

Frida describes the development of her teacher identity from having the "impression that a teacher must not bring out his personality in the teaching work but serve as a neutral educator and supplier of knowledge" until "by the Christmas holidays I realized that this kind of teacher image had made me anxious".

If we look at Esta's story it seems to be the opposite – she had assumed that her own personal integrity "my generous and sincere heart" was the main element of being a teacher and she learns that she also has to get hold of teaching methods.

Nora experiences as her biggest challenge in her first year standing up and calling herself a teacher. She has experience from working in a pre-school centre and describes her development from assistant to teacher: "now I don't just consider what is good now, this moment; it is easier for me to consider a broader perspective". In addition, she describes how she now understands situations differently from the way she did before. This development seems to have been happening during her formal education and has been strengthened through mentoring during her first year at work.

Beginning teachers feel loneliness in pedagogical situations: Frida "I still have the feeling of how uncertain I was to say aloud that I am the one who is responsible for the pedagogical decisions in the classroom". Teaching is a so-called "lonely" profession with big responsibility. This causes a lot of stress and uncertainty for beginners. This is period of forming professional identity. Self-analysis is important in building it. Esta: "I noticed my weak points thanks to the self-analysis. But sometimes I think that I analyse myself too much". To have more questions than answers is confusing for beginners.

Each of these teachers speaks about developing an identity. They tell about coping with teaching and finding their own style as teachers. But their methods and their experiences differ.

Theory and practice

The transition from student teacher to real teacher involves several challenges. The theory–practice conflict is a commonly discussed issue. In teacher education it is typically argued that student teachers need to be prepared before being sent to schools to teach. Although there have been serious efforts in teacher education to integrate theoretical and practical studies, many teachers still claim that there is an incongruity between educational theories and educational practices. But understanding how to become a teacher has changed. We must treat the first years of teaching as a phase of learning to teach (Feiman-Nemser 2001). The importance of bridging the theory–practice gap in learning about teaching is raised by several authors. Korthagen (1999) agues that there is an essential need to recognize and respond to the ways in which student teachers construct their views and understanding of teaching and learning so that their experiences and knowledge are integrated.

Both the Finnish and the Estonian teacher are looking back at their pre-service education and wondering.

Frida: "My head was full of different theories, but putting them into practice wasn't easy at all. I was wondering at that point why we never deal with these situations in teacher education."

Esta: "My mentor still keeps telling me that I was too lenient, too kind, but tell me: how can I go into the classroom when none has ever told you what to do when it's your first time. During my university years I had heard that I should assert myself but what this meant precisely I didn't know."

These two teachers talk about what is happening in teacher education as something that "is put" in their heads, words contra action, understanding as remembering, as opposed to what something really means in practice.

Let's juxtapose these expressions with Nora's statement: "I have acquired a lot of theory from the teacher education; therefore when I started in my first year I was in a quite different place from where I was earlier." Nora is not only referring to theories as something unreal, but as something that has affected her acting and thinking about her everyday work. And she comments on this difference in her comment on the stories of Esta and Frida, wondering if the difference in their perception is due to lack of practice periods during formal education or to a lesser amount of pedagogical knowledge as compared to subject knowledge in school teacher education than in early childhood teacher education.

Teacher education at university is the beginning, not the end. Beginning teachers should be aware that converting knowledge into practice

causes problems. Self-reflection is a good tool for understanding the conflict between theory and practice.

Areas of concern

Commonly beginning teachers' main problems relate to classroom management (Fullan, 1991, Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Even if classroom management seems to be a general problem for novice teachers, each person has her own experience.

Teachers describe their struggle with structure and routines in their classroom. Esta: ". . . it was impossible. It was absolutely impossible. I don't know, maybe I didn't explain it to them, or the words 'silence' and 'quiet!' didn't mean anything to them".

Nora, who started her first year as a teacher with some prior teaching experience, felt more confident to establish new routines and structures in her classroom: "And I worked with the routines. Together we changed the routines in our group and developed a way of organising the day. That was a good thing. In this pre-school centre, they didn't have many routines earlier".

Esta is here trying to understand the reasons for her difficulties and is looking for reasons in her own teaching strategies. Many beginning teachers struggle with skills for organising pupils' work, planning lessons, following pupils' individual needs, etc. The results are discipline problems which make the teaching even more challenging.

Esta offers two ways of looking at this issue: "But seeing finally in spring that they could do this, that they could be quiet and I could invite them to read next to me, not to mention the present time, I saw this progress which was actually the result of terribly hard work". Starting with first grade and following the routines and rituals of a classroom is a difficult task for all teachers. In addition, Esta is looking at her own personal way of interacting with children: "When you've decided to become more persistent and confident, you have nothing to fall back on but raising your voice. You have to be strict and scold them if necessary. Actually it's awful . . ."

If classroom management is a universal challenge, work with parents is another challenging situation. Frida: "The most difficult thing in the first year was facing the parents".

In addition to concerns which seem to be similar and overlapping in the first year,[3] there are concerns which can be explained by the different challenges in different classrooms/groups of children (Hauge, 2001a). Whatever kind of difficulties they meet, they will address them as challenges, for instance: teachers who meet a situation of children

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[3] Research show that these areas are somewhat different for school teachers and early childhood teachers.

with special needs, families in severe trouble, groups of children with many different first languages will recall these special areas of concern. Nora: "There is one of the boys who is very challenging. My colleagues want me to be stricter with this boy. And before I had finished teacher education, I would have done as they wished. I didn't have the qualifications to help him. The mentoring has helped too. I can meet the pressure because I know what I want".

The evaluation of the Norwegian programs of "*Veiledning med nyutdannede lærere*" [mentoring of newly qualified teachers] shows that the newly qualified teachers who participate in formal mentoring programs in general have a more positive understanding of their pre-service education. What then is happening during the mentoring program? One aim of mentoring is to connect theory and practice, to use theoretical knowledge to reflect situations at hand (Hauge, 2001b). During this process newly qualified teachers have time to reflect on their own understanding of being a teacher, how to use theories in this process, and they get support to understand "what something can mean in the classroom". Formal education is seen as a starting point, and especially the first year is a transition period in which teachers have to understand the challenges of the school/pre-school centre as a learning arena.

It is important to identify areas of concern in order to prepare student teachers to realize these problematical areas. In addition, students and first year teachers can be prepared to identify problematical issues not so much as individual shortcomings but as a natural part of teachers' professional development.

Support during the first year

In these three narratives we see that support to first year teachers differs. The Finnish teacher didn't participate in a support program at all; the Estonian has a mentor in the same school and participated in group meetings with other beginning teachers (group mentoring) once every three months. Nora participated in group mentoring in the suburban area and the local college.

Frida, the Finnish teacher, states "Many times I would have needed a mentor, to turn to even with simple questions. My first year passed more or less relying on a search-and-find mindset. In retrospect, there was actually no orientation for the new employee in my case. They showed me the classroom, the gym, and the canteen, handed me the keys and welcomed me aboard." Frida had the support of a facilitator who gave practical information. Esta had a mentor appointed in her school, someone whom she actually could ask for help. Actually she got what Frida was asking for.

Nora values group mentoring in peer groups: "And I think there should be an offer of group mentoring, not just individual mentoring. I think it is important to listen to the experiences and concerns of other newly qualified teachers in the group – you could meet similar situations later on. And you get several points of view in group mentoring. I think it would be 'poor' mentoring to be just on your own with the mentor/supervisor. And maybe if I were on my own – I wonder if I would run out of questions after a while. There are not that many difficult situations".

Still, Esta is addressing another issue: "But the problem is I didn't ask for help a lot, you see. Up to this point I didn't want it a lot". There can be an understanding that to schedule the mentoring on offer is an extra burden for the first year teacher because she experiences a lack of time. Here we see the other side: first year teachers can be very considerate – they don't want to bother their mentor who has such a heavy workload. For this reason the support system in the first year has to be mandatory and the leader and/or the mentor has to take responsibility to ask the new teachers to come at specific times and places. It seems that first year teachers worry that they are claiming too much (Hauge, 2001a).

Comparative and time perspective of the stories

One year later when teachers participating in this research read each other's stories they highlighted certain topics. One similarity is that all of three teachers emphasize the importance of mentoring. They argue about initial teacher education programmes and have very strong feeling concerning the first year.

After the first year the beginning teachers still discuss teacher identity issues. The Estonian teacher, Esta, brings the perspective of lifelong learning into the conversation. She is talking about how she is constructing her identity as a teacher. Esta: "It is true what the Norwegian teacher said – after finishing your studies and becoming a real teacher, in some way everyone's point of view changes. Small pieces make a whole if a person knows how to put them together . . . . I have talked to people who said that their attitude and view have changed over the years and they can feel this themselves".

The Norwegian teacher raised an interesting conceptual question. "The Estonian teacher talks a lot about being strict. And this being strict, I think that is so sad". The Norwegian teacher is talking about a teacher being someone who is able to act taking into consideration the long term perspective, seeing the child, acting and giving reasons for her choices in discussions with colleagues and others.

The first years of teaching are learning times. Esta: "These two and a half years have taught me what my weak points are as a teacher. I have to work on my skills". **Implementing the continuing professional development** approach we have to look back to initial teacher education. Initial teacher education is discussed in all comments and teachers value it differently. The Norwegian teacher discussed how much teacher education programmes include pedagogical studies and practice.

But some time later the teachers consider initial teacher education more meaningful. Esta: "The theoretical base gives you the opportunity to use knowledge in practice. You can find solutions to different cases". The Norwegian teacher highlighted the importance of the practice period in teacher education even for students who have earlier working experience.

Looking backward all three teachers notice the importance of mentoring support. But they experienced and value it differently. **Nora's re**sponse reminds us that even if we agree on the importance of an induction system which includes individual mentoring, we still have to clarify what we mean by mentoring. Do we want somebody who listens and encourages the first year teachers' own thinking, or do we want somebody who gives advice? What kind of ideas do the mentors and first year teachers themselves have about mentoring? If we want mentors who encourage the newly qualified teachers to research and reflect on their own practice, we have to discuss how we understand "reflection". And we have to discuss whether there are important points of view which should be addressed by the mentor. These points of view are dependent on the picture of a good teacher which is implicit in the teacher program.

In some areas the beginning teachers' later comments are richer. For example, the Estonian teacher talks about co-operation with parents, something she didn't mention in the first story. **Nora: "The most impor**tant issue for the teacher must be that each parent can be sure that the teacher "is seeing my child with a 'loving eye'". The Finnish teacher emphasizes the importance of the school community: "How important it was to deserve your place in the school community. The teaching community was so grounded in old school traditions, and I felt I was on my knees in front of them . . . I felt that the better I became acquainted with the pupils and the teachers the more I enjoyed both the classroom and the staffroom, and the more I liked both the teachers and the students . . ."

Sometimes there is a contradiction between the beginning teacher's own beliefs and the understanding of colleagues: Frida: "I felt there was an anti-reform ethos, and any new proposals were resisted by saying that this is the way things are done here, and between the lines you could

read that this will always be the way". It is an emotional imperative for most new teachers to gain acceptance from their colleagues and to become a member of the organisation. We agree that beginning teachers' teaching and learning to become a teacher are integrated. The community of practice theory generalizes all components of teachers' learning: learning as practicing, learning as belonging, learning as becoming and learning as making experience meaningful (Wenger, 1998).

It seems that the Finnish teacher felt uncomfortable in the school community; she thought that school was enmeshed in old traditions and felt contradictions between her understanding and the school culture. The Estonian teacher had deep personal doubts and she remarked even a year later that "Things that seems to be very natural and common for other people are not allowed to be used by a teacher". The Norwegian teacher is the most confident and experienced. Her doubts are more focused on the children. We want to underline that when we implement support systems for newly qualified teachers we have to consider both each individual newly qualified teacher and differences in the national context.

Conclusion: what is to be learned?

The stories and the reflections on these stories make visible newly qualified teachers' competent aspect and the aspect of needing support. In this repeated cycle beginning teachers highlighted the important topics of their first year by retelling their own story connecting and juxtaposing elements in their peers' stories. And the stories told a year later highlight different ways of mentoring and add the importance of the school community and support of colleagues.

The experience obtained during the first working years has a great influence on the development of professional identity. Teachers need support in their first year; the transformation from student to working professional is challenging. Some first year teachers feel almost lost in their first year, others feel competent and bring new ideas and a fresh view of what's going on – and can even support school development. The beginning teachers' life seems to be a struggle for recognition in the eyes of parents, colleagues and pupils (Heikkinen & Huttunen, 2004).

We may summarise with Villegas-Reimers' characteristics of the new paradigm in teacher education where the teacher is a reflective practitioner and active learner who plans, leads and evaluates her own learning and professional development (2003, p. 2471). Teacher education, from initial training to service, is a long-term, life-long process in which the teacher evaluates her own previous knowledge in practical situations, in this way constructing new knowledge. Professional devel-

opment is a collaborative process; schools are becoming professional learning communities. The most effective professional learning takes place in groups supporting each other and giving feedback. In this context the mentor is a person who supports beginning teachers' reflection and development.

The development of the teacher always takes place in the particular context. A teacher's professional growth is an integral component of school culture and related to school development. The role of an organisation is considered essential and the formation of teachers' communities of practice is seen as a way of professional learning. To a great extent it depends on school culture and leadership how successfully novice teachers socialise in the organisation and how quickly they adjust to their profession. It is much easier for a novice teacher to start working as a teacher and develop professionally in a school where collegial discussions take place, where common objectives are pursued, where mutual feedback is given and self-reflection supported. The school leader is responsible for the implementation of support in the organisation. The leader's attitudes toward the professional development of novice teachers and the competence in appointing a suitable mentor, time for mentoring, etc., influence the co-operation between the mentor and novice teachers, and also the work of the whole organisation as a learning organisation.

Methodologically, our study has been a mixture of a rather traditional strategy in qualitative research and a more interactive approach. We have developed the interpretation with the participant-storytellers and let them detect interesting points in each others' stories. This interaction with three people who did not know each other turned out to be very exciting and worthwhile. We still adopted a more authoritative researchers' voice, and thus widened the perspectives. However, we do not intend to obscure the narrators' voices but give some alternatives for interpretation.

Hence this piece of study has been a kind of *bricolage*, in the terms of Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2005b, p. 4–5); we have construed our way of doing narrative research which has emerged through the interaction between us and our informants. The outcome, methodologically speaking, is an "emergent construction that changes and takes new forms as the bricoleur adds different tools, methods, and techniques of representation in the puzzle" (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1991; cited in Denzin & Lincoln 2005b, p. 4). Through our *montage*, we hope, a multifaceted and polyphonic evocation of a newly qualified teacher's life in three countries has been construed.

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Chapter 7

Development of Networking and Networks

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ABSTRACT – and reading instructions for this chapter

The intent of this chapter is to share with readers our knowledge of how the national and international networks on new teacher induction have developed in some countries in Northern Europe, from the perspective of active network members. Furthermore, the intent is to analyse the similarities and differences of networking and networks, to characterise the knowledge being developed and to describe future perspectives.

If you are especially interested in how networking on induction has developed in Denmark, Estonia, Norway or Sweden, from the perspective of network participants, you should read the specific narratives written by participants from those countries.

If you are especially interested in gaining a comparative perspective on the development of national and international networking in some countries in Northern Europe, you should read all the narratives and the analyses of the similarities and differences of the networking.

If you are only interested in a discussion on the change of characteristics of knowledge as a result of the growing focus on networking and networks, you should go directly to section Networks and networking as a change of mode of knowledge production at page 163.

Introduction

Networking is an important and growing feature in the improvement of support for the professional development of newly qualified teachers in some countries in Northern Europe, an observation that is evident in this book. Networking is the sharing of knowledge. Networking in professional fields often ranges from informal activities to more formal networks, but there seems to be enormous variation in how networking is initiated, how it develops, how networking methods change and how initiatives are taken. The sharing of knowledge in such professional communities is a quickly growing trend in many fields (Wenger et al., 2002).

One feature of the networking supported by the network Newly Qualified Teachers in Northern Europe (NQTNE) since autumn 2004 has been the ongoing inspiration all members have gotten from the examples of networking activities of other network members (see also chapter 1 and 2). In the current chapter, we – the members of NQTNE – want to share this inspiration with you. A number of narrative descriptions written by colleagues involved in the NQTNE are presented here, followed by reflections on similarities, differences and perspectives. The kind of knowledge in focus is not derived from cookbook recipes on how to network and how to develop networks, because – as the narratives will show – the methods are many and very context specific. Furthermore, every participant has his and her own personal version of what actually has taken place in the networking relations and how this relates to the contexts, engagement and tasks of every individual involved. One of the difficulties in writing personal narratives on networking activities is that the development of these activities cannot be described in and of themselves without the wider context, because networking is never an end in itself; networking is for every individual means to reach specific ends that are relevant in a specific context.

As we have some ends in common in the NQTNE – we are all engaged in supporting the induction processes of new teachers – we have a unique opportunity to collect a number of narratives of personal experiences on the role of networking and networks concerning induction. The narrative writers were asked to answer the following questions:

– How did your engagement in supporting new teachers start and how did it develop?

– What specific role has networking (e.g., local, national and international) played in specific periods?

– Did networking develop into more formalised networks?

- What are the interactions between the different networking activities with which you are involved?

- What are the future perspectives in networking on supporting the induction processes of new teachers seen from your geographic location in the world?

Five narratives

A Danish narrative

February 2008 by Egon Hedegaard

Somebody ought to do something

Since my time as a student teacher in the 1970s, I have been fascinated by the transformation from being a student teacher to teacher. The problems associated with being a new teacher who has a lot of energy, engagement and many visions, but who meets a reality tougher than expected, were discussed heatedly when I was a young teacher. Such problems, for example, were formulated by young teachers in a book called "Praksischok" (Olsen, 1980). My interest rose to a new level when I became a teacher educator after 17 years of practice as a teacher and further academic studies: How should we organise support for new teachers in their first year on the job?

Action taken

Following a teacher education law in 1997, stating that all initial teacher education institutions are responsible for developing initiatives to support the transition from study to profession, the growth climate for new initiatives was increasingly positive, and local initiatives were taken (though without any central funding). Together with two colleagues and a group of student teachers in their final year we initiated a development project. To prepare, we started networking by contacting all colleagues in Danish initial teacher education, who had experimented by developing action projects, which typically were courses with dialog on experiences. On the basis of these (and our own) prior experiences and on the interests and concerns of the student teachers involved, we conducted a development project in 2003-2004, with 50 new teachers taking part in group dialog sessions, observation and feedback sessions and Internet communication. The activities were very constructive and intensive, and the project resulted in the development of a yearly inservice course with all the described elements offered by our teacher training institution.

New problems, where to look for solutions?

We were offering solutions to municipalities and schools who owned the problems in the very decentralised Danish school system, but we realised that only a few of these local problem owners were interested; they had different agendas and priorities than ours. At the same time we were looking for solutions, outside the Danish context as well, we were contacted by researchers from University of Gävle, and they urged us to take part in a national Norwegian conference in Trondheim in January 2005, where experiences from developmental induction projects all over Norway were to be presented. As my colleague and I from Copenhagen presented our experiences as well, we found that in the middle of this language confusion of Danish, Swedish and two Norwegian languages (and a number of dialects), we were all focusing on the same questions and we had many discussions that were fruitfully shared.

Nordic networking as a basis for Danish initiatives

The co-operation in the network NQTNE developed (cf. chapter 2) as a result of this initial meeting in January 2005. Throughout, I have been the only Danish participant, exposed to the experiences and views of a group of Nordic colleagues engaged in research and development of induction, an experience nobody else in Denmark has had. Therefore, I became aware of the possibility and responsibility for creating initiatives that would disseminate this knowledge in the Danish context.

In December 2006, I started an E-mail network by writing an informative description of how induction was developing in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Estonia (currently sent to 300 E-mail addresses). This E-mail was sent to everyone I could find who would be concerned with induction of new teachers (local teacher union representatives, municipality departments, teachers and teacher educators). Through this E-mail network, I announced an initiative to organise a national conference in November 2007, in Copenhagen, called "Network conference on new teachers: How do they get started in a good way?" The conference took place with 75 participants, including NQTNE members from all five countries. The NQTNE members presented national experiences and Danish colleagues presented experiences from partnership projects between Danish teacher education institutions and Danish municipalities. The realisation of the network conference was very much an uphill struggle because the topic of induction of teachers is still not a focus of public educational concern right now (poor Pisa results and new initial teacher education are mainly in focus). The successful conference attendance was a result of support for the idea

through a number of networking relations: five co-inviter organisations sent invitations to all spheres of teacher induction in Denmark and worked for the realisation of the conference. In reality, one individual in each organisation with whom I networked (except in the NQTNE where all network members were involved) did all of the work.

What´s next?

One of the first results of the Copenhagen conference was that a number of network relations were informally established among participants attending the conference. Since the conference, I have made a number of contacts in order to develop new and realistic initiatives for network activities, local as well as national. It was evident at the conference that induction activities are in a developmental state in many of the 98 Danish municipalities and it is evident, in addition, that local experience actually produces a basis of knowledge, which is not in focus in educational research in Denmark. New initiatives for research and development projects currently is being discussed informally among those of us involved in networking. I personally developed a number of new networking relations and was invited to join new networks, e.g., an Internet network conference of educational consultants in Danish municipalities. As I am also networking with European colleagues in Eastern and Western Europe through a COMENIUS project, the possibilities for and content of new international relations are also growing. Many next steps are now possible. It is a much more positive situation than it was five years ago thanks to networking.

An Estonian narrative

February 2008 by Eve Eisenschmidt

In 2002, the first group of teachers graduated from Haapsalu College and at the same time interest in implementing an induction year programme for beginning teachers was born on national level. Haapsalu College received state funding to implement a pilot project of an induction year programme. The project allowed us to organise a training course for mentors and seminars for beginning teachers. My personal interest was in collecting empirical data in order to be able to evaluate the support that new teachers received in school environments and the need for a support programme to be implemented at the university.

How to develop an induction year?

The results of the pilot project were introduced at a national conference and plans were made for united efforts in preparing the induction year

programme on a national level by the universities that provide teacher training. This initiated the development of my doctoral thesis, which became a design research with the goal of developing an induction year implementation model and evaluating its realisation in an Estonian context. I defended my doctoral thesis in 2006, but the work continues. Throughout this whole process, co-operation and partnership have been two very important factors to me on national as well as on an international level. In actuality, those who were the important mentors for us in planning the induction year activities were beginning teachers and mentors themselves!!!

How to develop international networking relations?

We were looking for international experience and we found interesting solutions in the USA, the UK and Ireland. The first co-operative efforts in the Nordic countries were with Jyväskylä University. Hannu and Hannu (see presentations of these authors in this book) were critical friends who helped us see the blind spots in our implementation model and gave good advice for the development of mentor training. Thanks to our colleagues in Jyväskylä, we got involved in the formation of NQTNE. This network creates new networking and new possibilities for co-operation for us.

Networking and networks today and in the future

Today we have many contacts and new ideas we can use in the development of the induction year, and these are the result of networking. Networking is also done by the beginning teachers and mentors who have participated in the programme. They learn from each other.

As the implementation of the Estonian national induction year programme is connected with the development of educational policies, this work has exposed me to many networks that have helped me understand the co-functioning and influences of educational reforms. European Network of Teacher Education Policy (ENTEP) and Teacher Education Policy in Europe (TEPE) are two valuable networks that support mutual learning. The first is primarily a board of representatives of EU ministers of education and the second is a universities' co-operation network researching teacher-training policies. Academic co-operation and scientific conferences are vital to all university lecturers. We need that these academic networks grow whether they focus on a specific project or not.

A Norwegian narrative

February 2008 by Wiebke Klages & Eva Bjerkholt
(Sidsel Hauge in memorial)

We live in the southern part of Norway and from the beginning of the 1990s we were involved in different aspects of mentoring. As teacher educators for many years, from time to time we meet former students who are now teachers in pre-schools and schools. These meetings with former students made us curious and interested in how they develop and create their own ways of being teachers. In addition, we are each interested in "veiledning" (mentoring/supervision) as a way of supporting learning during formal education and in the workplace.

Our interest in and experience with mentoring combined with a focus on the transition from student teacher to professional teacher are the background for how two of us (Eva Bjerkholt and Sidsel Hauge) developed a pilot-project on mentoring new teachers in Norway in 1997. We both were funded and were then responsible for the implementation of two pilot projects in Norway from 1998 to 2001, with a focus from nursery to secondary schools.

Because of our mutual interest in supervision/mentoring, we knew each other quite well and the discussions and sharing of knowledge were of great value for the professional development of the projects as well as for us.

A National Network for Mentoring Newly Qualified Teachers

The pilot projects were very successful, so the government decided in 2003 to offer funding to teacher educators who wanted to start similar projects on mentoring newly qualified teachers.

We all continued in the programmes that followed, but Eva Bjerkholt in addition applied for funding in order to create a network for teacher educators who were about to start projects on supporting and mentoring new teachers.

This was the starting point of our Norwegian Network for Mentoring Newly Qualified Teachers. The network has grown and today it includes about 45 teacher educators at universities and university colleges from all over Norway. The aims of this network are to create a learning community for teacher educators to develop local induction programmes together with local authorities, create arenas for exchanging experiences and to develop joint research projects. In this network, we organise conferences, workshops and inspire each other in our work with induction programmes. The network also inspires its members to do research. In 2006, we organised workshops for network members

who wanted to participate in writing articles. In 2007 we published our first collection of articles on the website financed by the Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training and in spring 2008 we published a book called "Det store spranget" (The Big Leap). The writing process and the result were important, not only in order to make our work visible, but further, we developed another way of supporting each other; prior to this, our support occurred in response groups or individually as critical friends. The network developed from being an avenue where we present results to each other, to a place where we cheer and support each other's professional development in different ways and as writers.

Networking is opening doors

For us, our involvement with the induction programmes is just a small part of our professional lives and the induction projects are just- a few of the large number of projects at our institutions. Network meetings give us the opportunity to meet others whose main focus is this theme. Instead of working in isolation, you are part of an engaged crowd.

Networking with other teacher educators is of great importance both professionally and personally. For many of us who participate in this network, the networking has helped us to write and publish our first article or our first research project as collaborators. Together with the Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, Teacher Unions and other stakeholders at the national level, we are able to put a spotlight on new teachers' professional development. On the national level, people in the network collaborate with authorities concerning policy making in terms of developing initial teacher education as well as induction programmes. The network and networking also increase our confidence in our projects; we believe in and are proud of our projects and inspire and support each other to write, independently or with others, and to make presentations based not only on our own projects, but on the experiences of many different projects in Norway.

The NQTNE Network

The national network for teacher educators involved in supervising newly qualified teachers is a busy network, and we arrange annual conferences for all the different stakeholders involved with supervising newly qualified teachers. Those of us who work with induction programmes become visible and make contact with others – and this was how the NQTNE started. Professor Torlaug Løkensgard Hoel, who was participating in our Norwegian network, together with representatives from the Induction Research Group at Gävle University initiated the development of this new international research network. We invited

Göran Fransson, from the Induction Research Group, to a meeting in Oslo with a small group from the Norwegian network, to discuss how to start a research network together. He and his team were invited to the Norwegian National Conference on mentoring new teachers later that year. At that conference in Trondheim, representatives from Sweden, Denmark and Norway decided to create a network and to invite researchers from Finland and Estonia to join us. Thus, the national network was a stepping stone to participating in a Nordic network concerning newly qualified teachers.

Networking is meeting the people behind the words

For us, Eva, Sidsel, Wiebke – as you can read in our story – networking is about people meeting other people, building personal connections on the basis of a mutual professional interest. In a time with overload of available information, we value personal meetings in addition to sharing our ideas through the written word.

We have described how our network has supported our own professional development. Discussions, responses, critical friends, talking and writing together – these are processes that have developed our own understanding. In the Norwegian network, our experience was that, by sharing our work with others, we are challenged to make clear, to elaborate, and to give arguments for our own ways of understanding. By listening to others, I understand my own point of view more clearly or I change my own understanding.

A Swedish narrative – forming an international network

February 2008 by Göran Fransson

My involvement in research focusing on newly qualified teachers and ways to support them started in 1994 with my own graduation paper in the initial teacher education. I had a genuine question concerning what was planned for teachers trained to teach in grades 1 to 7 or grades 4 to 9, and in a few subjects. Was it possible to do what we were trained for, when the school system and the positions for teachers still were organised for teachers trained for grades 1-3 and 4-6 (and in principle teaching all subjects) and grades 7-9 (teaching only a few subjects)? When I started to work as a teacher, my own experiences as newly qualified deepened my interest and eagerness to know more about the experiences of (other) NQTs, their efforts and professional deployment, and of course ways to support NQTs.

Networking, with a focus on NQTs and support for them, initially for me meant co-operation with a colleague at the university of Gävle

(Åsa Morberg). Could two people form a network? I experienced it as a network, as we were in contact with many teachers, teacher trainers and representatives of teachers unions – and "communicated" with a lot of published research. It could be seen as a small but intense "network", gradually expanding our interaction, curiosity, knowledge and involvement with others. Towards the end of 1999, the Municipality Induction Network was initiated with participants from University of Gävle, the teachers unions and eight municipalities in the region around the University of Gävle (see also Åsa Morberg's narrative).

Aiming at the international arena

The local network focused a great deal on the development of support for NQTs in the municipalities. While involved in research, I gradually became more and more aware of the need for international contacts and exchange that could provide more information and knowledge than we were able to get by just reading. Another important inspiration to our efforts to develop international contacts was the "discourse" that international relations provide a stronger position, e.g., when applying for money and conducting research. In January 2003, we held a small symposium at the University of Gävle, with about ten Swedish participants and one (!) Norwegian participant (Torlaugh Løkensgard Hoel). This meeting strengthened our resolve to apply for money to form a network. However, the application we sent to NORFA (Nordisk Forskerutdanningsakademi) in the beginning of 2004 was not approved. I had never met some of the people named on the application's "list of participants". One of the Danish participants, for example, had written a book about NQTs in Denmark that I just happened to have read (Martin Bayer), and another I had heard of from colleagues in Sweden.

Now we were keen on forming a network, but we were just Swedes, Norwegians and Danes! While attending ATEEs (Association for Teacher Education in Europe) conference in Agrigento, Italy, in 2004, I met some Finnish women and talked to them for just a few minutes about NQTs and asked "if they knew someone in Finland, interested in these issues." I gave them my business card. Travelling home from Italy I was going directly to a meeting in Oslo with some people I had never met before (Eva Bjerkholt, Sidsel Hauge and Gunnar Engvik); I was invited to meet with them as they coordinated "some Norwegian national network supporting NQTs". The meeting was friendly and fruitful and I was able to present what we were doing in Sweden – and the idea about a Nordic network. Some months, later a Finnish researcher (Hannu Jokinen, University of Jyväskylä) called to tell me that he had been informed (from the women I had met at the ATEE conference) that "some

Swedish guy was interested in making contact with Finnish research-ers concerning NQTs". This was an inspiring chat, with some laughs, and the mutual experience of "finally we have found another group of people with the same interests" (the "Finns" at Jyväskylä university had been looking for contacts in Sweden). By that time, we (at Univer-sity of Gävle) had been invited to a conference in Trondheim, Norway, scheduled for the beginning of 2005. The conference was arranged by the Norwegian national network; I told the "Finns" about the confer-ence, but they could not attend, and our Danish contact (Jens Christian Jacobsen) could not come but sent two colleagues (Sven Antonisen and Egon Hedegaard).

Finding each other

Among approximately 150 participants at the Trondheim conference, I ran around trying to find some "faceless" Danish men, whose name I knew but had never met (I wonder what people thought when I intru-sively tried to read their nametags?). However, we found each other and had two impromptu meetings that included the Swedes, the Norwegians and the Danes. As a result of the meetings, one month later we sent an application to the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (FAS) for funding for a Nordic Network. The application was approved giving resources to form a Nordic network during 2005-2007. In April 2005, the first "official meeting" was held at University of Gävle with participants from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and – Estonia! Our Finnish friends had contacts in Estonia and they were of course in-vited. Therefore, even before the Nordic network was formalised, it was wider then just the Nordic countries. The network was formalised as the Newly Qualified Teachers in Northern Europe – Research and Develop-ment Network (NQTNE). Finally, there was an international network with opportunities to meet on a regular basis, with a common interest and with a great deal to learn from each other.

Characteristics

What characterised this aspiration and process to form a network? Some key characteristics include: striving for goals; coincidences; loose contacts; improvised meetings; many "hooks thrown in the water, but few fish caught"; mutual interest to co-operate and – hard work. Moreover, for the future, international co-operation is important and becomes even more important as there is so much to learn from each other in a global world. The network has to expand, while maintaining its core together.

A second Swedish narrative
– on forming a local network with the municipalities

February 2008 by Åsa Morberg

I have been a project leader since 1998 for a local municipality network called "The Municipality Induction network", and I will describe the process of developing a network. The participants are from: nine municipalities in the region of Gävleborg, the two main Swedish Teacher Unions and the University of Gävle (where I work as a lecturer and researcher). The network is one of the most long lasting networks at the University of Gävle: We are now in the third project period, each of three years duration. Very close co-operation, an eye-to-eye level, and equal terms in a very respectful and rewarding collaboration characterise the network.

The network started more or less by coincidence when I heard one of the local project leaders on the radio; I contacted her and she was interested in doing what I was interested in doing. I wanted to develop a participatory research and development network project, a project in which practitioners and researchers would work closely together in every phase of the research and development process. The aim of the research and developmental work would be concerning newly qualified teachers. The research questions would be formulated on the basis of real problems in the municipalities concerning NQTs and researched in close co-operation between participants from the municipality and from the university.

The network project model we have developed

The members of the network's core group include two people from each municipality (or one if it is a very small municipality). These participants are responsible for the NQTs and support to NQTs and they hold different positions: teachers, heads of schools or coordinators for school development. The core group of the network, led by me, consists of about 20 people and we meet once a month. The network meetings each last one full day and we organise them in two different ways. One meeting is primarily organised at the university, when researchers, national or international, visit the core group. We start by having a meeting on project affairs, the invited guest lecturers participate in the meeting, and after there is a lecture or seminar to a wider audience. The other type of meetings takes place in the municipalities on a rotating basis. All the municipalities are hosts for a meeting at least twice during a project period of three years. These meetings start with a presentation of induction-period praxis in the host municipality. There is a presen-

tation of an urgent issue, e.g., the induction phase, the mentors' programme or education for mentors. The discussion develops out of what the municipality needs to have happen in their local work. These meetings are very important concerning how information is spread among the project participants.

Results and highly important factors for success

The Municipality Induction Network has been very successful. The outcomes of the three projects have indeed contributed to increased knowledge of NQTs and their professional development, to local school development, and to development of the initial teacher education programme. It has also contributed to developing co-operation models for networking with universities and municipalities. Some factors have been highly important: the work is carried out with mutual understanding and respect, and there is a willingness to co-operate. The genuine interest to co-operate has been shown in daily activities, such that no one's particular interest has been the main interest, and the time has always been shared. These relationships have been developed in a region with long distances between the municipalities and the university. No one has been more important than the others.

I have arranged study tours to different countries. The opportunity to travel together has been important to create a very good atmosphere in the network. It has also contributed to the municipality being able to view itself in comparison with other municipalities abroad, and the network has a lot of learning partners nationally and internationally. The networking has also contributed to the municipalities getting another self-image.

Increased interest in research participation

The core issue in the methodology is that research is conducted together during the whole research process, from developing the research question to the results and the discussion. The research process has been de-dramatised. It is systemised and problematised knowledge and the insight that research is something that you can participate in is important. To have positive personal contacts with researchers is also important. However, it is important, too, that the personal contacts between researchers and practitioners work on the personal level. No one has the right to interpret his or her needs as the most important. To network is to negotiate.

Analysis of the answers to the questions to the narrative writers

How did your engagement in supporting new teachers start and how did it develop?

The narrative writers all share the belief that their involvement in working with new teachers is closely connected to their professional employment as lecturers and researchers in initial teacher education. They differ on the degree to which this activity is a part of their individual workloads, but they have all chosen to make this engagement a vital part of professional focus. Further, their engagement in local and national activities developed their interest and need to find out how colleagues in other national states deal with similar challenges, therefore developing an interest in international networking.

What specific role has networking (e.g., local, national and international) played in specific periods?

The activity and roles are described specifically in the narratives. The writers would agree that they became "*more and more aware of the need for international contacts and exchange that could provide more information and knowledge than we were able to get by just reading*". It is also clear that the narrative writers understand that the role of networking in their professional lives is an important way of producing knowledge, which is an essential part of their professional engagement and obligation, and which has to be produced in order to create *useful* and *relevant changes*.

This characteristic is very similar to an internationally observed change: knowledge production has had a change of character; knowledge today is not only produced in university institutions; and *network* and *network relations* have become a characteristic and decisive factor of creating solutions to experienced problems (Duus & Jørgensen, 2004, p. 7). This new kind of knowledge is defined as "modus 2" knowledge by Gibbons et al. (1994), different from "modus 1", which is characterised as the typical way that universities produce knowledge.

Did networking develop into more formalised networks?

There are examples in each of the narratives indicating that *informal networking* develops into *formal networks*, which include agreements on who is to meet, how, where and when meetings are to take place, and most importantly – what the aims of the network are.

How to fund the activities is also a crucial question. One characteristic is that initiatives to form a network come first and funding follows

later (sometimes much later). Many of the networks had a very informal start, which was characterised by an increase in informal activities to such an extent that the need for formalisation and funding became urgent.

Further, the initiatives for funding network activities often took place at the same time as initiatives to organise the network were apparent. The organisation of each network was constructed in a way that was most productive for reaching its goals. The goals included:

- sharing experiences on how to organise induction systems,
- sharing knowledge on how to conceptualise the processes of induction,
- collaborative research endeavours into questions of common interest.

These goals are not only shared by the network-members; they are goals of

- initial teacher education institutions,
- municipalities,
- other stakeholders,
- and national political initiatives.

The formalisation of networks through funding and contracts are all examples on use of networks as a strategy to reach aims which are shared by many more than the few network members. It is evident in all the examples of local, national and international networks that there is a focus on opening up the networking activities for such a wider audience. Examples of this reported in the narratives include lectures, discussions, conferences, publishing of articles and books, home pages and e-mail networks.

It is also evident in all the examples that in each network there is a focus on creating a restricted group of core members. An important aspect for every individual member is that by joining a network you "become part of an engaged crowd", in which all share the same interest. In your daily work, you usually have to focus on numerous competing objectives, and you have to work with others who do not have the same interests, engagement or wish to go deeper into a specific topic.

The sharing of knowledge and the network dissemination activities also has a personal learning dimension for each network core member. Networks are also arenas for personal professional development of their members: you try out and develop your ideas through *reflective* discussions. You present your work and you give feedback on the work of others. In the narratives there are many examples of network members

taking new professional steps such as writing articles, participating in research (some for the first time) and taking *dynamic* initiatives in their own professional contexts inspired by the activities, the examples of others and the discussions.

What are the interactions between the different networking activities with which you are involved?

It is evident in the narratives that networks on local, national and international levels interact and the descriptions indicate that this interaction is inspiring and often results in a higher level of self-understanding concerning the individuals' own work. In one narrative this was formulated as: "By listening to others, I understand my own point of view more clearly or I change my own understanding". The broader result is that the different networks (and innumerable informal network relations) gain knowledge, inspiration and new initiatives through the renewed efforts of network members who "come back home" and share the *heterogeneous knowledge* that they have gained as members in other networks.

Network and networking as a change of mode of knowledge production

As mentioned earlier, the activities described in the narratives share many characteristics with the characteristics of "modus 2" knowledge production defined by Gibbons et al. (1994). "Modus 2" is a new method of knowledge production characterised by its knowledge production in a problem solving context, where the knowledge is immediately put to use in a constant process of negotiation with users and all interested stakeholders (see table 7.1). This mode of knowledge is defined in contrast to the traditional scientific knowledge called "modus 1", which is developed through research and then later tried out in action (Winther-Jensen, 2004, pp. 115-122).

Though it might seem that the change from modus 1 to modus 2 is a total shift of paradigm, in praxis there are overlaps between modus 1 and modus 2. This perspective is supported by the fact that many "modus 2 networks" do publish extensively and do include, e.g., peer reviews as quality assurance (Duus & Jørgensen, 2004, p. 2). The current book is such an example.

Table 7.1: Characteristics of knowledge production. (Translation and elaboration of table in Kristiansson, 2006, p. 21, and with use of concept "Multicriterial quality control" in Duus & Jørgensen, 2004).

	Modus 1 knowledge production	Modus 2 knowledge production
Orientation	Scientific truths	*Relevant changes, usefulness*
Organisation	The scientific hierarchy	*Network relations, informal networks and formal networks*
Place	Universities	*Scattered, widespread*
Logic	Discipline oriented, cross disciplinary, multidisciplinary	*Transdisciplinary (making use of competence networks and networks competence)*
Knowledge	Research results evaluated according to scientific paradigms in specific fields	*Reflective, dynamic, heterogeneous*
Dissemination	Scientific periodicals, conferences etc.	*Fluctuating networks*
Quality	Peer reviews	*Multicriterial quality control*

In modus 1 knowledge production, other researchers are the target group, whereas in modus 2 knowledge production, the target group is everyone across professions with special interest in the focus area. Anyone having a part or say in the field of induction of new teachers is a member of the target group, and they are all potential members of fluctuating networks over time.

In modus 2 knowledge production, publications are not the foremost criteria of evaluation: as the aim is to have an effect on action and conditions in specific fields, the relevant criterion is "doing" rather than publication (Duus & Jørgensen, 2004, p. 19). The main evaluation question in modus 2 knowledge production is the following: Is the new knowledge useful in the field in focus? The answer to this question is actually indirectly and continually tested in every relationship in all the network relations and networks mentioned, and this is characterised by Duus and Jørgensen (2004) as "*multicriterial quality control*".

Epilogue: "If It's Not Happening, It's Because You're Not Doing It"

Thomas Friedman writes, in a chapter with the title cited above, "…social activists and social entrepreneurs … have been superempowered by the flattening of the world" (Friedman, 2007, p. 489). Friedman's point is that global changes have given us opportunities to communicate, to

take initiatives and to collaborate much more easily across boundaries than ever before.

It is evident in the narratives presented above that networking is an important and growing feature of the development of support for newly qualified teachers in the Nordic countries, and it is indirectly evident that the networking activities are facilitated intensively by the possibilities of new media and Internet technology. But action such as networking still does not start automatically or "more or less by coincidence", as written in one of the narratives: it starts because a person takes an initiative, and then we see again and again in these narratives that such initiatives result in collaborative action through networking. Heikkinen and Jokinen's story below is very appropriate and worth considering in this connection.

March 2008

by Hannu Heikkinen and Hannu Jokinen

There is a story we tell at conferences about an education reformer who holds a séance in order to call up the ghost of John Dewey.

Frustrated with the pace of reform, this person asks the great philosopher of progressive education how to bring about real change in American schools.

"Do you want the realistic way or the miraculous way?" Dewey asks.

"Well, the realistic way, of course," says the reformer.

"A million angels would come down from heaven and visit every classroom in America, wave their hands, and education reform would immediately become established," Dewey replies.

"Then what would be the miraculous way?" asks the puzzled reformer.

"Educators would do it themselves," explains Dewey.

The point of the story is clear, but the discourse in the story is trapped in a dichotomy. The traditional way of discussing how change in education develops has been through two contradictory strategies: either through a "top down-strategy" or through a "bottom-up strategy". Networking cannot be characterised as either one of these two strategies. Therefore, when we are networking and creating networks, we are not bound by the traditional dichotomy, but we are able to cross traditional boundaries such as organisational levels, ordinary channels of command, professional boundaries, disciplinary boundaries etc.

This strength of networks may be also characterised at the same time as one of the weaknesses of networks. "The life of a network" is threatened by many risks posed by changes: funding has to be renewed, members are not members forever, aims, leadership and directions of each network can always be questioned and disagreements may have devastating results.

However, according to our experiences, networking and networks are indispensable tools we can not do without now or in the future. Knowledge is shared in networks – as described in the narratives – in a multitude of ways: presentations, discussions, E-mail correspondence, negotiations, critical friends, joint research projects, writing of articles and books, development of new projects, development of trust and friendship, taking up new challenges, new inspiration, new energy, new networking possibilities etc.

These many ways of learning constitute both personal and professional learning processes. These learning relations are the core of networking, and networks are the fluctuating frames of these processes.

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Chapter 8

Summary, Future Perspectives, and Conclusions

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Introduction

In the chapters of this book, various themes related to new teachers and systems promoting their professional development have been described, analysed and discussed. Activities such as mentoring have been in focus from different perspectives: in chapter two as a phenomenon challenging to conceptualise; in chapter three as activities within an extensive system for support and promotion of professional development; in chapter four as an analysis of characteristics of mentoring, in general and in three specific countries; in chapter five as activities with different kinds of ideas and philosophies lying behind certain approaches and relationships between mentors and mentees; in chapter six as elements in personal narratives; and in chapter seven as a concern making networking an obvious endeavour.

In this final chapter, we will discuss some aspects of what has been highlighted in the earlier chapters. Firstly, we will discuss some of the similarities and differences between the five countries that the analyses reveal in the various chapters and the different approaches of building systems promoting new teachers' professional development: "the local approach" in a decentralised governed system and "the national approach" in a centralised system. Some of the potential advantages and dilemmas with the various approaches will be discussed. Secondly, we will analyse and discuss a recently published Government Inquiry proposing a Swedish system for registration of teachers, a system embracing a probationary year[1] for new teachers. This is the major part of this

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[1] In Sweden new employees go through a first six-month probation period before being offered a regular employment. However, we have considered to use the term "testing year" as evaluation of the new teachers is expressed so explicitly (literally "to test"), but we have finally chosen the term probationary year in line with the usage in English-speaking countries.

final chapter. Thirdly, we will give some future perspectives, discussing the idea about a continuum in teachers' professional development; linking together initial teacher education, systems promotion new teachers' professional development, and in-service learning. We will also discuss the focus and ethos in the relationship between mentor and mentee, and after that, we propose a model for promoting (new) teachers professional development. Finally, we offer some conclusions and propose some areas for further research.

Some similarities and distinctions in the five countries

One of the intentions of this book has been to compare new teachers' working conditions, and the systems for support and promotion of professional development. So, when doing the comparative analysis, what emerges as common, and what differs?

In chapter six, Eisenschmidt, Heikkinen and Klages show that new teachers have similar experiences to a great extent, even though every situation is unique (cf. Gold, 1996; Fransson, 2006). In this chapter we also see that similarities but also differences appear between new teachers in kindergarten and in school (cf. Grimsæth et al., 2008). If we move to an all-embracing level, in chapter three, Bjerkholt and Hedegaard analyse different national systems promoting new teachers' professional development and raise the question whether there is a common model. Their answer is yes – and no. Major similarities are:

(a) the same generic aims promoting new teachers' professional development;

(b) the incentives to recruit teachers, prevent them from leaving the profession and effectively adapt to the school culture, but the specific arguments vary between different stakeholders within the national contexts.

(c) the *activities,* as courses for mentors; courses for NQTs and different mentoring systems for new teachers (see also chapter 4).

(d) the low scale beginning of the organised promotion of new teachers' professional development, with explicit pilot projects within a national strategy in Estonia and Norway; and locally initiated projects not connected to any national strategy in Denmark, Finland, and Sweden. There is no common model for any induction system, and even the very existence of systems promoting new teachers' professional development varies, from Estonia with a national system to Denmark and Finland, which have no initiatives or incentives at a national level.

The non-existence of a common induction system is not surprising, even if the Nordic countries have a great deal in common, at an overall level concerning political aims, policies and influences (cf. Oftedal Telhaug et al., 2006). Bjerkholt and Hedegaard discuss the impact of decentralised or centralised systems governing the educational system. They claim that the Estonian nationally implemented induction system is a result of a centralised governing system, while the absence of nationally implemented induction systems in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden is the result of a decentralised governing system. However, they stress that the strategy in Sweden and Norway is more complex and has elements of both a decentralised, local approach and a national strategy. Proposed reforms in Sweden (SOU 2008:52) and signals from the Norwegian committee of reforms in teacher education may change the picture towards national strategies within a decentralised system. Bjerkholt and Hedegaard conclude that it seems that the Estonian centralised strategy is becoming more decentralised, while the developments seem to be the opposite in Norway and Sweden, moving from a decentralised strategy towards a more centralised strategy in the promotion of new teachers' professional development. The development in Sweden during the last few years will be further discussed later on in this chapter.

We will not discuss the details in decentralised or centralised systems, but highlight some aspects of systems promoting new teachers' professional development. Bjerkholt and Hedegaard discuss the system building in a decentralised governance system as "the local approach" and in a decentralised system as "the national approach", referring to where the responsibility of system building lies.

The advantages of a national approach are that "something is built", that is; some kind of structure, organisation and conceptual attendance emerge focusing on new teachers' professional development. However, organising these kinds of activities could also limit the informal learning, support and co-operation new teachers have with colleagues. These informal structures are important. The advantages of a local approach are that the responsibility and the commitment are put in the very context where the new teachers work (or rather close to it). However, there are some risks, e.g. to what extent could we rely on a long-term and reliable focus, and what happens if the "external" motivation or stimulation vanishes, if other important areas blur the agenda, or key persons drop out? All-embracing structures, organisations, and conceptual attendances (as in a national approach) could give stability, but it cannot guarantee the commitment at lower levels.

However, the all-embracing structures may not have to be at the national level, but can also be placed at a more local level, giving atten-

tion to local conditions and aims. Then appears the crucial question of the frontier, where the all-embracing structures do not become as stable as necessary. Perhaps the most suitable induction system is a system having the stability and the best qualities from an all-embracing structure, combined with local flexibility, commitment and responsibility. According to Beijaard and Papanaoum (2002) it is agreed upon that the most meaningful induction program for new teachers is when it takes place within a "setting where it is part of a wider policy of professional development for all teachers" (p. 906). This could give stability but also the local flexibility, commitment and responsibility.

However, even if we sometimes request stability, we live in a dynamic and changeable world where a lot is happening in the educational systems. One recent contribution in this field is a Swedish government Inquiry proposing a Swedish system with registration of teachers based on a probationary year. This we will discussed in the next section.

The Swedish proposal of registration of teachers based on a probationary year

The issue of new teachers' professional development has become of great immediate interest in Sweden as a government Inquiry in May 2008 proposed a system to register teachers (SOU 2008:52).[2] The Inquiry, "Registration and stricter qualifying rules" is a governmental top–down initiative with a probationary year for new teachers indented, if accepted, to be implemented in 2010. During the probationary year, the new teacher will have a mentor that should support the teacher and participate in the evaluation of the new teacher.[3] After this year, the new teacher has the possibility to be registered as a teacher. It is suggested that the power to impose or withdraw the registration is given to The Swedish National Agency for Education. National criteria for the evaluation of the new teachers will be made and the headmaster will be formally responsible for the evaluation. But the mentor will participate and consider if the new teacher has adequate competence to become registered. It is proposed that the state takes responsibility for fund-

[2] In some contexts the concept certification is used, e.g. in the USA. For a discussion about different concepts in use and their connotations, see e.g. Roth (1996). In Scotland, which the Swedish government Inquiry uses as a model, the concept of registration is used.

[3] In this context, it is important to distinguish between evaluation and assessment. Gold (1996) stresses that assessment is used for feedback and the promotion of professional development, while evaluation most often is associated with to what degree something or someone is effective, adequate, valuable or appropriate. When we discuss the governmental proposal (SOU 2008:52) we use the concept of evaluation as we conceptualise the intentions and the tone being an evaluation of the new teachers' competence. When we use assessment, we would like to stress the "diagnostic", non-threatening analysis of competence as a starting point for feedback and the promotion of professional development.

ing the mentors with 5% of their wages and 10 % of the new teachers' wages, and fund the process of registration.

In the Inquiry the issue of advancement for teachers is also discussed. An important proposal is that teachers can be acknowledged and registered as "especially qualified teachers". This will also be a matter for judgement of the Swedish National Agency for Education. The main way of acquiring this acknowledgment is to get a post-graduate academic degree (licentiate degree) or be evaluated as especially competent on the basis of documented developmental work.

There are many important issues in the proposal, but we will concentrate on four: first, the ideological base for this proposal; second, mentors being involved in the evaluation of new teachers; third, the headmasters' role and use of national criteria in evaluation; and fourth, why the registration will be possible after just one year, and not after two, three or more years.

Regarding *the first issue,* the ideological base for the proposal, we find the proposal being produced within a neo-liberal ideological frame where neoconservative ("unproblematical") solutions to educational problems are proposed or implemented (Robertson, 2008). This implies education as e.g. a market with choices of schools, private schools and a rhetoric including elements of an ideological movement from a child-centred education towards emphasis on knowledge based education. The constitution of this frame and the preparations of the reforms are performed with a massive criticism towards teacher education and what is happening in the school system.[4] At the political level this has been expressed as a result of long time Social Democratic governing. In this "rhetorical game" the Liberal Party has been especially active with catchwords like "the fuzzy school" or references to less favourable sections of international comparative studies like PISA or TIMSS, or national reports of the state of art in initial teacher education or in the school system.[5] In 2006, when Sweden after twelve years of Social Democratic governance got a centre–right coalition government, the rhetoric was turned into actions and reforms. In short, the reforms launched lately include more and earlier national tests, earlier grading

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[4] The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has in a series of evaluations pointed at critical aspects in the initial teacher education (eg. HSV, 2005; 2006a; 2006b; 2008). In media these critical aspects have attracted great attention and become big news, often commented by the Liberal Parties spokesman in educational matters. However, the fundamental messages in these evaluations are that the initial teacher education is becoming better and better, but with some flaws emerging as the level of the demands the educations has to meet increases (e.g. Fransson, 2008). Nevertheless, this message has severe problems to attract attention in media and on the political agenda.

[5] There seems to be almost a universal phenomenon with critical national discussions about negative results in evaluations as PISA or TIMSS, as there seems to be *some* negative aspect possible to focus on in every national context (see e.g. Black & Wiliam, 2005; Livingston & McCall, 2005; Sammons, 2006; Søreide, 2006). This could also be a hint of how media and politics are working.

of pupils, and a downsizing of the resources for school development in favour of school inspection, intentions to rank universities, and changed structure and organisation of the initial teacher education.

The proposal of a system to register teachers has to be seen within this neo-liberal frame with massive critique towards teacher education and what is going on in the school system, aiming to raise the alleged weakened status of teachers, and as a way to "control" the teachers' competence. However, the proposal contains some dilemmas in perspectives and choice of words, giving the impression of an "old fashioned" or "unproblematic" way to conceptualise mentoring and the development of teachers' competence. We find expressions like "testing year"[6] and mentors "primary give advice and support" problematic, as well as the "control" of the new teachers, and the explicit mistrust towards the initial teacher education. It is claimed that initial teachers' education is not able to train teachers adequately or keep unsuitable candidates out of the profession.

Interestingly, this state top-down initiative (and other initiatives in the recent school-policy) with its components of state control is in contrast with classic liberal ideas saying that the state should keep from control, rules and guardianship. Another contradictory issue is the rhetoric about a professional teaching profession and the actions taken from the state, putting the teachers into a process of de-professionalisation (cf. Beach, 2008). One example from the proposal (SOU 2008:52) is that professional codes of conducts for teachers should be established by a state authority, whereas up till now the teachers' unions themselves have taken responsibilities for the development and implementation of a code of conduct. Another example is that the state (The Swedish National Agency for Education), according to the proposal, should be the institution having mandate to impose or withdraw the registration, while other professions have the mandate to regulate the registration (e.g. lawyers).

The second issue we will discuss is the fact that it is very problematic if mentors are being involved in the evaluation of new teachers' competence. There is an obvious risk that this will be counterproductive in relation to the goal of promoting teacher competence. The result could be less qualified teachers than intended. A reason for this is the vulnerable and confident relationship between mentor and mentee.

Many researchers warn against evaluation connected to a fruitful, honest and evolving relationship between the mentor and the mentee (see e.g. chapter 4 and 5 or Rust, 1994; Gold, 1996). One effect might be that new teachers are not honest about their shortcomings, their

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6   A direct translation of the Swedish phrase "provår" (practically: probationary year) having strong connotations "to test" as the evaluation of the new teachers is expressed so explicitly in the Inquiry.

thoughts, their anxiety or questions. Research shows that new teachers avoid questioning colleagues to avoid losing prestige or being regarded as incompetent (Dinham, 1992; Rust, 1994).

The importance of an open and extensive communication cannot be underestimated. For instance, Roehriga et al. (2007) conclude that the most effective new teachers communicate more with mentors and are more open to mentoring, than less effective new teachers. The importance of trust is also stressed by McNally and Oberski (2003), who state that new teachers learn a lot if they interact with colleagues observing their teaching when the relationship is built on "a degree of trust and voluntary collaboration" (p.64) and if "there is a strong case for sensitive coordination of support" (p.64). One conclusion is that evaluation does not open for the full potential of promoting new teachers' professional development (cf. Tickle, 2000; Martin & Rippon, 2003).

What reasons can we find behind the proposal that mentors should participate in the evaluation of the new teachers? One possible explanation could be a misunderstanding of the concept mentor and in what kind of context the concept mentor and mentoring is used, in the context of new teacher or in the context of initial teacher education. As shown in chapter two, the concept of mentoring is also used in *pre-service teacher education programs* (e.g. Sundli, 2007; Leshem, 2008; Parker-Katz & Bay, 2008) and *there* the mentor's (if we use that concept) function in evaluation is very important. However, this line of reasoning is rather unlikely. Three other, more likely explanations, could be that the Inquiry:

(a) is not aware of the research stressing that it is not advisable that mentors have to evaluate the mentee,

(b) is aware of this dilemma but finds it more important to evaluate the new teachers, rather than promoting their professional development, and therefore is ready to jeopardize the relationship between mentor and mentee,

(c) is mentally restricted to the idea that the new teachers would have the opportunity to be registered after one year, and that the mentors are involved and become a "natural" part in the process of evaluation.

The most likely conclusion is (b), that it is a very deliberate choice, and that the evaluation of new teachers is seen as so important that the Inquiry is willing to jeopardize the promotion of new teachers professional development. However, in the proposal it is stressed that the mentor primarily will "give advice and support", but as long as the mentor has to participate and consider if the new teacher has adequate competence for being registered, the relation between mentor and mentee will

be problematic and might even jeopardize the full potential of learning. However, the person responsible for the evaluation is the headmaster, and in the next section we focus on her/his role.

Our *third issue* to discuss is the headmasters' role and the use of national criteria in evaluation. The process of evaluation is described in a rather detailed way, prescribing what the different actors should do. We will give one example, prescribing how the headmaster should act when evaluating the new teacher.

> First the headmaster and the probationary teacher [the new teacher] should have a dialogue about the planning of a certain teaching occasion or a specific activity. Then the headmaster should observe the teaching/realization and finally the headmaster and the teacher should have a follow-up dialogue. (SOU 2008:52, pp. 185–186)

However, in this proposed way to evaluate new teachers, what are the actual conditions for performing a fair and qualified judgement? And what is possible for a visiting headmaster to get a grip on? A headmaster "visiting" a new teacher two times, discussing planning and what is happening, and using a "national competence profile" seems to be a very instrumental way to evaluate a new teacher's competence and conceptualising what is contained in a teacher's competence. And what if the contextual matters are less than optimal? How will this influence the evaluation of the new teacher's competence? There are situations and classes where even very experienced and qualified teachers will have real trouble or even fail. We do not usually blame the foot when the shoe is too small – but how do new teachers want to be evaluated in these situations?

The proposal implies new tasks for headmasters – to evaluate new teachers. This could be seen as an extension of the evaluations performed continuously during the years of initial teacher education. One important question then occurs regarding what kind of competencies a headmaster needs to evaluate new teachers. This becomes a rather important question, as the competency requested for teachers working within the university-based elements of the initial teacher education in Sweden is a doctoral degree, and supervisors of the school-based elements of initial teacher education are supposed to have adequate training.[7] To evaluate and predict teacher competence is a complex and challenging process demanding rather qualified knowledge and experience (cf. John, 2002; Berliner, 2005; Korthagen et al., 2005; Smith, 2005) if not being something superficial.

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[7] However, in reality it is quite different. In 2006 the statistical median was 33% of the teacher educators having a doctoral degree (HSV 2008).

In the process of evaluating the new teachers, a national competence profile is proposed to be an important tool and support. Internationally, criteria-based evaluation of new teachers is used in some countries. In chapter three and four, the use of teacher's professional standard in Estonia is described, but examples could also be found in e.g. Scotland, Wales and New Zealand. However, even though policy makers stress the usefulness of standards (e.g. Kleinhenz & Ingvarson, 2007) some aspects could be discussed. McNally et al. (2008) show that in Scotland, the Standard for Full Registration was used as a checklist to fulfil bureaucratic requirements, but does not, as NcNally et al. suggest, capture the essence of a new teacher's classroom experiences and teaching, and is not a useful reference at that stage of development. McNally et al. also found that the first year is better described as an "identity shift rather than as any rational policy-governed progression through the element of a standard." (p. 295). We will not elaborate this further here, but conclude that a development and implementation of a competence profile needs to be done thoughtfully, to avoid running the risk of being used in an instrumental way.

In our view, important aspects to be included in a possible future competence profile are for instance aspects of self-reflection, self-knowledge, and awareness of one's own capacities, but also knowledge about what one has to learn and develop for the future. Then, the focus becomes more a prediction of professional development, than actual evaluation of the competence at the moment.

The fourth issue we will discuss is why it is suggested that teacher apply to be registered after just one year, and not after two, three, or more years. The key question is at what stage it is most appropriate to "evaluate" if the teacher is qualified enough to be registered. In the Swedish proposal, the new teacher is given the opportunity to be registered after one probationary year (SOU 2008:52). This is in line with many other systems of registration of teachers (e.g. in Scotland and Canada). However, is one year a reasonable period? Will this give sufficient evidence that the teacher is substantially more competent than when he or she ended the initial teacher education?

We would like to discuss the above questions, as a lot of research points out new teachers´ first year(s) of teaching as challenging, demanding and with potential for learning (see also chapter 4, 5 and 6). For instance, Grimsæth et al. (2008) stress that the first years are characterized "by a struggle for survival and an intense process of discovery, when the learning curve is steep and emotions run high" (p. 233), and that "it is important to give new teachers time to grow" (p. 231). If we acknowledge that this is a sensitive and vulnerable beginning of

the professional career where a lot of learning takes place, the question arises what use it is to evaluate the new teacher during this year. To what extent are the new teachers able to show the development of a more complex competence during this probationary year than during their initial teacher training? Moreover, is it worth the costs and the risk to jeopardise the mentoring process by locating the process of registration at the end of this first bewildering year? Why not "evaluate" the new teachers after two or three years, when they have had real opportunities to "survive" the first year, have become rather comfortable and (probably) have given proof of some real professional development?

In research and among policymakers, the promotion of new teachers' professional development is often suggested to be formally organised for two or even three years (see e.g. Tickle, 2000; Flores, 2006; O'Brien & Christie, 2008). In our opinion, letting the new teachers apply for registration after two or three years, will give opportunities to evaluate the new teachers' competence at a more advanced level as well as not being biased from their "first year of struggles and emotions". In addition, the risk of jeopardising the relationship between mentors and adepts would be reduced. However, some disadvantages with this could occur, as it is proposed that some teacher tasks should not be performed by non-registered "teachers" (SOU 2008:52). Some of these tasks are to grade pupils, supervise teacher students, and being a mentor.

To conclude, there are some good intentions to raise both the competence and the status of the teaching profession, but it is debateable whether these measures really will have that effect. The question of evaluation could be highly critical, especially the role of the mentors. As described in chapters three and four, the Estonian system promoting new teachers' professional development does not (yet) include a compulsory registration of teachers, even though a board for registration was established in 2006. The political decision has been not to use the Estonian induction system as a control mechanism. As a teacher it is possible to register voluntary if, for instance, one would like to work abroad and needs to show "the formal competence". However, Swedish politicians and educational experts have to consider the proposals in the Inquiry and make decisions in line with knowledge and experience, rather than out of political ideology.

Finally, in this section, we have discussed when it is appropriate to be registered as a teacher. We will return to this issue when we later on propose an alternative (or complementing) model to the proposal. However, we will first discuss some important issues regarding new teachers; the matter of a continuum in teachers' professional develop-

ment, and the focus and ethos in the relationship between mentors and mentees.

A continuum in teachers' professional development

The idea of a seamless continuum of the professional development embracing initial teacher education, systems promoting new teachers' professional development, and regular systems of in-service learning are discussed in research, in literature and in policy documents (see e.g. Fransson & Morberg, 2001; Britton et al., 2003; Jokinen & Välijärvi, 2006; Commission of the European Communities, 2007). The Commission of the European Communities (2007) sees this as an ideal approach including formal, informal and non-formal learning opportunities.

However, one conclusion drawn from what is described, analysed, and concluded in the various chapters in this book, is that it is difficult to claim that, in the countries included (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Norway, and Sweden), there exists a professional development system that could be seen as a highly deliberative and organised continuum of learning processes, connecting initial teacher education and the professional development of (new) teachers. Estonia and Norway seem to be closest to this idea, and some good but minor examples are given from some of the other countries. In Estonia and Norway initial teacher education has an important role in developing the national programs, but in the other countries the teacher education involvement in the promotion of new teachers' professional development seems to be restricted to a few projects and co-operation with a few municipalities. However, the Nordic countries do not differ much from a lot of other European countries in this respect. The Commission of the European Communities (2007) expresses that in many member states:

> […] there is little systematic coordination between different elements of teacher education, leading to a lack of coherence and continuity, especially between a teacher's initial professional education and subsequent induction, in-service training and professional development; nor are these processes often linked to school development and improvement, or to educational research. (Commission of the European Communities, 2007, p. 5)

A systematic coordination between different elements of teacher education could (probably) be realised in many ways. However, the most important aspect for reaching this systematic coordination is, as we see it, that people conceptualise and make sense of the entire educational

system as a continuum. We claim that there will be no continuum unless people do not conceptualise it as a continuum. Every good intention or reform will fail if the continuum is not conceptualised. To get there, a lot of what Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) calls sensegiving is probably needed. Sensegiving could be described as a process to influence the sensemaking and construction of meaning of others in a preferred direction. One way of doing this could be to communicate visions and conceptualisations, and make it possible for others to grasp the visions and conceptualise them in a specific (desired) way. However, this implies a clear and uniform vision, a national unity on visions and argumentation, and – probably most important – unity among politicians to ensure that there will be a long-term project. To build and conceptualise the educational system as a continuum is most certainly a long term project that needs stability in ideology, rhetoric and investments.

One (other) crucial component to ensure unity is the relationship between initial teacher education and the school community. A seamless continuum of professional development and an effective and continuous learning process this implies co-operation, sharing of knowledge and, to some extent, sharing of perspectives between teacher education and the school community. In this, the question of superiority is crucial, as the teacher education as an institution often seems to have superiority of opinions over the school community. However, it is not certain that one perspective is more valid or fruitful than another. Exchange and negotiation perspectives, opinions and knowledge then become crucial (see also O'Brien & Christie, 2008).

However, if structures and perspectives for a continuum in teachers' professional development are elaborated, the question then has to focus on the content, approaches, and ethos of this professional development. We will focus some of these aspects in the next section, especially the approach between mentors and mentees but also between more experienced teachers (or more correctly, between all teachers).

The focus and ethos in the mentor–mentee relationships – towards a more offensive approach?

In the introduction to this book, we highlighted the issue of how to learn to teach and what kind of knowledge, skills, and values teachers need. These issues are essential when discussing teachers' professional development – with regard to both experienced and inexperienced teachers. However, new teachers are in a special situation as they are inexperienced and often struggle to find their own approaches and their own identity while they have to handle the (teaching) situations. Then,

how to promote new teachers' professional development and with what, becomes a complex question. However, research seems to be rather in accord concerning the needs of new teachers in the very beginning – to organise and survive the daily work (cf. Gold, 1996; Wideen, et al., 1998; Fregerslev & Jørgensen, 2000). It is perhaps therefore the focus in many induction programmes is to help new teachers to "survive" and to adjust to the school culture. However, Wang et al. (2008) stress that this strategy does not automatically make them effective teachers. The question then arises if many induction programs are based on an ethos that new teachers rather will be provided with a safety net, than challenged to develop their teaching skills, the pedagogical content knowledge and subject matter? This question becomes important as for instance Maloch et al. (2003) in their research implies that the induction promotion might need to focus on pedagogical content knowledge rather than general pedagogics.[8] They followed new teachers that had undergone three different types of reading programmes, and during their first year of teaching the ones with most specialised programmes were more willing to seek support for their teaching, as they were more aware of and focused on their reading instruction. The conclusion could be that they possessed a potential of learning that could be fulfilled with an appropriate focus on pedagogical content knowledge, rather than on general pedagogic.

Can we assert that there is higher potential for learning, if the induction programs have a reactive approach responding to new teachers' general and expressed needs? Or will the potential for professional autonomy, innovation, and development be reduced, if there is a more proactive and offensive approach to new teachers' professional development and learning? Internationally, the organisations, activities, ideas and approaches vary in the systems or programs promoting new teachers' professional development. Gold (1996) organises her characterisation of approaches in induction programs under two headlines; instructional-related promotion necessary for success in the classroom and at the school, and psychological promotion emphasising positive self-esteem and confidence building.

The question then arises what kind of approaches are emerging or are possible in the Nordic countries? We would like to claim that ideologically in the Nordic countries, new teachers are looked upon as completely qualified and fully worthy colleagues, however not yet so experienced. We also claim that, in Gold's categorisation, the ideological

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[8]   However, other research draws other conclusions. For instance McNally et al. (2008) conclude that new teacher's narrative data during their first month does not to any greater extent focus on subject knowledge or teaching methods. Instead they stress that beginning teachers experiences is more rational to express in terms of identity-formation in sense of "becoming a teacher", than in a more rational cognitive motion of "learning to teach".

base when promoting new teachers' professional development in the Nordic countries is on psychological promotion emphasizing positive self-esteem, confidence building and self-reflection, even though some mentors would like to "instruct" their mentees (see chapter 4). With Heikkinen, Jokinen and Tynjälä's terminology in chapter four this could be recognised as a *humanistic approach.*

Is the result then that the promotion of new teachers' professional development tends to be proactive and supportive? Not challenging and offensive? Is it possible, or even desirable, to implement a more offensive approach as another, or complementary, ethos? An approach where teachers challenging each other to develop teaching skills, pedagogical content knowledge and subject matters? With Heikkinen, Jokinen and Tynjälä's terminology this could be described as a *critical constructivist* approach, where mentors encourage new teachers to question and challenge existing teaching practice and change their way of being as teacher. However, is it possible to develop this approach a bit further, so that teachers could "coach", or even "teach" each other? In other professions the latter is not a troublesome or uncomfortable situation or relationship. For instance, members of the medical profession or the armed forces "teach" their colleagues' (cf. Soeters et al., 2003; Fransson, 2003; 2006). In these professions, they often learn collaboratively and explore their professional objectives together, but sometimes also rely on each other in situations where they more or less "teach" each other. In these situations, someone for a while becomes the "first among equals" – *primus inter pares* – while sharing knowledge and experience and leading the knowledge creation of others. For teachers, an approach like this should imply a critical research based approach and a collective as well as an autonomous process of self-development. This could build a learning community for development (not for adjustment or socialisation) where the pupils' learning could be in focus.

This approach goes far beyond the practical advice and the socialisation process where new teachers become members of an existing culture (as approaches in many of the early induction programmes). It even goes beyond new teachers' self-questioning and reflection upon their own actions and on the values and norms underlying the educational settings that many authors express as important if to promote new teachers' professional development (see for instance Flores, 2006). The approach requires what Heikkinen, Jokinen and Tynjälä in chapter five describe as a "collaborative collegial relationship" based on a *critical constructivist* approach. An approach like this could be one component in the process developing a teaching profession with high self-esteem, with collegial and qualified processes of learning and with high status.

Perhaps this is a complementary approach for the future when promoting teachers' professional development – for experienced teachers as well as less experienced ones. However, in a Nordic perspective, this approach could to some extent be seen as a cognitive turn and perhaps a bit provocative.

Consequences will follow from our proposed changes of ethos. On major is that the promotion of new teachers' professional development to a greater extent must focus on the new teachers' needs in their particular contexts *and at the same time* aiming at develop as professional teachers in a more general sense. In any mentoring process this probably has to be done with more sensitivity and awareness concerning the changing needs and what is possible to learn over the months and years for new teachers.[9] New teachers have different needs during the first months, and the potential for learning changes (see also Munby et al., 2001; Richardson & Placier, 2001). It is perhaps no use analysing and discussing rather complicated pedagogical content knowledge, e.g. how pupils learn math, in the very beginning, if the new teacher is stressed just being in the classroom. And it is probably a waste of valuable time and competence to always focus on just the well-being of the teachers. For the sake of clarity we have to stress that we do think the teachers' well-being is important and essential, but if the interaction with the new teacher only has that focus, there will probably be some severe problems in either the context, in the conceptualising of what kind of stimulation and challenges teachers need in their professional development, or in the potential in the promotion of new teachers' professional development. Therefore, the potential of learning in a more offensive approach promoting (new) teachers' professional development, as described above, should not be underestimated. However, this implies a changed ethos of the entire teaching profession, as well as a reconceptualisation of teachers' self-understanding and how they look upon themselves and each other.

One possible way of reaching this proposed ethos and a situation where teachers themselves are the driving force "teaching each other", is to empower the teaching profession, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. One way of doing that is to build structures and incentives for continuous professional development. In the next section, we will give a proposal for such a structure.

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9 Some researchers have tried to express new teachers' needs, situation and competes in stages or phases, eg. Katz (1972), Lacey (1977) and Tetzlaff & Wagstaff (1999).

A proposal of a structure promoting (new) teachers' professional development and empowerment

In this section we would like to give a contribution to a possible future perspective for the promotion of new teachers' professional development, as well as the more experienced teachers. We will propose a possible way of thinking, acting and conceptualising professional development which in some way may let teachers take the initiative and control over their own knowledge creation. To some extent, there are similarities with the proposals given in the Swedish Inquiry (SOU 2008:52) but there are also major differences.

Before we describe the model further , we would like to stress some of the prerequisites for the model proposed. The model may be realised only if the promotion of new teachers professional development: (a) is built on an initial teacher education preparing teachers for collaborative research based analyses and developmental work; (b) has a collaborative approach with possibilities for teachers to create and share knowledge; (c) is supported by policymakers, both morally and financially; and (d) is in line with long-term political objectives and investments for both the initial teacher education, the school system, and for teachers' professional development. These aspects are also prerequisites for the more offensive approach sketched in the previous section.

The argument for a model like this (or other models) is based on the assumptions that: (a) it is impossible for any education to fully prepare the student for working life and its situations; irrespective of if it is initial teacher education, medical education, financial or engineering education (some learning has to be dealt with "on-the-job"); (b) "on-the-job-learning" is a powerful tool to contextualise knowledge and skills; (c) "on-the-job-learning" will be gained if deepened and challenged in a collaborative and systematically manner; (d) collaborative learning develops and strengthens a profession's knowledge base; and (e) the promotion of new teachers' professional development is more than one year.

The model we are proposing has four phases focusing on: (1) new teachers' "survival" and day-to-day efforts; (2) new teachers' professional development with a general focus; focusing on general pedagogic and emerging themes; (3) the new teachers' professional development with focus on pedagogical content knowledge, or corresponding; (4) professional empowerment. These phases are primarily phases of competence and focus of activities, rather than phases of time.

The *first phase* in the model is promoting new teachers' professional development on a day-to-day basis and give support to their efforts of

"survival". During this phase we have to deal with what is related to the so called "praxis shock" (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002) or "reality shock" (McCormack & Thomas, 2003). Most often, this implies dilemmas related to classroom management, leadership, and discipline (see eg. Wideen et al., 1998; Moran et al., 1999; Fregerslev & Jørgensen, 2000); prioritising and meeting pupils' different needs (Bergsvik et al., 2005); relations to pupils, colleagues or parents; and to handle stress and uphold self-esteem (Fransson, 2006). During this first phase, new teachers' professional development is primarily promoted by colleagues, mentors and other new teachers and personal and moral support are important components. The support has a character of just-in-time and of meeting the needs new teachers express. Seminars with other new teachers resulting in the sharing of experiences and an awareness of others in the same situation could be one component, primarily organised for more than one school.[10] These seminars could also be performed at some centre connected to teacher education or educational faculties (as in the Estonian system). Facilitator in these seminars could be an experienced mentor, a former new teacher and/or someone from the teacher education institutions (e.g. an educational researcher).

In the *second phase*, the promotion of new teachers' professional development takes a more formally organised form. The new teacher has now become rather relaxed and at home with the daily activities and routines are established. For many new teachers this occurs during the end of the first year or in the second year of teaching. Still the needs expressed by the new teachers are in focus, but there is a slight steering towards some general pedagogic themes such as leadership, identity formation, and perspectives of experiences from the teacher education. In this phase, the importance of the mentors could increase or decrease, depending on what role the mentor has had before and what kind of knowledge the seminars with other new teachers gives. During this phase, the new teachers also become involved in another form of professional development organised at the schools together with the colleagues. These school-based seminars are organised as "research circles" (Andersson, 2007), having a research based approach as in a model of Learning Study (Gustavsson, 2008) or action research (Smith & Sela, 2005). Facilitator in these seminars could be a qualified teacher or an educational researcher.

In the *third phase* the focus is on pedagogical content knowledge (or other relevant topics). In this phase the importance of the mentors could increase or decrease, depending on what role the mentor has had before and what kind of knowledge the seminars with other new teachers

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[10]   To meet other new teachers in similar situations seems to be very important and appreciated (cf. chapter 4, 5 and 6).

gives. During this phase, the new teachers get more actively involved in the school-based "research circles" and actively contribute with content and analyses within the Learning Study model. In this phase the involvement of the initial teacher education or educational researchers as facilitators becomes important for the new teachers (and the other teachers) to promote the research-based activities, the reflections, the conclusions and the dissemination of the knowledge developed. The school-based seminars could be organised as courses at advanced level (and for some teachers at research level). This makes it possible to gain university credits at advanced levels promoting career or in the long perspective get the status as "especially qualified teachers" (cf. SOU 2008:52). If a system of registration of teachers was in effect, the registration would be done at the end of this phase when the new teacher could show some developmental work or university credits.

In the *fourth phase* teachers have reached a high level of professionalism, having self-esteem, eagerness to learn more and confidence in their own and others' competence. In this phase teachers use a research-based approach in their daily reflections about their work, they take active responsibility for systematising and sharing their knowledge, and take the approach of "teaching each other". We will develop this approach further below when comparing with approaches within other professions, for instance the medical profession or the military profession. Within the "research circle-model", the teachers now have a leading role and produce and disseminate research. If a system of teacher career is used (e.g. as described in SOU 2008:52) the teachers can now apply for being registered as "especially qualified teachers".

We see the proposed model with four phases in the promotion of new teachers' professional development as one possible and comprehensive way to make a "seamless continuum" of the professional development embracing initial teacher education, induction and early career learning, regular systems of in-service learning, including formal, informal and non-formal learning opportunities. This model is based on confidence in the educational system and the continuum between various phases of the process of learning as a teacher; as initial teacher education, early professional development and in-service learning. The system is also built on a research-based teacher education preparing for a life-long research-based professional development.

In the fourth phase we discussed an approach of teachers "teaching each other". This approach is both based on, and a requirement for, professional empowerment, both within and outside the profession itself. It is based on an empowerment *within* the teaching profession, with a reconceptualisation of teachers' self-understanding and how they

look upon themselves and each other, but also on the making of an autonomous process of self-development (as described in the previous phases). The empowerment *outside* the profession is based on recognition of competence and status and a "cease-fire" from political rhetoric "attacking" the educational system.

Future research

The model presented above is an example of an incorporation of our own and others' research results and praxis experiences. Research within the problem area has, however, neither the scope nor the force to create ways to guarantee new teachers an optimal professional development. This book can possibly be a first step. The research presented in this book covers aspects of the promotion of new teachers' professional development at different levels, from the growth of systems, to organisations and detailed analyses of the content of these systems. Hopefully this book will contribute to presenting new knowledge and new perspectives, and hopefully it will also open for further investigations and interventions. However, we would like to point out some specific areas where further research is needed and where interventions are possible. The suggestions might very well be used in a comparative perspective, contrasting different contextual settings and in that way challenge one's own perspectives and raise new kinds of questions and construct new perspectives and new ways to conceptualise, think, and act.

In chapter two, the conditions for sensemaking and mutual understanding in international co-operation was analysed. This analysis could be deepened to analyse what *really* is conceptualised of other countries' national contexts (e.g. of initial teacher education or system promoting new teachers' professional development, or other issues). This research is important for the understanding of the processes in international co-operation and, theoretically, the processes to make sense of other national contexts when doing comparative research.

In chapter three Bjerkholt and Hedegaard analysed the growth and development (or the non-development) of different national systems promoting new teachers' professional development. One important issue for further research is to go deeper into the contextual factors, such as social, cultural, educational, philosophical, and political conditions or approaches to learning, to find aspects that are important to be aware of if one is to develop a continuum in teachers' professional development. Another important aspect is the analysis of what influences the building of a system and what people from other countries see as valuable aspects or taken for granted.

In chapters four and five, mentoring was in focus. Jokinen, Morberg, Poom-Valickis and Rohtma compared and analysed approaches and organisation of mentoring in three national contexts while Heikkinen, Jokinen and Tynjälä analysed different kinds of mentoring organisations within a national context, as well as the very conceptualisation of what mentoring could be. However, many aspects remain to be analysed. For instance, there is a need to perform research on the very interaction between mentors and adepts in the north European countries (cf. Strong & Baron, 2004; Lee & Feng, 2007). In research, it has been shown that differences in national and cultural contexts result in different approaches, foci and forms of discussions (Wang et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2008). Wang and Odell (2007) have identified 16 different types of mentor–novice relationships depending on whether the mentor and the novice share ideas and views concerning what kind of teaching they believe in and want to practice. Thus, it becomes interesting to analyse similarities and differences between the Nordic and Baltic countries (or other countries), or even within countries. The impact of social, cultural, educational, and political conditions that form educational contexts and philosophies could be analysed. Different approaches to mentoring could also be analysed, as well as the conditions for creating a continuum in teachers' professional development, for instance analysing the organisational, conceptual and ideological conditions for constructing a continuum between initial teacher education and any systems promoting new teachers' professional development.

In chapter six, Eisenschmidt, Heikkinen and Klages analysed new teachers' narratives, letting their experiences and perspectives become visible. Research about new teachers' perspectives, experiences, and processes of learning and development are vital if to promote their professional development. This kind of knowledge is important for teacher educators, mentors and colleagues, as well as for policymakers, and we need more of it. However, there seems to be a discourse in research – and for certain in media and among politicians – that stresses the problems, dilemmas, and shortcomings new teachers could meet. This influence how new teachers, the teaching profession, and the initial teacher education are constructed, re-constructed and conceptualised. This influences the prestige and the respect for the teaching profession as well as the recruitment of students to initial teacher education.

In chapter seven, Hedegaard has compiled narratives from NQTNE-partners showing the importance of networking. This gives some information about the importance of networking as a source for knowledge development. How to organise, stimulate, maintain, and develop learning networks in this area could be an issue both for interventions and research.

In this final chapter the proposal in the Swedish Inquiry of a system for registration of teachers has been analysed. If this proposal is approved, it becomes important to analyse what happens if mentors have to evaluate the new teachers. What becomes important to stress in this situation? Does this affect the relationship and the new teachers' professional development, and if so, in what way and what will the consequences be? Another interesting aspect could be to analyse the impact of research-based knowledge, practical experiences and political ideology if the proposal is ever realised. Other research questions for macro level analysis are comparative statistical data for e.g. teachers' work commitment and cases of illness, but also new teachers and their conceptions of and work with e.g. ICT, children with special needs or democracy, just to mention a few issues. There is no shortage of important and interesting research questions.

Conclusions and implications

In this final chapter we have tried to summarise the issues highlighted in the book in order to give some future perspectives. Some of the conclusions we could draw are:

- there is no common model in Northern Europe for the promotion of new teachers' professional development,
- new teachers' professional development has attracted different kind of attention in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Norway, and Sweden,
- among these countries, Estonia is the country with the most developed formal system promoting new teachers' professional development; second is Norway with investments in a national network and big scale development projects. However, the Inquiry's proposal from the new Swedish government could, if accepted, make the Swedish situation similar to that of Estonia.
- it seems like the centralised Estonian strategy to promote new teachers' professional development is becoming more decentralised, while the developments seem to be the opposite in Norway and Sweden, moving from a decentralised strategy towards a more centralised strategy.
- there is a need for comparative research focusing on new teachers and the promotion of new teachers' professional development.
- it is rather complicated and time consuming to do comparative research, but that cannot be a reason not to initiate and implement it.

Out of the research and perspectives presented in this book, some important implications for the promotion of new teachers' professional development emerge. We find it important that:

- the promotion of new teachers' professional development goes far beyond a focus on new teachers' well-being, but also focus on matters of pedagogical content knowledge, the pupils' learning and the development of the teaching profession.
- there is some kind of continuity of the learning initiated during initial teacher education and the learning and professional development as a new teacher.
- the promotion of new teachers' professional development is done in a collaborative manner within a learning community, for example involving groups of new teachers and/or their more experienced colleagues. However, this does not exclude more personal relationships as between a mentor and a mentee. Involved in these learning communities could also be teacher educators and educational researchers.
- research is performed concerning the promotion of new teachers' professional development.

In this book we have analysed and discussed new teachers' professional development and how it could be promoted. The promotion of new teachers' professional development is important for maintaining a qualified teaching force and well-functioning educational system. However, most important for how the teaching profession is conceptualised, how teachers are educated and trained and that competent and qualified people will become teachers, is how politicians and media act and argue. As long as politicians and media, sometimes fair but most often unbalanced, almost constantly criticise educational systems and initial teacher education, there will be troubles recruiting and retaining qualified teachers. Do politicians have the courage to acknowledge this connection? And turning the focus back on the educational profession: Is our voice sufficiently raised in the public debate?

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