

Marina Bendtsen

Becoming and being a language teacher

Evolving cognitions in the transition from student to teacher





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BECOMING AND BEING A LANGUAGE TEACHER



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Evolving Cognitions in the Transition from Student to Teacher

Marina Bendtsen

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the process of becoming and being a teacher as viewed by prospective teachers themselves and aims to contribute to the understanding of how teachers' professional development can be promoted and supported during the early stages of professional learning. Studies have shown that our beliefs affect how and what we learn in a given situation and thus attempts to provide support for teachers' professional development need to be based on an understanding of the learners' perspective. Besides looking into teachers' views of teacher learning, the study also scrutinises teachers' views of the teaching profession, as it is assumed that a person's learning preferences are affected by how one perceives the job of the teacher.

The initial phases of professional learning, including the transition from teacher education into working life, have been identified as a highly influential period in terms of learning and development. As teachers evolve and develop, different needs are likely to come into focus and it was therefore considered important to take the whole transitional period into account. Thus, a longitudinal approach was chosen, enabling a follow up on how teachers' views evolve as they progress from university into working life.

The empirical study was carried out in a Finland-Swedish context and focuses on the evolving cognitions of a cohort of prospective language teachers (N=20) as they progress through teacher education and into the workplace. The data are in the form of narrative essays and interviews and has been gathered in three different phases: 1) when the participants were student teachers 2) after the participants had completed teacher education and 3) after they had worked one or two years as teachers. The study has a longitudinal scope, is qualitative in nature and informed by a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. The two perspectives, becoming and being a teacher, are studied through the theoretical lens of two different, but intertwined strands of research: theories of teacher learning and professional development, on the one hand, and teacher cognition research, on the other hand.

The results regarding the teachers' views of the teaching profession during the early transitional phases of professional learning show that different aspects of the job are in focus at different times. From an initial focus on aspects of the job related to the classroom arena (e.g. teaching and relations to pupils), the arenas and scope of the job gradually broaden towards heightened concerns with internal aspects of the job (e.g. building a teacher identity) along with a heightened awareness of the teacher's role on the school and societal arenas. As the views broaden, they become more holistic and interconnected, but also more complex and diversified, leaving the

teachers in an emotional and tentional turmoil, where they have to prioritise, set limits and come to terms with clashing beliefs.

When it comes to the teachers' views of teacher learning, the results show that on a group level, a broad variety of learning opportunities are recognised. Individual preferences could be noted, as well as differences in terms of how the different learning opportunities are viewed and which functions these are seen to perform. The teachers' views gradually evolve from more vague and narrow, towards more diversified, complex and interconnected. Furthermore, the findings show that practical experiences and experiential forms of learning are considered central throughout, whereas collaborative and more autonomous forms of learning are afforded less emphasis, especially with regard to learning in teacher education. Furthermore, the role of theory is largely downplayed and views regarding the functions of theory relatively narrow, as the participants found it difficult to connect these elements with the teacher's job. The results thus highlight a need to attend to how elements of theory and practice are connected in teacher education and to broaden prospective teachers' views regarding different forms of learning and to heighten their awareness of the intricate processes involved.

The thesis concludes with a proposal of a holistic, dynamic and interconnected model of professional development, centering around three main arenas for teacher learning: the *Practice arena*, the *Academic arena* and the *Collegial arena*.

Keywords: teacher learning, teacher cognition, teaching profession, learning opportunity, student teachers, newly qualified teachers, subject teachers

Abstrakt

Studien fokuserar på blivande lärares uppfattningar om lärarblivande och lärarskap och syftar till att bidra till förståelsen av hur professionell utveckling kan befrämjas och stödjas under det professionella lärandets initialskeden i övergången från utbildning till arbetsliv. Hur vi tror att vi lär oss har i tidigare studier påvisats inverka på såväl hur som vad vi lär oss i olika situationer. Det är därför viktigt att åtgärder i syfte att främja och stödja lärares professionella utveckling baseras på en förståelse av den lärande individens perspektiv. Utöver lärares uppfattningar om professionellt lärande och utveckling utforskas även deras uppfattningar om läraryrket eftersom synen på yrket kan ge upphov till olika uppfattningar och preferenser vad gäller lärarblivandet.

Den tidiga professionella utvecklingen som innefattar övergången från lärarutbildning till yrkesliv har i forskningen identifierats som en synnerligen betydelsefull period vad gäller lärande och utveckling. I olika skeden av utvecklingen kan olika typer av behov aktualiseras och det är därför viktigt att beakta hela övergångsperioden. Sålunda valdes ett longitudinellt perspektiv som möjliggör uppföljning av eventuella förändringar i lärares uppfattningar i olika faser av utvecklingen.

Den empiriska studien genomfördes i en finlandssvensk kontext och fokuserar på en grupp blivande språklärares (N=20) framväxande uppfattningar om lärarblivande och lärarskap före, under och efter utbildningen. Materialet bestående av narrativa texter och intervjuer insamlades i tre faser 1) i början av lärarstudierna, 2) efter avslutad lärarutbildning och 3) efter ett till två års yrkesverksamhet. Studien är longitudinell och kvalitativ och bygger på en hermeneutisk fenomenologisk ansats. Avhandlingens teoretiska ramverk består av två nära sammankopplade forskningsinriktningar, teorier om lärarblivande och professionell utveckling å ena sidan och teacher cognition-forskningen som studerar lärares uppfattningar och tankar om olika fenomen, å andra sidan.

Resultaten i anslutning till lärarnas framväxande uppfattningar om läraryrket visar att olika aspekter av lärarjobbet fokuseras i olika faser av utvecklingen. Från ett initialt fokus på aspekter av jobbet kopplade till klassrumsarenan (t.ex. undervisning och relationen till elever), utvecklas småningom en bredare syn på yrket där lärarna i högre grad lyfter fram inre aspekter av yrket (t.ex. skapandet av en läraridentitet) men också lärarens roll inom skol- och samhällsarenorna. Samtidigt som synen på yrket blir mera holistisk och kopplingen mellan olika aspekter av yrket framstår tydligare framträder också yrkets komplexitet och mångfald allt tydligare och lärarna

försätts i en situation där de tvingas prioritera, sätta gränser och förhålla sig till motstridiga uppfattningar.

Resultaten i anslutning till lärarnas syn på lärarblivandet visar att lärarna på gruppnivå identifierar en mängd olika lärandetillfällen. Individuella preferenser kan noteras liksom skillnader när det gäller hur olika lärandetillfällen uppfattas och funktionen hos dessa i lärandeprocessen. Lärarnas uppfattningar om lärarblivandet är initialt rätt diffusa och snäva för att småningom bli mera mångfasetterade, komplexa och sammankopplade. Vidare visar resultaten att praktiska erfarenheter och erfarenhetsbaserade lärandeformer genomgående anses centrala medan kollaborativa och mera autonoma lärandeformer lyfts fram i mindre grad, speciellt i relation till lärande i lärarutbildningen. Ytterligare kan konstateras att teorin inte anses ha en speciellt betydande roll i lärarblivandet. Uppfattningarna gällande teorins funktion i lärandeprocessen är rätt snäva och deltagarna upplevde det svårt att koppla teoretiska element till lärarens arbete. Sålunda accentuerar resultatet vikten av att fästa uppmärksamhet på hur teoretiska och praktiska element integreras inom lärarutbildningen, att bredda synen på olika lärandeformer och öka medvetenheten om vad lärarblivandet kan omfatta och innebära.

Avslutningsvis presenteras en syntes i form av en holistisk, dynamisk och integrerad modell av professionellt utveckling där det professionella lärandet fokuseras till tre huvudsakliga arenor: en verksamhetsarena, en akademisk arena och en kollegial arena.

Sökord: lärare- professionell utveckling, lärares uppfattningar, läraryrket, lärandetillfälle, lärarstudier, nyblivna lärare, ämneslärare

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Vaasa, August 1st, 2016

Marina Bendtsen

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List of Abbreviations

CPD	Continuous professional development
ICT	Information and communication technologies
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
ST	Student teacher
TE	Teacher Education

1 Introduction

Walking towards her office after a final evaluative meeting with this years' group of graduating student teachers, the teacher educator felt a mixture of relief and anxious anticipation. She was relieved that yet another group of students had formally passed the teacher education programme and now she could not wait to get to her office to read the individual evaluations. The general discussion held at the evaluative meeting had proceeded in a positive manner, but wise from previous experience, the teacher educator knew that not everybody's views and opinions, and perhaps not even the most common ones, are necessarily expressed during an open discussion.

Having read the evaluations, she was once again struck by the diversity of opinions among a group of prospective teachers that had gone through the same teacher education programme. Some student teachers felt that both the theoretically-oriented and practical elements of their education had provided them with a considerable amount of useful ideas that could be applied in their future work, whereas others felt that the education was a little too theoretical and they would have wanted more practical ideas. Indeed people learn in different ways and the teacher educator sighed and wondered how she, together with her colleagues, could possibly cater for these diverse needs? She felt an urge to dig deeper into this matter.

The above story illustrates my personal point of departure and motivation for embarking on this explorative journey into what becoming and being a teacher can entail from the perspective of student teachers. Teachers' conceptions of how they learn have been seen to affect not only what and how they learn from different learning opportunities (Bramald, Hardman & Leat, 1995; Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1995), but also the amount of time and energy they invest into different practices, as well as their motivation for partaking in different learning opportunities (Bråten & Ferguson, 2015). Thus, in order to support teachers' professional development, a thorough understanding of their views is needed, so that their various needs can be met and satisfied but also so that views that may stand in the way of development and learning can be addressed and dealt with.

1.1 Background

Becoming and being a teacher today is not the same as becoming and being a teacher some twenty years ago. As a result of globalisation, internationalisation and advances in information and communications technology, we live in a society characterised by continuous and sometimes very rapid change. New knowledge is produced and spread at great speed and has thus become an evolving concept. What

is considered true today may well prove to be false tomorrow. The irony is that while information and knowledge are readily available to each and every one, no individual can possibly take in and keep up with all the knowledge produced. Living and working in the twenty-first century thus call for skills and qualities such as adaptability, flexibility, initiative, collaboration, critical thinking and openness towards continuous learning throughout one's life. (cf. Coolahan, 2002; Jarvis, 2007; Jokinen, Taajamo & Välijärvi, 2014; Woods, 2002)

In a memorandum from 2000 followed up by a communication a year later, the European Commission (2000, 2001) identified *lifelong learning* as a central guiding principle and key to meeting the demands of the ever-changing knowledge society. In many ways, current views of teacher learning are framed by lifelong and *life-wide* approaches to learning.

The concept *lifelong learning* highlights the dimension of time in learning. Teacher learning is thus not confined to a specific period but is a process that starts during (or even before) teacher education (TE) and continues after formal qualification, throughout one's career.

In order to better support teachers in their career-long professional development, researchers emphasise the need for a more coherent and interlinked process of professional development throughout the career span, starting from TE, through the induction period and beyond (Commission of the European Communities, 2007; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Fullan, 1993; Innola & Mikkola, 2014; Ministry of Education, 2007; Taajamo, Puhakka & Välijärvi, 2014). Several reports (Heikkinen, Aho & Korhonen, 2015; Mahlamäki-Kultanen et al., 2014; Ministry of Education, 2007) highlight the weak connection between initial teacher education and in-service training in Finland. As indicated by Välijärvi and Heikkinen (2012), this link is inherently weak since initial education is the responsibility of universities whereas in-service training is organised by other stakeholders (e.g. further education centres, teacher associations and municipalities). The induction phase, encompassing the transition from education to work and the first few years in the profession, has been identified as being especially critical. Research on professional development has shown that the period is a particularly complex, but important developmental stage (Kagan, 1992b; OECD, 2005; Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 1998) and it is today widely recognised that different forms of support is needed during this phase (cf. e.g. Aspfors, 2012; Fransson & Gustafsson, 2008; Heikkinen, Markkanen, Pennanen & Tynjälä, 2014; Zuljan & Vogrinc, 2007).

The concept *life-wide learning* highlights the fact that learning occurs in different contexts ranging from formal contexts, such as education and school, to learning at

work, in everyday life and with the help of modern technology. Sometimes learning may be an intentional activity when we deliberately strive to learn something and sometimes it may be unintentional, in cases where learning occurs as a side effect of activities we engage in. (Heikkinen, Jokinen & Tynjälä, 2012; Niemi, 2009)

In keeping with the concept life-wide learning, researchers have come to recognise that teacher learning is an inclusive concept involving both formal and informal learning activities in a variety of contexts (Flores, 2005, p. 487). Thus, learning is seen to occur as a result of a variety of activities such as doing the job, experimenting, observational learning (watching somebody else doing), reflecting, learning from others without interaction (e.g. reading articles or books, listening to lectures) and through collaboration and interaction with others (Buehl & Fives, 2009; Grosemans, Boon, Verclairen, Dochy & Kyndt, 2015; Kwakman, 2003; Meirink, Meijer, Verloop & Bergen, 2009).

Studies focusing on student teachers' views on learning in teacher education have shown that student teachers differ in how they view and conceptualise teacher learning (Bramald et al., 1995; Wideen et al, 1998). Still, when it comes to learning in TE, two general tendencies can be noted across studies. First of all, student teachers (STs) seem to value practical elements of their education higher than theoretical ones (see e.g. Bråten & Ferguson, 2015; Chróinín & O'Sullivan, 2014; Hauge, 2000; Roness, 2011). Especially teaching practice is generally favoured and seen as an important eye-opener and student teachers appreciate opportunities of getting real-life experience, learning by doing as well as opportunities to apply what has been learnt during courses on campus. Alongside teaching practice, courses with a practical and applied focus are also generally favoured and often student teachers express that they want practical tips and ideas that they can use in their work (see e.g. Ahonen, Pyhältö, Pietarinen & Soini, 2015; Chróinín & O'Sullivan, 2014). However, studies that have specifically focused on the role of theoretical elements in initial teacher preparation have received more varied results. In a study encompassing both prospective subject and class teachers at two Finnish universities, Niemi (2011) found that even if critical voices were raised, the majority of students found the research component in their education to be of relevance for their future work. Allen and Wright (2014) investigated the role of theory and practice during teaching practice and found that even if there was much support for the role of practice teaching, support was also found for the theoretical elements of the programme. Knight (2014), who specifically focused student teachers' conceptions of the role of theory in teacher learning, found that with time, and especially when the former STs had started working as teachers, theory came to be increasingly valued.

Studies into teachers' retrospective views of TE have shown that when teachers look back on TE as NQTs, they are often critical and commonly they express that TE did not prepare them for dealing with the day-to-day realities of the job (see e.g. Aspfors, 2012; Blomberg, 2008; Nyman, 2009; Wideen et al., 1998). These findings suggest a connection between how the job is perceived or experienced, on the one hand, and views about teacher learning, on the other hand. In fact, a number of influential researchers in the field of teacher learning have addressed this link. Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1995) point out that what student teachers perceive they will be doing as teachers, what kinds of tasks and functions they see themselves performing, will affect not only what they want to learn from TE but also how they want to learn it. Two years later, Calderhead and Shorrock (1997) also conclude that our perceptions of the work of teachers inevitably influence how we perceive that teacher learning occurs. Since teachers' views of the profession seem to impact on how teacher learning is experienced and perceived, a joint study of the two perspectives seems warranted.

When it comes to teachers' views about teacher learning in a workplace context, previous studies suggest that in general individual rather than collective learning activities are favoured. Thus, classroom experimentation and individual reflection are considered important means of learning at the workplace (Avalos & Aylwin, 2007; Flores, 2005; Grosemans et al., 2015; Opfer, Pedder & Lavicza, 2011). Then again, formal contexts of learning, such as in-service courses, are less valued (Flores, 2005) and in a study involving a sample of as many as 1126 primary and secondary school teachers in the UK, Opfer et al. (2011) found that the lowest level of beliefs related to the importance of research for professional learning. Furthermore, cross-sectional studies investigating beliefs of novice and experienced teachers have found that experienced teachers attribute more importance to reading professional literature, whereas novices tend to favour interaction with colleagues (Grosemans et al., 2015; Flores, 2005; Richter, Kunter, Klusmann, Lüdtke & Baumert, 2011). Despite these general tendencies, Flores (2005) concludes that teachers' views regarding professional learning practices are varied, idiosyncratic and context-specific.

The process of becoming a teacher has received a vast amount of interest in the literature over the years and it has been extensively studied from different perspectives. Still, I believe there is much yet to be learnt and on that note, I will proceed to presenting and explaining the motives behind this study.

1.2 Motives

Besides the personal and professional motive sketched out at the beginning of this chapter, there are a number of additional motives for this study that can all be included under the overarching motive of a need for research.

First of all, as others have pointed out (Ahonen et al., 2015; Vermunt & Endedijk, 2011), literature on teacher learning often focus on how learning *should* occur (e.g. Berliner, 1988; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Day & Sachs, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2008; Niemi, 1989; Sachs, 2016; Shulman & Shulman, 2004) rather than on describing how teacher learning does occur or, indeed, how teachers themselves believe that it occurs. Since the study focuses on the perspective of the teachers and their perceptions of teacher learning, it can be seen to provide a complement to the existing literature.

Secondly, the study focuses on the perspective of subject teachers who, in contrast to primary school teachers, have received comparatively little attention in the Finnish context (cf. Virta, Kaartinen & Eloranta, 2001). Considering that the two groups of teachers follow different programmes of study, their paths towards becoming teachers are also likely to be different.

Thirdly, there is a need for research that attends to both the life-long and the life-wide aspects of learning. In terms of the life-long perspective, I previously pointed out that a coherent approach to professional learning was sought after. As teachers evolve and develop, different needs come into focus and in order to provide ongoing, coherent support during early professional learning it is important to take the whole period into account and to follow up on how teachers' views evolve during the transitional period from university into working life. Very few studies have a longitudinal perspective today and even fewer focus on evolving views of teacher learning from initial TE and into the workplace. Fewer still combine teacher's views of the profession and views of teacher learning. Two exceptions are the studies of Calderhead and Shorrock (1997) and Chróinín and O'Sullivan (2014) but they focus on primary teachers and the latter one does not include beliefs about the profession, so in this respect the current study fills a gap in the literature.

The life-wide perspective highlights that teacher learning takes place in multiple contexts. There are studies that specifically address student teachers' views of learning in TE (e.g. Ahonen et al., 2015; Allen & Wright, 2014; Bråten & Ferguson, 2015) and studies that focus on teachers' and/or NQTs' views of teacher learning at the workplace (e.g. Flores, 2005; Grosemans et al., 2015; Opfer et al., 2011), but if we want to consider how learning occurs across the teacher learning continuum, a more

holistic approach is needed that takes different learning contexts into consideration (cf. Borko, 2004, p.4).

1.3 Aim

In view of the background and motives presented above, the aim of this study is to contribute to the understanding of the process of becoming a teacher by describing teachers' evolving cognitions of the process of becoming a teacher and the teaching profession at different phases during the transitional period from university to work. Furthermore, I want to contribute to the understanding of how teachers' professional development can be promoted and supported during the early stages of professional learning¹.

As the aim implies, prospective teachers' cognitions or views² are in focus. Cognitions are here defined as personally-held, dynamic, mental constructs (cf. Borg, 2006, p. 35). I see it as a broad concept covering a person's beliefs, understandings, meanings, perceptions, preferences and opinions³. A person's cognitions are affected and formed by experiences but at the same time, they function as a frame of reference through which new experiences are filtered and interpreted in an ongoing process. This means that cognitions are both a tool for learning as well as a result of learning and gaining insight into prospective teachers' cognitions can thus inform our understanding of the teacher learning process.

Considering that cognitions are afforded a central role in this study aimed to shed light on the process of becoming a teacher from the insiders' or teachers' point of view, it seems appropriate to initially explore the role of cognitions when it comes to teacher learning.

¹ Even if much has been written about the need to create a learning continuum from initial preparation through to the early years of teaching (see e.g. Feiman-Nemser, 2001), there is no available term that would cover this particular period from teacher education through to the first years of working as a teacher. Thus, when I use the terms *early stages of professional development* or *early stages of professional learning*, it is this this abovementioned period that I am referring to.

² The two concepts, cognitions and views, will be used interchangeably in this thesis.

³ As Borg (2006, p. 35) points out, the different psychological labels used for mental constructs may be possible to distinguish on a theoretical or philosophical level but on an empirical level they are difficult (if not impossible) to separate. Borg is also critical towards the diversity of terms and concepts used within teacher cognition research, especially since these are not used consistently across studies. A further reason for my opting for an inclusive, comprehensive definition is that the connection to other studies with similar focus then becomes easier to detect.

1.4 Teacher cognitions and their role in teacher learning

The field of research concerned with teachers' thought processes is referred to as research on teacher thinking (Clark & Peterson, 1986) or teacher cognition research (Borg, 2006). A research interest in the mental and covert aspects involved in teaching emerged in the late 1960s but according to Borg (2006, p. 7), a major shift in perspective from a focus on observable teaching behaviours to teacher thinking occurred in the middle of the 1970s. The orientations within this line of research has shifted and varied over the years and today it comprises a broad field of inquiry. Research in teacher learning and teacher cognition are closely aligned today and studies have shown that cognitions influence what teachers do and how they act in the classroom (cf. Borg, 2006; Bramald et al., 1995; Hauge, 2000; Kennedy; 1997) as well as how they learn and what they learn in teacher education (Bramald et al., 1995; Northcote, 2009). It is thus believed that teacher cognition research can bring insights that can help support and enhance learning, both on a pre-service and in-service level (Borg, 2006, p. 35).

Teacher cognition research essentially concerns what teachers think, know and believe (cf. Borg, 2006). Studies into teacher cognitions have used a broad variety of concepts in reference to the mental constructs in focus. These include beliefs, conceptions, images, knowledge, implicit theories, orientations, and perspectives to name but a few⁴. Unfortunately, the concepts are often used inconsistently and interchangeably and Pajares's (1992) conclusion that the educational research community has been unable to agree upon a common definition, still holds true.

A further issue of debate is whether beliefs can be separated from knowledge. Few would dispute that there is a grey zone between these two concepts and a definite separation is perhaps not possible. Still, beliefs differ from scientific knowledge in the sense that beliefs do not have to submit to the truth criterion (Virta et al., 2001, p. 29) as beliefs represent how an individual sees and experiences the world.

Teachers' cognitions about teaching and learning are generally referred to as educational beliefs (Pajares, 1992; Northcote, 2009). Pajares (1992, p. 324 ff) provides a list of sixteen fundamental assumptions about teachers' educational beliefs. From these assumptions five propositions about the nature and impact of educational beliefs can be drawn.

⁴ A comprehensive overview of concepts and their use in connection to different studies is presented in Borg, 2006, pp. 36-39.

First of all, beliefs play an important part in learning as they help us perceive and interpret the world around us. Calderhead and Shorrock (1997, p. 180 ff) found that student teachers' images of teaching and images of themselves as teachers influenced what they learnt and how they developed during teacher education. The researchers noted that student teachers who did not express a clear image had trouble dealing with and finding their own way around all the new things they encountered.

Secondly, beliefs held by an individual are not necessarily mutually consistent. In a study examining student teachers' educational beliefs, Northcote (2009) found that "participants held opposing, competing or conflicting educational beliefs about the same issue at the same time" (p. 74). She exemplifies this by saying that participants could express that teachers should monitor and guide students' learning every step of the way, while also claiming that learning processes enable independence. These conflicting beliefs may cause tensions and impede teachers' ability to deal with and find satisfactory solutions to dilemmas they encounter in their work (Kennedy, 1997).

Thirdly, beliefs are also influential in the sense that they are more readily available than cognitive strategies or knowledge structures in situations where teachers are unsure of how to act and what information is needed. The teacher's job is full of such situations where quick decisions and actions are needed and in these kinds of situations the response is often intuitive and based on one's beliefs. This could be one possible explanation to a commonly reported phenomenon where newly qualified teachers, as they enter school after teacher education, often revert back to their own experiences as pupils and use models they have seen their own teachers use, rather than models taught during teacher education⁵ (Paulin, 2008; Nyman, 2009; Zeichner & Gore, 1990).

Furthermore, student teachers' educational beliefs are well established by the time they enter teacher education (cf. Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1995; Kagan, 1992a; Kennedy, 1997; Pajares, 1992). Educational beliefs are principally formed during the many years prospective teachers spend as students in schools⁶ (Bramald et al., 1995; Pajares, 1992). In his seminal study from 1975, Lortie refers to this period as the *apprenticeship in teaching*⁷. As students, prospective teachers have the opportunity to

⁵ See also 2.2.3.

⁶ Beside experiences during the formative years spent in schooling, other life experiences can also influence teachers' views of teaching and teacher learning. These can include experiences of babysitting, experiences of coaching groups of children, parenting or indeed own experiences of teaching prior to formal teacher education (Zeichner & Gore, 1990).

⁷ Lortie (1975) also uses the term *apprenticeship-of-observation*.

observe different teachers in action and based on these experiences they form beliefs about teaching and learning and about what it means to be a teacher. As beliefs formed during the apprenticeship in teaching are based on observations of classroom events from the subjective viewpoint of the student, they can be limited or even misguided. The student can only see what the teacher does and how the teacher reacts but the intentions and pedagogical reasoning behind these actions remain hidden. In line with what they have observed their teachers doing, students may thus conclude that teaching is all about employing a set of methods and techniques and consequently teacher learning involves learning the skills and techniques that the teacher performs. In this way, experiences of schooling bring about a set of beliefs about what should be taught during teacher education but also how this content can be taught, learnt or obtained.

Finally, research has shown that the educational preconceptions are extremely influential and persistent and that they can influence teachers' work and development well into their careers (Kagan, 1992a; Mahlios, Shaw & Barry, 2010). There have been claims that teacher education has no effect and does not impact on these beliefs, as studies have shown that prospective teachers' entering beliefs remain unchanged (Joram & Gabriele, 1997; Kagan, 1992ab). Kagan (1992a) notes, that instead of modifying their beliefs, student teachers tend to assimilate new information provided during coursework into their existing knowledge structures and elements that are incompatible or clash with these beliefs tend to be modified or even ignored. As Kennedy (1997) points out, practices do not necessarily change even if new methods or activities are introduced, since teachers interpret and evaluate what they are taught in light of their preconceptions of classroom situations, teachers and pupils. One can thus say that educational beliefs act as interpretive filters that influence what is learnt from teacher education programmes. Similarly, studies conducted in workplace environments have found that teachers' educational beliefs affect the amount of energy and time vested into different learning opportunities (Tam, 2015).

Despite the many studies testifying to the persistent nature of beliefs, other studies have shown that beliefs can, in fact, be changed. First of all, it has been found that if beliefs are deliberately addressed and worked on in teacher education, they are subject to change (see e.g. Hauge, 2000; Joram & Gabriele, 1997; Wideen et al., 1998). Joram and Gabriele (1997) noted that their students' beliefs in the primacy of field experiences lead them to believe that very little could be learnt from a theoretical course and this belief remained unchanged throughout the course. An intervention was designed for another group of students and it was found that when

prior beliefs were specifically targeted and discussed, the students' perceptions of the course and its significance for their learning changed.

Furthermore, field practice experiences, both in terms of student teaching and work experiences, have been found to impact teachers' beliefs (Kagan, 1992a; Mahlios et al., 2010; Tarman, 2012). Tarman (2012), who studied prospective teachers' beliefs about teaching as a profession, concluded that both positive and negative field experiences provided insights as well opportunities for reflecting on the job, which lead to changes in the teachers' understanding of the job. Similarly, the practice of fellow teachers can also provide valuable insight (Zahorik, 1987 as reported in Kagan 1992a) whereas readings and research findings have not been seen to greatly influence beliefs (Hall & Loucks, 1982 as reported in Kagan 1992a).

In light of the previous discussion, one could easily conclude that changing the conceptions of teacher candidates is a central task in teacher education. This idea is indeed inherent in many studies into teachers' beliefs and sometimes it is even an overtly stated objective (e.g. Kennedy, 1997). Indeed, if student teachers hold beliefs that perpetuate old traditions and thus hinder the development of practices that meet current and future demands, these beliefs need to be changed. What is important, though, is that teacher learning is not equated with belief change. A lack of change in prospective teachers' beliefs during teacher education should not automatically be interpreted as a failure. In cases where a teacher's prior beliefs are in line with the ideas espoused in the teacher education programme, a belief change is perhaps not a likely outcome. In these cases, beliefs may simply be affirmed and elaborated rather than changed (cf. Borg, 2006, p. 64 ff).

1.5 Outline of the thesis

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research topic, background, motives and aims of the study. Since the study focuses on the cognitions of teachers, teacher cognition research is introduced as an overarching theoretical frame in the introductory chapter. It is within this frame that the two phenomena of becoming and being a teacher are scrutinised.

Chapter 2 is divided into two main parts, one on becoming and one on being a teacher, and provides a theoretical frame for understanding and analysing the two phenomena under study. The first part provides an overview of central concepts used in the literature in reference to the process of becoming a teacher, and explains why teacher learning was considered the most appropriate term in connection to this study. Since the study aims to highlight different ways in which teacher learning

can be perceived, a broad framework including seven different perspectives on teacher learning is introduced. The chapter also highlights some central factors that may influence teacher learning, including individual as well as contextual factors. The second part, on being a teacher, focuses issues relevant for understanding and interpreting the teachers' views of the teaching profession. Initially, a historical overview is presented of how the profession has been viewed on a societal level. The chapter also outlines different tasks and functions of the teacher, after which issues pertaining to being an NQT are discussed. The chapter ends with a summary of research into student teachers' and teachers' views of the profession.

Chapter 3 outlines the contextual conditions of the study. First, the central aims and structure of Finnish teacher education is presented, after which specific conditions pertaining to the Finnish school as a place of work are discussed.

In chapter 4, I account for the specific research questions guiding the study as well as its ontological, epistemological and methodological underpinnings. I account for how the empirical study was implemented, including data collection procedures used and the different stages of data analysis. Finally, I discuss issues pertaining to validity and reliability and account for how ethical considerations have guided the process.

In chapter 5, the results of the empirical analysis is presented. The presentation is structured around the three research questions presented in chapter 4. Thus, three main parts can be discerned of which the first focuses on the teachers' cognitions of teacher learning, the second on their cognitions of the teaching profession, and the third on how the views evolve across the different phases.

In chapter 6, the main findings are summarised and discussed in light of the theoretical frame and in relation to previous studies.

Chapter 7 addresses the overarching aim of the study. Consequently, I discuss possible implications of the study when it comes to promoting and supporting teachers' professional development during the early phases of professional learning. Finally, I briefly discuss the methodological procedures used in this study and the possible impact of methodological choices on the results of the study and how these are to be understood. Suggestions for further research are also provided.

2 Becoming and being a teacher

In this chapter, the aim is to place the current study in a theoretical frame, to account for the theories that have shaped my understanding of and subsequently my approach towards the research problem. In keeping with the focus of the study, the chapter is divided into two parts, one on becoming a teacher and one on being a teacher.

2.1 Becoming a teacher

In this chapter, I look more closely at the process of becoming a teacher. As I will demonstrate, becoming a teacher is a complex process that can be approached and understood from a number of different perspectives. The following presentation has thus been informed by research from many different areas of study, such as research and theories of learning, teacher cognition research, studies of teacher knowledge and knowledge growth, studies of teachers' professional identity formation, research on teachers' professional development including teacher preparation, induction and socialisation of new teachers and workplace learning theories.

2.1.1 Approaching the field of interest

Depending on the perspective taken, different concepts have been used in reference to the process of becoming a teacher. The most commonly used concepts are different combinations of the terms *development*, *learning* and *socialisation* (Jordell, 2002). Even if the concepts are sometimes used interchangeably and even inconsistently (Carter, 1990; Jordell, 2002), some common traits in relation to the different concepts can be distinguished.

The concept *learning to teach* was commonly used in the 1980s and into the 1990s. Kagan (1992b, p. 129), in her review of studies on the professional growth among teachers, refers to the studies of the 1980s as learning- to-teach literature and the term was also used in the seminal reviews by Carter (1990) and Wideen et al. (1998). The term is by no means used consistently but two general remarks can be made. First of all, the term implies a narrow focus on the process of becoming a teacher, in light of the fact that being a teacher involves so much more than just teaching. Secondly, the role of teacher education in the process of becoming a teacher is a central issue in these studies and they tend to focus on the early stages of professional learning, that is on pre-service and beginning teachers.

Teacher socialisation or sometimes *professional socialisation* (of teachers) is another commonly used term. According to Jordell (2002, p. 42), the socialisation approach

to becoming a teacher was most prominent in the handbooks he reviewed from the late nineties. As opposed to learning to teach, the concept has a broader scope as it does not just focus on the early stages of professional learning when the student becomes a teacher (Lacey, 1995, p. 616). In their seminal review of teacher socialisation research, Zeichner and Gore (1990) emphasise the complex nature of the process of becoming a teacher as they describe the process as “contradictory and dialectical, as collective as well as individual, and as situated within the broader context of institutions, society, culture and history” (p. 343). Thus, a socialisation approach tends to put the process and experience of becoming a teacher in focus, as well as the socio-cultural or external factors that influence the process (cf. Jordell, 2002, p. 40).

The third concept, *professional or teacher development* (e.g. Eraut, 1994; Glatthorn, 1995), focuses less on the mechanisms of change but rather on the outcomes of the process (Jordell, 2002, p.60). In other words, what is it that is acquired or learnt? There is a large body of literature today using the term professional development but for the current purposes, the term is not entirely appropriate. First of all, the concept is often used in reference to workplace learning or development that occurs after initial teacher education, which makes it a bit too narrow in scope. Secondly, the term is not used consistently, as it sometimes refers only to formally organised learning opportunities and interventions (cf. Eraut, 1994; Glatthorn, 1994).

Along with professional development, the term *teacher learning*⁸ has gained prominence in more recent literature. The term is used by influential writers in the field such as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999); Day and Gu (2010); Feiman-Nemser (2008); Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald and Zeichner (2005); Putnam and Borko (2000) and Shulman and Shulman (2004). The teacher learning perspective places emphasis on the learning aspect of becoming a teacher, in terms of how it is done, what is being learnt, where this learning can take place and under what circumstances. Even if the concept principally consists of similar elements as the term *learning to teach*, it has a much broader scope. Becoming a teacher is not just about learning how to teach, it is about learning how to be a teacher with all which that involves. In line with this, Feiman-Nemser’s (2008) thematic framework of teacher learning illustrates that teachers develop along different but interconnected dimensions. The first dimension, learning to *think* like a teacher, focuses on the intellectual work of teaching and teacher learning. The second dimension, learning to *know* like a teacher, highlights

⁸ Alongside *teacher learning* the tem *professional learning* is also widely used (see e.g. Feiman-Nemser 2001; Sachs, 2016)

the different kinds of knowledge a teacher needs to develop. The third dimension, learning to *feel* like a teacher, links personal and professional development, as it focuses on the highly emotional business of identity formation and development. Finally, learning to act like a teacher focuses on the development of “a repertoire of skills, strategies and routines and the judgment to figure out what to do when” (p. 699).

For the current purposes, the umbrella term, *teacher learning*, seems the most appropriate. In my view, the term is broad enough to allow for a sufficiently comprehensive and holistic approach, informed by current learning theories. Consequently, teacher *learning* focuses the process of learning, it involves a broad view of areas of development and it is not restricted to a specific learning context.

2.1.2 Perspectives on teacher learning

How does one learn to become a teacher? What processes are involved in teacher learning? Unfortunately, there is no easy, straightforward answer to these questions. Literature on teacher learning abounds with testimonials regarding the complex, multi-dimensional, idiosyncratic and/or context-specific nature of the process of becoming a teacher (see e.g. Flores & Day, 2006; Wideen et al., 1998). Considering that teacher learning can be approached from many different perspectives, each highlighting specific aspects of the process, it is not surprising that no single, commonly agreed upon model of teacher learning has been produced.

For my purposes, a framework was needed that was comprehensive enough to highlight different ways of approaching and perceiving the process. Based on my readings of literature and research on learning and teacher learning in particular, I was able to identify and distinguish between a number of different perspectives of the process. The model presented in Figure 1 is thus my compilation and synthesis of approaches highlighted in the literature in the field and I have chosen a design that mirrors the complex and multi-dimensional nature of the process. Consequently, the model consists of seven perspectives on teacher learning, constructed as dual orientations or binary pairs. Each pair represents a particular perspective or dimension of teacher learning and the two concepts at either end of the continuum represent different approaches in terms of the dimension in question.

1. learning as transmission	↔	learning as knowledge construction
2. technical approach	↔	inquiry-oriented approach
3. learning from theory	↔	learning from practice
4. learning from primary experience	↔	learning from secondary experience
5. learning as a cognitive process	↔	learning as activity
6. learning as an individual process	↔	learning as a social process
7. learning as personal development	↔	learning as professional development

Figure 1. Perspectives on teacher learning.

Each orientation focuses on specific aspects of teacher learning and involves a specific conception of how teacher learning occurs. Depending on the orientation chosen, different approaches to teacher learning and different learning processes come into question. Even if the orientations represent opposing views, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. This means, for example, that a person may view teacher learning either as an individual or a social process or as a combination of the two.

Learning as transmission versus learning as knowledge construction

The first binary pair highlights the question of knowledge acquisition and whether knowledge is essentially transmitted to the learner or constructed by the learner. *Learning as transmission*, is sometimes referred to as the “traditional” approach, where the knowledge base needed by the teacher is provided by experts within the field who are then responsible for conveying this knowledge to the learner (cf. e.g. Cochran-Smith, 2000, 2003). The learner’s role becomes that of a listener or a follower, dependent on the teacher or lecturer to provide the necessary knowledge⁹.

At the other end of the continuum, we have *learning as knowledge construction*. This view is in line with constructivist approaches that involve the learner in the process of knowledge construction. Instead of being provided with a set body of knowledge, the learner has a more active role in the learning process. According to this approach, knowledge is developed and constructed through active engagement with the environment. The environment can include learning material or experiences that the learner processes and reflects on, individually or together with others.

⁹ Cf. *the knowledge for practice approach* of Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) and *the academic orientation* of Feiman-Nemser (1990)

The technical versus the inquiry oriented approach

The second binary pair highlights technical versus inquiry-oriented approaches to learning. This dichotomy is highlighted in the writings of John Dewey¹⁰ (1904/2008) and Donald Schön (1987) among others. According to *the technical approach*, learning involves adopting a set of strategies, techniques and procedures that can be applied and used in teaching. The focus is on learning the necessary skills and techniques for the job and the aim is to develop what Bransford, Derry, Berliner, Hammerness and Beckett (2005) call *routine expertise*. According to this view, teacher learning becomes a matter of technical training (cf. Schön, 1987, p.39) with the aim of acquiring basic classroom skills needed to carry out a lesson. These skills are often linked to a specific teaching context, which means that student teachers need to develop a repertoire of different routines and techniques that can then be employed in different situations. These skills can be learnt from methodology courses in TE, but the role of the practicum is often highlighted (cf. Schön 1987, Dewey 1904/2008), where the skills can be obtained through observing competent performers, and further developed by using and applying them in a practice context.

Calderhead and Shorrock (1997, p. 165) found the technical view to be the most common among the two groups of prospective primary school teachers they investigated. Other studies have also found that student teachers tend to focus on their own performance and development of routine in the classroom, rather than on other central aspects in the teaching situation, such as pupils' behaviour or learning (Eisenschmidt, Kasesalu, Löfström & Anspal, 2010; Hollingsworth, 1989; Kagan 1992b). This initial focus on development of routine and technique can be seen to reflect a necessary developmental phase in teacher learning. This became apparent in a study by Hollingsworth (1989), where only student teachers who had developed sufficiently automated teaching routine, were able to free attentional capacity to focus on pupils and their learning. Bransford et al. (2005, p. 57) draw parallels between learning to teach and learning to drive a car. In the beginning, as one is learning to drive, every action taken requires a great deal of attention- the wheel has to be turned, gears have to be shifted, turns need to be signalled - and it is difficult, if not impossible, to focus on anything else. However, as driving becomes more automated and the different actions more fluent and coordinated, the ability to

¹⁰ Dewey (1904/2008) is essentially concerned with distinguishing between two approaches to learning from practice. *The apprentice approach*, where learning is a matter of being provided with and adopting a set of techniques and skills, is equivalent to the technical approach. Then again, the *laboratory approach* focuses on providing the learners with the necessary tools for reflection and understanding of practice. The latter is equivalent to the inquiry approach and Dewey feels that this is where most of the effort should be placed in education, as specific skills can be learnt on the job.

multitask increases. In line with this, Berliner¹¹ (1988, 1995) expresses that novice teachers are preoccupied with trying to identify and discriminate the elements and rules that govern practice and he suggests that novices benefit from learning concrete rules such as ‘never criticise a student’ and ‘give praise for the right answer’.

At the same time, a purely technical approach towards teacher learning can be very limiting. In order to deal with the complexities of the classroom, skills and techniques are necessary but a teacher also needs to know when to use the different techniques and for what reasons (Feiman-Nemser, 2008, p.699). A sole focus on skills and techniques without an understanding of the theoretical underpinnings connected to the techniques, may thus lead to a situation where teaching becomes a matter of going through the motions and not a matter of trying to enhance pupils’ learning (Holt-Reynolds, 2000, 29ff). Furthermore, there is a danger that teachers believe that once they reach a sufficient mastery of skills and techniques, their learning is done and they see no need to develop further (Bransford et al., 2005, p.50).

As opposed to the technical approach, the *inquiry-oriented approach* highlights the process rather than the product of learning. Here, teacher learning is a matter of learning how to learn or as Schön (1987) puts it, learning “the forms of inquiry by which competent practitioners reason their way, in problematic instances, to clear connections between general knowledge and particular cases” (p. 39). Furthermore, learning as inquiry has a strong practice orientation and can be seen as a form of practical problem-solving (cf. Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, p. 187) but with a research-oriented approach involving reflection, identifying patterns, employing and connecting various knowledge domains, and evaluating and choosing among possible alternatives in order to reach an explanation and a plan for action. It has been argued that this combined activity of working, learning and reasoning is an essential part of the teacher’s job (Kansanen, Tirri, Meri, Krokfors, Husu & Jyrhämä, 2000) and Kansanen and his colleagues use the term *teachers’ pedagogical thinking* to signify that thinking in an educational context has special, pedagogical qualities.

Learning as inquiry incorporates the lifelong learning perspective as it highlights continuous development. The aim is to develop *adaptive expertise*, which involves being open and willing to try out new approaches and being able to respond to unexpected situations in flexible ways (cf. Feiman-Nemser 2008, p. 703; Bransford et al., 2005, p. 48ff). Equally important, is the ability to let go of previously learned

¹¹ Berliner’s (1988) theory of the development of expertise includes five stages on the road to becoming an expert teacher: *novice*, *advanced beginner*, *competent*, *proficient* and *expert*. According to Berliner’s theory, student teachers, but also many first-year teachers, are novices.

ideas and routines to incorporate new information into one's practice. Learning thus involves recognising a need for change, and in order to evolve and improve one has to decide which ideas and practices to abandon and which to keep, modify or develop further in an ongoing process (cf. Hammerness et al., 2005, p. 363).

Learning from theory versus learning from practice

The third binary pair is made up of *the theory-practice dichotomy*, which has been identified as an integral part of student teachers' views and experiences of teacher learning (Virta et al., 2001). It also constitutes a well- documented field of tension within literature relating to teacher learning and teacher education (e.g. Allen & Wright, 2014; Bengtsson, 1993; Brouwer & Korthagen, 2005; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Dewey, 1904/2008; Hansén, Forsman, Aspfors & Bendtsen, 2012; Klette & Hammerness, 2016). Sometimes the two concepts are viewed as diametrically opposite to one another, resulting in views where one is given prevalence at the expense of the other. Hansén et al. (2012, p.17) describe the phenomenon as a tension between two cultures, the culture of practice and the culture of academia. The former is rooted in the apprentice tradition and regards practice as the key to development whereas the latter claims that theory is necessary for understanding and successfully utilising what is learnt through practice. This dichotomous relationship is reflected in the commonly held view that theory is dealt with during university coursework and practice is what goes on in the classroom (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 290 ff).

Another way of approaching the elements of theory and practice is to look at them as separate but interrelated parts of the same totality and researchers today emphasise the intricate connection between these two elements (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Klette & Hammerness, 2016; Shulman, 2004). From this viewpoint, teacher learning requires both an understanding of the processes behind teaching and learning (theory) and an ability to perform in the classroom (practice). From such a perspective, teacher learning can be seen either as a process whereby theory is applied into practice or a process whereby theory is generated out of practice. Richards (2010, p. 115 ff) uses the term *application of theory* in reference to the former process and he explains that it involves connecting between and applying the concepts, information and theories from university coursework into classroom practice. However, this process is not as straightforward as may seem at first glance and two seminal reviews of research about teacher learning in the 1990s revealed that student teachers were not able to connect and integrate what they had learnt during university coursework with their experiences in the classrooms (Kagan, 1992b; Wideen et al., 1998). This finding lead Kagan (1992b, p. 162 ff) to strongly

question the compatibility of abstract theory and the practice context and even the relevance of theory for teacher learning. Then again, Wideen et al. (1998, p.160 ff.) drew the conclusion that student teachers' failure to utilise theory was more a question of how teacher education programmes were organised, rather than the result of an intrinsic incompatibility of the two elements.

The question of how scientific knowledge can be integrated into practice is elaborated by Bengtsson (1993), who proposes two conditions for integrating theory into practice. The first condition concerns recognition, in other words, that the learner is able to "recognize himself and his practice in the theoretical knowledge about it" (p.6). If the learner is unable to see this connection, the theoretical knowledge will have no effect on practice. We can easily see how this can be a problem in initial teacher education, where many student teachers have very little experience of the practice context from a teacher's point of view and thus have very limited possibilities of connecting to the practice context. Furthermore, the symbolic representation characteristic of abstract theory may not be easily connected with real world phenomena. As Bengtsson points out, the more abstract and systematised the theory, the greater the effort must be of ensuring recognition.

The second condition, pointed out by Bengtsson (1993), is that theoretical knowledge needs to be put into practice. Bengtsson here describes a kind of trial and error procedure, whereby the learner eliminates the distance between theory and practice by putting his understanding of the theoretical knowledge into practice. With training and repeated practice, the theoretical knowledge becomes an integrated part of the learner's way of acting and the learner will then be acting with skill.

Eraut (2004b) further recognises that applying knowledge from one context to another also requires transformation of the relevant knowledge, to fit the new situation. Theoretical knowledge that is abstract and generalised is indeed applicable to a broad variety of situations but it can never be applied as such into a specific situation. Theory is essentially information *about* practice rather than practical knowledge and in a concrete teaching situation, propositional knowledge must be transformed into procedural knowledge (Carter, 1990, p.306; Jarvis, 2004, p. 285). This transformation is complex and Eraut (2004b) stresses that the learner first needs a thorough understanding of the situation at hand in order to be able to determine what knowledge is of relevance. Secondly, the knowledge must then be transformed to fit the specific situation and integrated with other knowledge and skills in order to be applied in the new situation. Eraut (2004b) uses the term *transfer* for the previously described learning process, when knowledge, skills and

competences acquired in one context are applied in another context. Transfer and the application of theory involve similar processes but transfer has a bigger scope, as it involves skills and competences and not just theoretical knowledge. Moreover, transfer is not limited to the application of theory into practice but can also occur between two practice settings, for instance between one teaching situation and another.

Researchers have also recognised the significant role of time when it comes to the application of theory into practice (Eraut, 2004b). The complex processes involved require time for the learner to reflect on both the situation and the available theoretical resources.

The second process connecting the domains of theory and practice involves generating theory from practice or the *theorizing of practice*. There is a large body of literature today claiming that in order to deal with real-world practice, the ability to apply theory into practice will not suffice. As Schön (1987, p. 4ff) explains, real world cases are messy constructs where different factors influence the outcome in intricate ways. Therefore textbooks and theories fall short when it comes to dealing with these “indeterminate zones of practice”, as Schön (1987, p.6) calls them. This is where theorizing of practice comes in, which is a process that involves reflecting on one’s experiences and practices in order to reach a higher level of understanding. The results of these reflections can take different forms. They may be in the form of explanations as to why something occurs or generalisations about the nature of things or principles that then guide and inform one’s future actions (Richards, 2010, p. 116).

Theorizing from practice is essentially an ability that needs to be developed in practice. It is a learning process where the key ingredients are learning by doing and reflection. This ability can be developed during ‘the reflective practicum¹²’, which can be described as a secure setting where learners have the freedom to experiment and learn by doing, while being helped by a coach to reflect in and on action. Whereas *reflection on action* involves thinking back on what has occurred, *reflection in action* is reflection at a time when the action is still going on (Schön, 1987, p. 26ff). During the reflective practicum, the process of reflection is not just an internal activity where one evaluates and reviews one’s experiences but also an interactive process in the form of a dialogue between the learner and the coach and even between learners, if there is more than one learner involved. The interactive dimension of reflection can also be a form of learning at the workplace. As Shulman

¹² Donald Schön’s term, *the reflective practicum*, is elaborated in his work *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (1987)

and Shulman (2004) point out, teachers can collaborate and reflect with colleagues in a community of practice (cf. *learning as a social process* below).

Theorizing from practice can thus be an important key to learning and developing in an ever-changing context and reflection is found at the heart of this process. Teachers need to reflect in and on their practice and learn from that, but equally essential are the metacognitive processes of reflecting on and regulating one's own learning processes. As has been pointed out, all forms of reflection require close affinity to the context of practice but at the same time, a certain amount of distance is also important in order to be able to see things more "objectively" and from different perspectives (cf. Ojanen & Lauriala, 2006, p. 80).

Learning from primary experience versus learning from secondary experience

The fourth binary pair highlights the distinction between primary and secondary experiences. Peter Jarvis (2004) defines *learning from primary experience* as "learning in a practical situation where individuals are learning through their sense experiences, as well as through their minds. They are learning to experience an actual situation and to learn from it" (p. 97). In the literature, the term *experiential learning* is often used as a synonymous expression for this form of learning in a natural setting. As Stephen Brookfield (1983, p.16) points out, this is how most of our learning is done in everyday life. Two important caveats need to be made here in connection to teacher learning. First of all, experience in itself does not necessarily constitute learning. As Dewey (1938) remarks, "It is not enough to insist upon the necessity of experience, nor even of activity in experience. Everything depends upon the *quality* of the experience which is had" (p. 16. emphasis in original). In other words, length of experience does not necessarily equal qualitatively rich experience (Day & Gu, 2010, p. 28) and simply having experience does not guarantee that one has learnt from it (Shulman, 2004). Shulman (2004) illustrates his point by saying that there are two kinds of teachers, those with 20 years of experience and those with 1 year of experience 20 times (p. 506). Secondly, learning from primary experience is a relatively time-consuming process. As a natural context is always both specific and complex, the learner will need prolonged, repeated exposure in order to be able to generalise from collective experiences. As Brookfield (1983) explains, "in experiential learning events have to be repeated many times before inductive generalization occurs" (p. 18).

In a primary experience, the learners experience the phenomenon or situation themselves and this distinguishes learning from primary experience from *learning from secondary experience*. For the latter, Jarvis (2004, p. 99) also uses the term *mediated experience* to signify that here learners are not directly involved with the

phenomenon of study but the experience is being mediated or communicated to them, for example through a teacher giving a lecture, a book, or other forms of media. In secondary experience, learning occurs through communication of meaning (Jarvis, 2004, p. 100). This is a process where the speaker (or writer) first interprets a phenomenon and assigns meaning to it. When the message is communicated to the listeners (or readers), they, in turn, decode the message and interpret it and assign their own meanings to it, in light of their personal frames of reference. Two important conclusions can be drawn from this. First of all, learning from secondary experience is by no means a passive form of learning. In order to understand and generate meaning from what is communicated to us, we need to interpret what is being said. Secondly, since everyone interprets what they hear or see based on their own frames of reference, this means that what the teacher intends to teach during a lecture is not necessarily what the students learn, especially if their frames of reference are very different from that of the teacher. In a sense then, learning from secondary experience is learning from somebody else's experience and more importantly, learning from another person's interpretation of an experience or a phenomenon. For this reason, Jarvis points out that it is always important to be critical towards and reflect on what is being learnt through secondary experience.

Learning as a cognitive process versus learning as activity

The fifth binary pair is made up of the relationship between *cognitive and behavioural processes* in teacher learning. Does learning occur as a result of internal (mental) processes or as a result of external, active engagement? David Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning combines and differentiates between these two learning processes and he stipulates that learning requires some way of grasping or figuratively representing an experience, as well as a way of transforming that representation (Kolb, 1984, p 42). Kolb (1984) visualises the process of experiential learning as a four-stage cycle involving four adaptive learning modes – *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation* (p.40).

The apprehension of concrete experience, on the one hand, and the abstract conceptualization of an experience, on the other hand, form two dialectically opposed processes of grasping experience in the world. Apprehension involves grasping and experiencing a situation through the senses. It is a registrative process of an almost "pre-cognitive" character as it relies on the tangible, felt qualities of an experience. Learning of this kind results in *tacit knowledge*¹³ and intuitive behaviour

¹³ The term *tacit knowledge* originates from Polanyi (1966), who used it to describe things that we know but are unable to consciously relate (see Eraut, 1994, p. 15).

guided by affective judgement rather than cognitive reasoning (Kolb, 1984, p. 50). Tacit knowledge, is more or less synonymous with what Nonaka and Toyama (2003) and Niemi (2009) call implicit knowledge, and refers to knowledge that is acquired without us consciously thinking about it. For instance, routines are a part of tacit knowledge. Nonaka and Toyama (2003) emphasise that tacit knowledge is acquired only through direct experience. The second process in Kolb's theory, abstract conceptualization or comprehension, is a cognitive process whereby our perceptions are shaped, focused and organised through symbolic representation and conceptual interpretation. This is, in other words, how tacit knowledge becomes explicit so that it can form the basis for new knowledge. These two processes form what Kolb refers to as the *prehension dimension*, where concrete experience (apprehension) and abstract conceptualization (comprehension) represent two dialectically opposed adaptive orientations (p.41).

Besides prehension, Kolb identifies a second dimension of learning that he calls *transformation*. This dimension also contains two dialectically opposed processes that now serve the purpose of transforming what has been grasped through experience into knowledge. The transformation dimension includes internal reflection (reflective observation) and active external manipulation of the outside world (active experimentation). Thus, in order to create meaning from an experience, a learner needs to reflect on the experience and/or act on the experience and in that way extend it (p. 52). Acting can involve transforming an idea into physical action but it can also involve articulating our knowledge in a dialogue with others (cf. Nonaka & Toyama, 2003). The two processes of transformation can be separated in theory but in reality they closely interact.

Applied to the context of teacher learning, *the experiential learning cycle* described above can be exemplified as follows. The teacher experiences a situation (concrete experience), the teacher then reviews and reflects on that experience (reflective observation) and draws conclusions based on the reflections (comprehension). The teacher then decides to act on or try out what has been learnt so far in the process (active experimentation) and this forms a new experience that can then be subject to new analysis.

The model highlights the importance of different kinds of learning experiences and the fact that a combination of different kinds of learning processes can enhance the quality of learning. From the perspective of teacher education, it is also important to point out that different learning environments are conducive to different forms of learning. Kolb (1984, p. 197 ff) recognises four types of learning environments that each emphasise specific modes of learning. *The affectively complex learning*

environment places emphasis on the experiencing of concrete events. For student teachers, this would involve engaging in activities that mirror their future work and experiencing what it is like to be a professional teacher. *The perceptual environment* focuses observation and understanding. This could involve encouraging student teachers to closely examine and look at a teaching situation from different perspectives in order to inform their own. *The symbolic environment* emphasises abstract conceptualisation. A typical lecture would include perceptual but also symbolic orientations. Finally, *the behavioural environment* places emphasis on actively applying knowledge or skills in situations with real consequences. This could involve teaching a class of pupils during teaching practice. From this follows that teacher education should strive to create complex rather than one dimensional learning environments. It would thus be unfortunate to restrict different practices to include only certain kinds of learning environments. In other words, a lecture can be symbolically and perceptually oriented but it can also include affective and behavioural orientations. A methodology class, for instance, could include the lecturer using the techniques and methods in question, rather than just talking about them. The lecturer would then be acting as a role model involving the students in concrete experience. The behavioural orientation could involve students actively discussing how a particular problem could be solved or acting out a simulation or demonstration, where a specific method is applied in practice.

Learning as an individual process versus learning as a social process

The sixth binary pair concerns whether teacher learning is understood as an individual or a social process. Both perspectives are represented in literature on learning and on a general level, current theories can be placed on a continuum between these two influential approaches (cf. van Lier, 2000, p. 254). On the one end, we have the constructivist, or cognitive, approaches that place an emphasis on how the individual constructs knowledge and the cognitive (internal) processes involved in learning. On the other end, we find the social-constructivist, or situative perspectives where the social and contextual processes of learning are focused. According to the latter view, knowledge is socially constructed in a process that involves the sharing and fusion of ideas, knowledge, experiences and resources as individuals collaborate and work together.

Constructivist notions of teacher learning emphasise that teachers need to be active agents when it comes to their own development. This involves taking responsibility for one's own learning, initiating development and actively engaging in experimentation and inquiry. Studies of workplace learning particularly emphasise the role of agency, confidence and commitment (Tynjälä, 2013; Eraut, 2004).

Workplaces can afford opportunities for learning and development, but individuals still have to seek out and elect to actively engage in these opportunities. Commitment to learning and self-confidence have been identified as salient factors influencing workers' willingness to take advantage of available learning opportunities (Eraut, 2004; Tynjälä, 2013). In a longitudinal study of 11 language teachers' professional development process, Ruohotie-Lyhty (2011) found the teachers' agency to be a decisive factor in the process of professional development. The majority of teachers in the study complied with the dominant norms and restrictions of the environment and constructed their teaching practices accordingly. Ruohotie-Lyhty found that the teaching methods and practices of these teachers differed considerably from their teaching ideals. Then again, the four teachers that adopted an active and critical stance towards the environment were seen to actively develop their teaching and their relationships to other teachers and pupils. Ojanen and Lauriala (2006) see the development of a personal responsible attitude as a prerequisite for developing a reflective stance towards one's work and Shulman (2004, p. 514) stresses that active involvement leads to authentic and enduring learning.

The idea of the teacher taking charge of their own learning is also highlighted in the concept *active learning*. Active learning practices and obstacles have been evaluated within the framework of a larger Finnish evaluation project called *Effectiveness of Teacher Education* (see e.g. Niemi & Tirri, 1996). The results showed that the student teachers highly valued their experiences of active learning during teacher education but at the same time they criticised the fact that for the most part, they had not been taught through active learning methods¹⁴ (Niemi, 2002). Other central concepts in connection to adult education also highlight the active role of the learner, for example *self-directed learning*, *autonomous learning*, and *self-development* (cf. Brookfield, 1983, p. 22). It is important to note that while these forms of learning highlight the role of the learner as an active agent and aim for individual development, they do not rule out the possibility of cooperation. As Garrison (1997, p.19) points out, the individual takes responsibility for constructing meaning but may opt to include the participation of others to inform that process. In fact, studies have shown that collaborating with others can enhance teachers' individual developmental efforts (Niemi, 2011; Raymond, Butt & Townsend, 1992).

¹⁴ In a follow-up study conducted some fifteen years later, Niemi (2011) concluded that active learning methods (including e.g. peer discussions and problem solving, independent work on assignments, opportunities for knowledge application, and self-evaluation) had become more commonly applied in TE over the years.

The individualistic aspects of becoming a teacher are highlighted in Lortie's (1975) study of the socialisation of teachers into the workplace. He concludes that socialisation into teaching seems largely to be a matter of self-socialisation, as the teachers stressed personal development through experiences rather than collective learning and the sharing of knowledge among colleagues. Similar results are echoed in later research by Flores and Day (2006). Raymond et al. (1992), drawing on the results of a long-term project examining teacher development, conclude that the usual state of professional development involves the teacher working alone without much collaboration with peers (see also Heikkinen et al., 2015, p.30).

Especially in connection to teacher learning at the workplace, the social and collective forms of learning tend to dominate more recent literature (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Hammerness et al., 2005; Sachs, 2016; Shulman & Shulman, 2004; see also Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Flores, 2015). As Fenwick (2008, p.19) points out, the concept of a learning organisation that started to emerge in the literature in the early 1990s, along with Wenger's (1998) model of learning in communities of practice, has had far reaching influence. Wenger (2009) places focus on learning as active participation in the practices of social communities. Active participation, according to Wenger, has a dual focus, that of actively engaging in social practices but also that of contributing to the practices of the communities (p. 213). Thus, learning becomes a joint venture towards a common goal, rather than an individual pursuit.

Inherent in the conception that teacher learning occurs as social interaction within communities, is the view that members of the community are seen as fellow learners and researchers on the common practices. Expertise is something that develops collectively in an ongoing process, rather than something that separates the experienced teacher from the novice (cf. Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 278). The aim of the learning process is thus to increase the level of attainment of all members of the community¹⁵.

According to Kwakman (2003, p. 152), the assumptions behind the call for collaborative practices in teacher learning are that dialogue and interaction are important means of learning. Especially in connection to workplace learning, the learning culture and sense of community created through collaboration is assumed to form a context that is conducive to development and further learning.

¹⁵ Cf. Sachs's (2016) term *activist professionalism* where learning occurs as teachers work collectively to transform and develop their practices from within.

The learning theorist Knud Illeris (2004; 2009) proposes that the individual and social approaches can be seen as complimentary rather than dialectically opposite. He emphasises that learning processes involve the interplay between what he calls the external, interactive dimension and the internal dimension. In other words, as the learners interact with their social, cultural or material environment, they also actively reflect on and process their experiences.

Learning as personal development versus learning as professional development

The seventh and final binary pair concerns whether teacher learning is seen as a matter of personal or professional development.

Becoming and being a teacher inevitably involves personal development. Teacher learning involves the teacher both as a subject (the agent that through various measures instigates the development or change) and an object (the one that is being changed). Additionally, the act of teaching also requires personal involvement to the extent that it is sometimes difficult to separate the person from the professional. As Clandinin and Huber (2005) explain, the personal and the professional in teachers' lives are interwoven: "who they are becoming as people is intertwined with who they are becoming as teachers" (p. 56).

One of the central pursuits of teacher learning identified in the literature is the development of a teacher identity¹⁶ (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Flores & Day, 2006; Kagan, 1992b; Mayer, 1999). Developing a sense of oneself as a teacher is a complex task, involving the integration of the personal and professional side of becoming a teacher (Aspelin & Persson, 2008; Beijaard et al., 2004; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Clandinin & Huber, 2005; Eteläpelto & Vähäsantanen, 2006).

In their review of literature on teachers' professional identity, Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) point out that identity is not a fixed attribute of a person but an ongoing process where internal and external, contextual influences interact. They found that the process often has the character of a struggle, since it involves having to make sense of varying and sometimes competing perspectives, expectations, and roles that (student) teachers have to confront and come to terms with, as they try to construct their own image of self as teacher.

The development of a teacher identity is identified by Kagan (1992b) as a basic developmental task during the pre-service and first-year experiences (p. 155). She

¹⁶ Different concepts with slightly different scope are used in the literature to refer to this process, e.g. *teachers' professional identity* (Beijaard et al., 2004), *the professional self* (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002), *development of self-as-teacher* (Conway & Clark, 2003), *teaching identity* (Mayer, 1999)

stresses that learning of self and understanding of classrooms and pupils develop interdependently, in a progression from the inside out, as teachers initially focus attention on themselves and then gradually shift their focus to the design of the instruction and finally attention is focused on pupils' learning. The progression from the inside out that Kagan describes follows a model initially identified by Fuller (1969) and later developed by Fuller and Bown (1975). Whereas Kagan found support for this progression in the research she reviewed, the Fuller model has also been heavily criticised for being too simplistic. Watzke (2007), for example, found that developmental concerns are recurring, ongoing and evolving rather than progressing in lock step from one stage to another. Conway and Clark (2003) found that even if they could identify patterns where student teachers' concerns and aspirations moved outward, as suggested by Fuller, there was also a simultaneous inward development with heightened reflexivity and attention to development of self-as-teacher during the internship. In line with this, Calderhead and Shorrock (1997) also noted a growing emphasis on the personal dimension of teacher learning among the student teachers in their study. The student teachers struggled with finding their role as teachers and were concerned about how to integrate their personality with the teaching role. Calderhead and Shorrock emphasise that processes involved in taking on the role of a teacher and acquiring a teaching identity take time.

Researchers have also pointed out that teacher learning and the process of developing a teacher identity involves heavy emotional investment (Day & Sachs, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2008). As highlighted in Feiman-Nemser's¹⁷ (2008) model of teacher learning, part of the process of becoming a teacher is about feeling like a teacher. The student teachers in Calderhead and Shorrock's study (1997) expressed that feeling like a teacher and being at ease in their role had important empowering effects on them. Self-confidence and confidence in your abilities to learn are important elements in any learning process. Whereas positive learning experiences boost one's self-confidence, negative experiences can have the opposite effect. In the case of teacher learning, where the personal investment involved in being a teacher places the (student) teachers in a very vulnerable position, (perceived) negative feedback or response from pupils, peers, parents or supervisors may cause student teachers to lose self-confidence (cf. Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, p. 135). Teacher education programmes can therefore ill afford to ignore the personal and emotional aspects involved in teacher learning.

¹⁷ The model is described in chapter 2.1.1, pp. 13-14

2.1.3 Factors influencing teacher learning

An important reason as to why the progress and outcomes of teacher learning are difficult to predict is that there are many factors that influence the process. Furthermore, the influence of individual factors is difficult to measure, as these interact in intricate ways and depending on the situation, different factors may have greater or smaller impact. It is neither possible nor necessary to identify every single factor that may be of influence, but a basic framework of major sources of influence is needed. Zeichner and Gore (1990) group the factors influencing teacher learning¹⁸ into influences prior to formal teacher education, the role of pre-service education and the role of the workplace and the culture of the workplace. In the following presentation, I have chosen to group the influencing factors in line with Zeichner and Gore's three part model with one slight modification. Since their model places specific emphasis on the contexts of learning and how these influence development in different ways, the role of learner related factors, included in other models (see e.g. Glatthorn, 1995), has been downplayed. Since learning essentially occurs in interplay between the learner and the context, I feel that both elements need to be included. Thus the presentation initially focuses the role of learner related factors after which conditions affecting learning in teacher education and conditions affecting workplace learning, respectively, are considered.

The role of learner related factors

When it comes to the role of learner related factors in teacher learning, the impact of learner cognitions cannot be ignored. Since the role of teachers' cognitions is discussed more extensively in chapter 1.4, I will here confine myself to saying that how teachers believe they will learn, what they consider important to learn and what they recognise as learning opportunities, will affect how and what they learn both in teacher education and in the workplace. As Päivi Tynjälä (2013, p. 15) points out, it is not the learner variables or contexts of learning as such that affect learning, but rather how the learners' interpret and view the circumstances. How do they view themselves as learners and how do they perceive their learning environments, what affordances and constraints do they recognise?

As Illeris (2004, p. 435) points out, human beings do not function as computers, where input leads to predictable, additive output. Instead, human learning is influenced by cognitive and emotional elements connected to individual learners,

¹⁸ In their review, Zeichner and Gore use the concept *teacher socialisation* rather than *teacher learning*, but since their approach to becoming a teacher is very comprehensive, and the influencing sources of a sufficiently general nature, I feel their framework is applicable here as well.

such as motivation, understanding, emotion, blockings, resistance and defence. In keeping with this, researchers and theorists have considered the role of differences in learning styles¹⁹ among individuals. Learning styles can be described as a preferred approach to learning that is characteristic of a learner during a certain period (cf. Vermunt & Endedijk, 2011, p. 295; Kolb, 1984, p. 95 ff). According to Vermunt and Endedijk (2011, p.295) research into how students learn have revealed qualitatively different orientations to learning among students. A relatively recent study on pre-service teachers' learning styles found that learning was enhanced when the students met with teaching strategies that responded to their learning preferences (Tulbure, 2012). Kolb (1984) makes an even stronger claim when he says that "Learning environments that operate according to a learning theory that is dissimilar to a person's preferred style of learning are likely to be rejected or resisted by that person." (p. 202)

Kolb's (1984, p. 68 ff.) widely used and empirically validated Learning Style Inventory²⁰ (LSI) identifies individuals' orientation towards four basic learning modes. Those with an orientation towards concrete experience emphasise feeling, values relating to people and being involved in real situations. People with an orientation towards reflective observation emphasise understanding, reflection and observation rather than concrete action. People with an orientation towards abstract conceptualisation like using logic and working with ideas and concepts. Thinking and theory as opposed to feeling and intuitive understanding are emphasised. Finally, an orientation towards active experimentation emphasises doing and practical application rather than observing and reflecting.

Knowles (1982, as cited in Richards & Lockhart, 1994, p. 60) also identifies four different learning styles²¹ that partly overlap with Kolb's orientations. One learning style that is not included in Kolb's model is the authority-oriented learning style.

¹⁹ Recently, learning style theory has been heavily criticised on the grounds that there is no empirical evidence to support it (see e.g. Willingham, Hughes & Dobolyi, 2015). Accordingly, Willingham et al. (2015) found no support for the alleged claims of learning style theory, namely that learning styles are constant qualities (unaffected by content or situation) and that learning is enhanced when we learn in keeping with our own learning style. While I am not contesting these findings, I think we still need to be open towards the possibility of people having different (an possibly evolving) preferences for approaching learning (even if these may not be the optimal way for them to learn).

²⁰ Kolb's LSI has been criticised on the grounds that it proposes that people can exhibit only one learning style. Furthermore, the validity and reliability of the instrument has been questioned (see e.g. Manolis, Burns, Assudani & Chinta, 2013). Nevertheless, as Manolis et al. (2013) point out, Kolb's learning styles are still widely accepted today.

²¹ Knowles learning styles include the concrete, the analytical, the communicative and the authority-oriented learning style.

These kinds of learners thrive in a traditional classroom where there is a clear structure and the teacher instructs and tells them what to do. They do not like consensus-building discussions. In the context of adult learning Jarvis (2004, p. 128) uses the term other-directed (as opposed to self-directed) to refer to learners that seek to become dependent on their teachers. According to Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning, development proceeds from a state of dependence and reaction towards self-direction and independence (p. 140). This would mean that at the beginning of teacher education we can expect student teachers to be dependent or other-directed and to gradually become more self-directed as they learn and progress.

Conditions affecting learning in teacher education

When it comes to the role of teacher education for teacher learning, it is necessary to distinguish between the different contexts where the formal qualification for becoming a teacher takes place. Prospective subject teachers in Finland are socialised into (at least) two different university departments, one where they study their subject(s) and one where they study education. The two disciplines may have different epistemological views about what constitutes knowledge and how knowledge is acquired, which means that they may have very different approaches to teaching and learning. As the prospective teachers initially spend more time at their subject departments, they come to teacher education with specific ideas about what university studies are like. They may thus find it difficult to accept but also adapt to practices that differ between the two contexts.

In fact, learning in teacher education is different from learning in other university contexts. Student teachers are both students and teachers at the same time. They have to focus on their own learning and progress according to the teacher education curriculum, while simultaneously focusing on the learning of their pupils and their progress, in line with the school curriculum. What is taught to them not only has to be understood and learnt for themselves but needs to be reinterpreted and rearranged in order to be taught to the pupils. In other words, the university subject has to be transformed into a school subject. (cf. Hauge, 2000; Loughran, 2006)

Based on the reported learning experience of 20 student teachers attending two different programs, Calderhead and Shorrock (1997, p. 186 ff) identified five different types of learning experiences during teacher education. The first type, knowledge accumulation or the learning of factual information, is generally found across university contexts. The other types of learning are more clearly associated with the job of the teacher and may thus not be forms of learning the teachers have encountered elsewhere. These include performance learning (learning to act as a

teacher in the classroom), practical problem-solving (juggling various interests, opportunities and constraints in order to achieve one's goal), learning about relationships (especially learning to negotiate and maintain relationships with pupils) and processes of assimilation (drawing upon a wide variety of beliefs, values and information and finding a way to integrate these into your work).

A third influential context for formal teacher education is the school context, where the field-based components are located. The role of practical studies in teacher education is determined by how, when and for how long it is organised but also by the underlying principles that guide what student teachers are expected to learn from the experience. If one greatly simplifies matters, one could say that the university based part of teacher education focuses on developing an understanding of the processes behind teaching, whereas learning during the practicum is focused on learning how to perform as a teacher by performing as a teacher. This means that learning in a school context involves different learning processes and learning activities compared to those involved during university coursework (see e.g. the examples above).

One of the fundamental principles underpinning the institution of teacher education is that student teachers need to be able to connect and integrate knowledge acquired in different contexts to a coherent whole. This may be problematic if the focus and goals related to the different learning contexts are very different. Here researchers have stressed the importance of coherence between settings so that what is learnt in one context is further expanded or complimented in another context (Hammerness et al., 2005; Klette & Hammerness, 2016; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). This, of course, highlights the importance of cooperation and mutual insight among teacher educators representing the different learning contexts.

An important feature distinguishing practice teaching from “authentic” teaching practice is that teaching practice is supervised. Studies have shown that mentors have a crucial role in influencing both how the practicum is experienced and consequently what is learnt from it (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Hauge, 2000). Calderhead and Shorrock's (1997, p. 177 ff) study revealed that student teachers have varied expectations of the role of the mentor. Several students found it important to be able to confide in their mentor and get their support, whereas others looked to their mentors for help, guidance and constructive feedback. Some saw their mentors as role models who could demonstrate how to teach. Students felt they could learn from both good and bad examples, as the bad examples provided opportunities for reflection. In some cases, having a brilliant teacher for a mentor was not beneficial

for the students' own development, as it made them less confident about their own abilities and performance.

Other important tasks connected with mentoring in teacher education involve helping students connect between theory and practice, in other words to apply theories in practice as well as to theorize from practice. A further task is that of expanding student teachers' repertoire and guiding them into seeing things they may not yet be able to see for themselves (Hammerness et al., 2005). Studies of teacher expertise have namely shown that experts and novices pay attention to different things in an educational setting. Where the expert, with the help of knowledge drawn from experiences, recognises similarities and notices patterns from which inferences can be drawn, the novice finds it hard to distinguish the trees from the forest and to interpret the blur of impressions (Berliner, 1995, 1988; Hammerness et al., 2005, p. 361). As Hammerness et al. (2005, p. 375) point out, student teachers need support in interpreting their experiences so that they can expand their repertoire rather than infer faulty conclusions based on limited experience.

Conditions affecting workplace learning

Learning in the workplace can include both formal and informal learning opportunities in a variety of settings. By formal learning I mean learning opportunities that are specifically organised and structured to induce learning, whereas informal learning is learning of a more opportunistic, unstructured and even implicit character²². Tynjälä (2008, p. 140) distinguishes three basic modes of workplace learning: 1) incidental and informal learning, 2) intentional, but non-formal learning activities related to work and 3) formal on-the job and off-the-job training. The first mode of learning refers to learning that takes place as a side effect of doing the job, the second mode can involve deliberately practising a skill in a classroom setting, team planning or peer coaching activities, whereas the third mode includes taking part in formally organised professional development activities such as conferences, courses, workshops, or organised forms of mentoring of new teachers. Tynjälä (2008) argues that informal learning on its own does not meet the demands of today's society characterised by rapid knowledge growth (see also Heikkinen et al., 2015). She thus argues that informal and formal learning activities should be employed side by side and that formal training should utilise informal learning (Tynjälä, 2008, p. 140). In this way, tacit knowledge can be turned into explicit knowledge that can then be scrutinised, further developed and shared.

²² For more detailed accounts on the differences between informal and formal learning opportunities see e.g. Eraut, 2004; Tynjälä, 2008.

Learning at the workplace takes place in different settings or contexts and here we can distinguish between the classroom-, the school, and the societal setting²³ as each of these contain their own set of affordances and constraints that can influence teacher learning.

Relationships play a significant role in teacher learning both at the classroom and school level (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Eraut, 2004). On the classroom level, the significant role of pupils is highlighted (Andersson, 2005, p.55). Zeichner and Gore (1990 p. 339) describe the nature of the influence as reciprocal, in that teachers' perceptions of pupils' skills, behaviours and characteristics affect how they approach a situation, for instance, in terms of what method or teaching approach to choose. Similarly, pupils' reactions (or the teacher's interpretations of these reactions) towards the approach chosen, influence whether the teacher feels the intervention was successful or not. Studies have shown that pupils influence teachers' general teaching approach, the type of teaching methods used as well as the frequency of use of different methods (cf. Zeichner & Gore, 1990). In this way, pupils influence how teachers view teaching and what they consider functioning or effective practice.

Since teachers spend much of their time in their classrooms together with their pupils, it is not surprising that the classroom can be an important arena for development and that interactions with pupils are considered important. At the same time, this often means that teachers spend a fair amount of time away from their colleagues, which may hamper cooperation and place even more emphasis on the need for self-development (cf. Pataniczek & Isaacson, 1981).

On the school level, studies have pointed to the significant influence of the school culture on teachers' learning and socialisation into the workplace (Aspfors, Bendtsen & Hansén, 2011; Glatthorn, 1995; Paulin, 2008; Raymond et al., 1992; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). The term *school culture* includes the norms, values and ideas that characterise a particular school (Andersson, Bennich-Björkman, Johansson & Persson, 2003). The shared norms and values are manifested in a particular working climate that, in turn, affects learning. Common characteristics of a positive working and learning climate are openness towards challenges and changes in the work environment and surrounding society, a willingness to learn from and with one another, and willingness to provide and accept support in that process (cf. Eraut 2004, p. 268). The collaborative culture described in the work of Hargreaves and Dawe (1990) and Hargreaves (1998) includes these features, and it is particularly

²³ Glatthorn (1995) distinguishes between five contextual layers: the classroom, the teaching team or department, the school, the school system/district and community/the society. Three of these are focused on here.

emphasised that positive working climates must be managed and upheld from within, as opposed to being externally imposed. A negative working climate, then, could be described as having the opposite characteristics to what has been described above, and typical features include negative interactions among colleagues, conservatism, isolation and resistance towards participatory activities (cf. Aspfors, Bendtsen & Hansén, 2011; Raymond et al., 1992).

Furthermore, the school culture of a single school can, in fact, consist of many different cultures and these cultures may not be entirely compatible, which means that the influences of the workplace and the colleagues may be conflicting (cf. Zeichner and Gore, 1990). This leaves new teachers in a situation where they not only have to struggle with trying to decipher the underlying norms of the school culture but they also have to find a way of dealing with the conflicting messages encompassed within the school culture.

Finally, the wider community and surrounding society also influences teacher learning. The intense pace of change characteristic of postmodern society has also impacted on the working conditions within schools. Hargreaves (1998) uses the term *intensification* to describe the well-documented phenomenon where feelings of exhaustion, inadequacy and frustration are created among teachers as a result of new tasks and responsibilities continuously being added to the teachers' workload, without the provision of adequate time and resources for dealing with the situation. Intensification was found to be a prominent feature in the socialisation process of two newly qualified teachers in a study by Aspfors, Bendtsen and Hansén (2011).

Societal influences can also include how further education is organised for teachers. What kind of courses are available, how frequently are they arranged, is attendance mandatory or optional? For new teachers, the availability of different kinds of mentoring programmes can greatly influence initial workplace experiences (Aspfors, Hansén, Tynjälä, Heikkinen & Jokinen, 2012).

As the theoretical overview shows, teacher learning can be conceptualised and understood in different ways. Thus, if we truly want to understand how the process is perceived by prospective teachers, it is important that the approach chosen is open. By this I mean that the questions addressed to the participants must be open to allow the participants to express their views, but it is also important that the resulting empirical data is approached inductively and not by applying a pre-set

theoretical model²⁴. Seeing that different contexts offer different kinds of affordances and constraints for learning, it is important to be sensitive to the fact that learning in teacher education may be viewed differently from teacher learning in a workplace context.

2.2 Being a teacher

2.2.1 The teaching profession yesterday and today

Views of the teaching profession and the role of the teacher are culturally and socially embedded, which means that teachers' views are affected by the prevalent views of the society where they live (Luukkainen, 2000; Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Välijärvi, 2006). Since societies and cultures constantly evolve, it also means that the work of the teachers and expectations connected to that work fluctuate and evolve over time.

The changing nature of teachers' professionalism is discussed in an article by Hargreaves and Fullan (2010), who identify four broad historical phases. During the *pre-professional age*, the teacher's role was to educate the masses and common teaching methods included lecturing and note-taking, questions and answers. The classroom was the main arena for the teacher, as the job focused around teaching the subject to the pupils and keeping order in the classroom. The basic principles of teaching were learnt through practical apprenticeship and training. Ongoing professional learning was not considered necessary, as it was expected that teachers refine their practices through trial and error processes within their own classrooms.

In the 1970s and 80s, during *the age of the autonomous professional*, the status of teachers improved in many countries as the amount of preparation lengthened. Individualism and isolation characterised the work of the professionally autonomous teacher. The classroom was still the main arena for the teacher. The dominant culture stipulated that good teachers manage by themselves and help was associated with incompetence and weakness. This meant that teachers strived to cope as best they could, in isolation, on their own.

²⁴ In investigating how teachers learn at the workplace, Kwakman (2003) applied a theoretical model derived from literature and the result showed that the model used did not adequately grasp the teachers' perceptions.

By the mid- 1980s, the culture of autonomy became unsustainable due to factors such as expanding knowledge growth, widening curriculum demands, and accelerated pace of change. Teaching became more complex and during *the age of collegial professionalism*, teachers had to learn to teach in new ways. The need for continuous learning is accentuated as well as the need for collegial professionalism, which involves collaborating with, learning from, but also teaching one's colleagues. During this time, the Finnish school went through an organisational change, from being a centrally governed institution towards becoming more locally governed. As teachers were afforded greater responsibility for development and planning, it followed that more tasks were now included in the teacher's job (Niemi, 2006).

The fourth professional age refers to the time at the turn of the millennium and is characterised by far-reaching social, economic, political and cultural changes. Consequently, the arenas for the teacher's work and development are widened. Teachers are now expected to be involved in and committed to school development, as well as in the development of teaching practices. Furthermore, they are expected to cooperate with groups and institutions beyond the schools, such as parents, social workers and other stakeholders.

Looking at the patterns of change described above from a general perspective, one can say that the arena for the teacher has widened to cover responsibilities not just within the classroom but also on the school and societal arena. Furthermore, teachers are no longer confined to solitude and isolation in the classroom but are expected to collaborate with their colleagues as well as with other stakeholders. However, change is a slow process and especially the image of the teacher as an independent worker seems to largely apply even today. The view of the teacher as one who is independent and able to solve problems on his/her own, is still deeply rooted in the Finnish teacher identity (Heikkinen et al., 2015; Välijärvi, 2006). This becomes especially evident in new teachers' experiences (Jokinen et al., 2014). Accordingly, Nyman (2009) found in her study on new teachers that the individualistic school culture the teachers met, provided little support for the new teachers, who needed to be bold enough and take the initiative themselves, in order to get help and support from their colleagues. Other studies have shown that many new teachers experience isolation and even exclusion in the beginning of their careers (Andersson, 2005; Paulin, 2007).

The degree of professional autonomy assigned to the teacher varies widely even within Europe (OECD, 2005). In Finland, the teaching profession is comparatively autonomous and teachers can relatively freely plan, realise and develop their own work, choose teaching methods and teaching materials. Teachers are also highly

involved in the process of compiling and writing curricula, both on a national and local level (cf. FNBE, 2012; Välijärvi 2006). Finnish teachers also enjoy a comparatively high status in Finnish society²⁵, which is reflected in the relatively high number of applicants to teacher education²⁶ (Mahlamäki-Kultanen, 2014; Välijärvi, 2006).

Both in international and Finnish literature, the teacher's job is largely described in terms of a profession (Kari, 1996; Kumpulainen, 2011; Niemi, 2006; Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Sachs, 2016; Välijärvi, 2006). Välijärvi (2006, p. 21 ff.) describes the professional teacher as one who has the ability to act independently and autonomously, while relying on one's own competence and knowledge. Furthermore, it is stressed that the teacher needs to be able to collaborate with others, especially with colleagues but also with pupils, parents and other professionals. The professional teacher is also characterised as being ethically aware, which involves recognising pupils as individuals and working with their best interests at heart. Such a teacher also sees herself as a life-long learner and is open towards change and learning new things. (cf. Jokinen et al., 2014; Kumpulainen, 2014; Taajamo et al., 2014).

2.2.2 The roles and tasks of the teacher

A workable definition of the concept *teaching role* is provided by Diane Mayer (1999), who defines teaching role as “the things a teacher does in performing the functions required of him/her as a teacher”. Biddle (1997) connects teaching role to the characteristic behaviour of teachers, as well as to the perceptions and ideas about such behaviours that are held by teachers and others (p. 505). Mayer, in reference to Britzman (1992), distinguishes between *role* and *identity* and where role refers to function, teaching identity is seen more as a personal attribute, as it concerns how one identifies with being a teacher and how one feels as a teacher. In the words of Britzman (1992, as cited in Mayer, 1999, p. 8), “role speaks to function whereas identity voices investments and commitment”. As Britzman points out, role and identity are in a dialogic relation and often there is a tension between what one does or is expected to do (function) and what one feels or believes one should be doing (beliefs, values). The conflict Britzman is describing is termed *role conflict* in role theory literature (cf. Van Sell, Brief & Schuler, 1981). Role conflict is also

²⁵ In the *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (TALIS) 2013, nearly 60% of the Finnish teachers expressed that their profession is valued in society. The equivalent average of the other thirty-four participating countries was 31% (OECD, 2013), and in Sweden only 5 % of the teachers were of this opinion (Taajamo et al., 2014).

²⁶ Especially to primary school teacher education.

experienced in situations where the different roles of a person are in conflict with one another, for instance, the role of the caretaker, the educator or the member of the school board (cf. Van Sell, Brief & Schuler, 1981). Biddle (1997) offers two additional concepts that are useful for studying new teachers' experiences and views of the profession. *Role ambiguity* is experienced when expectations for one's responsibilities and functions are not clear and *role overload* is experienced when one feels that one is expected to perform too many tasks or responsibilities (p. 504).

Since the teacher's role involves the performance of functions and characteristic behaviours of teachers, it follows that as one is acting in a specific role, one is also performing a specific set of tasks. Next, I will consider the different functions and tasks that the teacher performs, or is expected to perform, as part of the job. It has proven very difficult to come by a comprehensive account of what tasks are included in job of the Finnish teacher. The lack of such accounts is probably connected to the fact that Finnish teachers are seen as autonomous professionals who, with the help of certain guidelines, are expected to take responsibility for identifying what needs to be done and to implement the necessary measures. In line with this interpretation, a brochure intended for NQTs by the Finnish teachers' trade union states that the teacher is responsible for the practical arrangements and organisation of teaching and for the tasks that have been assigned to him or her (*Uuden opettajan opas*, 2012, p. 23). The brochure does give examples of tasks that the school as an institution is responsible for, but how these are to be arranged and what the role of the individual teacher is, in this respect, is not specified. Still, by combining information from several sources²⁷, I was able to compile a basic overview of different tasks of the teacher that I then connected to different levels: the classroom level, the school level, the societal level and the level of professional development.

The classroom level

The task of teaching is perhaps most readily connected with the job of the teacher. In fact, teaching duty is the one task that is clearly identifiable among the different tasks of the teacher, as the number of lessons a Finnish teacher is required to teach is clearly stipulated²⁸. Just like the job of the teacher has evolved over the years, so have

²⁷ These included literature on the teacher's job (e.g. Niemi, 1998; Nummenmaa & Välijärvi, 2006) as well as international (OECD, 2011, 2013) and national reports, brochures and websites about the teacher's work (e.g. Kumpulainen, 2011, 2014; information from the websites of Finnish teachers' trade unions and The Finnish National Board of Education)

²⁸ The teaching duty of Finnish teachers in general education varies between 16 to 24 hours per week. There are no formal requirements regarding time spent on non-teaching activities (OECD, 2011). However, the collective agreement for teachers stipulate that three hours per week are to be spent on tasks other than teaching and pre- and post-teaching tasks (cf. FNBE, 2012).

our perceptions of what teaching is all about and the role of the teacher in that process. Morberg and Fransson (2001, p. 159) point out that the teacher's role in connection to teaching has become complex and difficult to grasp, as focus has shifted from mediation of knowledge to learning, from the teacher as an expert to the teacher as a coach or a mentor, and from looking for set answers to looking for possible solutions (cf. Kumpulainen, 2014; Niemi, 2006; Zuljan & Vogrinc, 2011).

In many respects, the issues Morberg and Fransson (2001) discuss emanate from two opposing views of teaching. Pettersen (2008, p. 51) distinguishes between *material* and *formal theories* of teaching²⁹. The material view places emphasis on the subject or content that is to be learnt and the teacher's role becomes that of a mediator of knowledge and content from the specific field of interest. The teacher's role as a subject expert is emphasised. In contrast to this, the formal view focuses on the pupils' learning processes and their prerequisites for learning the subject. This view is in line with current student-centred learning approaches outlined in *the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2004*³⁰ (henceforth referred to as the NCCBE 2004). According to the NCCBE 2004, the pupils are seen as active learners and the teacher's role is to facilitate and scaffold pupils' learning (cf. NCCBE 2004, chapter 3.1). Steinberg (2004) distinguishes a third approach to teaching that focuses on making the learning process interesting and motivating for the pupils. He uses the Swedish concept *motivationspedagogik*, which directly translates as *motivational pedagogy*. According to this view, the teacher strives to involve and activate the pupils with the aim of getting them motivated for learning.

Beside the more academically oriented aspects of teaching described above, teaching can also include educational aspects³¹. The NCCBE 2004 stipulates that basic education has both an educational as well as an instructional mission (p.12). According to Hansén (1997), the educational aspects of teaching are not so much focused on specific subjects but on the development of the pupil as a whole person (p. 25). Ron Best (1990) uses the term *pastoral care* which, when used in an educational context, can be seen as synonymous to education. Best distinguishes three forms of pastoral care. *Pastoral casework* involves the teacher in a role that is largely comparable to that of a parent. This involves meeting the pupils' need for

²⁹ The two concepts Pettersen uses derive from Bildungs-theory and are usually connected with Wolfgang Klafki. I use the concepts in the sense that Pettersen (2008) and Steinberg (2004) have described them.

³⁰ A new national core curriculum is being introduced in the Finnish schools in August 2016 but at the time of the study, the NCCBE 2004 was still very much in force.

³¹ Here I use the word *education* (and its derivation *educational*) as synonymous with the Swedish term *fostran* and the Finnish term *kasvatus* (cf. Uljens, 1997, p. 18).

security, guidance and/or moral support by getting to know them as individuals, supporting, counselling and guiding them. This aspect is reflected in the NCCBE 2004, for example in the following quote:

Basic education must provide an opportunity for diversified growth, learning, and the development of a healthy sense of self-esteem, so that the pupils can obtain the knowledge and skills they need in life, become capable of further study, and, as involved citizens, develop a democratic society. (p. 12)

Where pastoral casework places the emotional needs of the pupils in focus, *the pastoral curriculum* is concerned with the pupil as a learner. The pastoral curriculum concerns issues connected to the personal and social development of the pupil, as opposed to purely cognitive or academic development. Important objectives include the examination of beliefs, values and feelings, and the development of attitudes. In the NCCBE 2004, we find the following guideline that refers to this particular aspect:

It is also the mission of basic education to create new culture, revitalize ways of thinking and acting, and develop the pupil's ability to evaluate critically. (p.12)

The third form of pastoral care is referred to as *pastoral control*. Pastoral control does not just include instilling order and discipline (i.e. classroom management) but also other means of preparing the pupils for the role of citizens, in line with the norms of the society. This can involve learning how to behave in social situations or participating in joint decision making. Aspects connected to pastoral control are reflected in the following quote from the NCCBE 2004:

In order to ensure social continuity and build the future, basic education assumes the task of transferring cultural tradition from one generation to the next, augmenting knowledge and skills, and increasing awareness of the values and ways of acting that form the foundation of society. (p. 12)

According to Kohonen and Kaikkonen (1998, p. 130), the teacher's job has become more demanding, as inequalities in today's society are transferred into the classrooms (cf. Innola & Mikkola, 2014, p.38). Pupils carry with them the pressures and insecurities from home, which may show as concentration problems, greater unsettlement, and fatigue. This means that the teacher's role becomes something like that of a social worker and there are increasing expectations on teachers to provide pastoral care and cater for pupils' upbringing (Väljjarvi, 2006, p. 21). According to Niemi and Tirri (1997), the teacher of the future is foremost an educator. Hence, their description of what the teacher's work entails includes all three aspects connected to pastoral care.

Linked to the instructional and educational duties on the classroom level, are the task connected to teaching, involving both pre- and post-class work. This includes tasks such as planning of instruction, constructing teaching material, compiling, correcting and grading tests and assignments, assessment of pupils, and so on.

The school level

At the school level, the teacher's duties can include supervisory duties, extra-curricular duties, administrative duties and school development duties. Supervisory duties involve, for instance, recess duty and supervising in the school canteen at lunchtime. These duties are connected to the educational goals of the curriculum. Extra-curricular tasks include planning for school festivities, activities or excursions that are part of the school's field of activity. Administrative duties include assigning grades to pupils at the end of each course, record keeping, and so on.

Teachers are also expected to take part in school development. School development duties are generally duties that require collegial collaboration (cf. Luukkainen, 2000). These can include tasks such as setting objectives and developing the strategy of the school (Innola & Mikkola, 2011), drawing up local curricula based on national guidelines, co-planning together with colleagues, staff meetings, and so on.

The societal level

Tasks at the societal level described in the sources reviewed, all involve collaboration. Here, Innola and Mikkola (2011, 2014) stress the importance of teachers' actively engaging in and influencing the direction of public discussion about school. There are many stakeholders (e.g. parents, politicians, pupils) with differing or even conflicting opinions about the role of the school, what should be taught there and how learning should be organised. Innola and Mikkola feel that teachers need to take the lead here, engage in dialogue and make their opinions known, rather than be steered from the outside (cf. Sachs, 2016).

Furthermore, Finnish teachers are actively involved in the processes of compiling and writing national guidelines for the curriculum (FNBE, 2012). As the instruction and operation of the school has to follow these guidelines, this gives teachers opportunities to influence their own work. At the same time, they are also influencing the society of tomorrow.

Furthermore, in order to cater for the needs of the pupils, teachers are expected to cooperate with parents and parent associations, as well as with other professional groups, such as staff in social welfare services, remedial teachers, the police, and so on (FNBE, 2012; Innola & Mikkola, 2011).

The level of professional development

Professional development is considered an integral part of the teacher's job and recent reports have stressed the importance of continuous professional development (CPD), now and in the future (see Jokinen et al., 2013; Taajamo et al., 2014). In Finland, teachers are required to participate in in-service training every year. Teachers in general education are thus expected to (and have the right to) participate in a minimum of three days of continuing education per year (FNBE, 2012). The education providers are responsible for providing relevant training opportunities but the teachers are also encouraged to choose and attend courses that are in line with their own developmental needs.

Placing teachers in control of their own professional development is in line with the view of the Finnish teacher as an autonomous professional. According to Niemi (2006), members of a profession are expected to be able to continuously engage in development of their own work. A crucial aspect of professional self-development is the process of critically reflecting on one's work.

There are also other ways in which teachers can develop professionally. Innola and Mikkola (2011, 2014) suggest that teachers need to know about (and presumably keep in contact with and participate in) different expert networks within their own subject areas, in order to develop and expand their knowledge. For language teachers, this could involve taking part in the activities and possibilities for collaboration offered within the framework of various national and local organisations for language teachers or forming their own informal, local networks for cooperation with other language teachers. In order to meet educational challenges and the aims of cross-curricular integration stipulated in the NCCBE 2004³², teachers need to develop their expertise, not just in their own subject area, but in other areas as well. Collaboration and networking can thus not be restricted to include only language teachers but also teachers of different subjects or groups of experts from different professions.

Since the aim of the above overview is to give an idea of the variety of tasks included in the multifaceted job of the teacher, different tasks organised on different levels have been clearly separated. In reality, these tasks are intricately and sometimes even inseparably linked. For instance, decisions and actions on the school or societal levels are likely to affect what happens in the classroom and vice versa. Similarly, the teacher's educative role is perhaps most readily connected with instruction and the

³² Cross-curricular integration is afforded even more emphasis in the new Finnish national core curriculum (NCCBE 2014) that comes into force in August 2016.

classroom level, but this role inevitably permeates everything the teacher does, in and out of the classroom. To sum up, one can say that the teacher's job is complex, comprehensive but also elusive, as most professions are.

2.2.3 The newly qualified teacher and the induction period

From a developmental perspective, the first one or two years in the profession are seen as extremely influential. Teachers' experiences during the early years of teaching have proven critical when it comes to developing a professional identity (Cherubini, 2009; Fransson, 2002), learning how to apply and develop knowledge learnt during teacher education, and forming positive attitudes towards teaching as a career (cf. Coolahan, 2002). Research indicates that negative experiences during the initial career phase can have detrimental consequences (Coolahan, 2002, p.25) and teacher attrition during the early years in the profession is unfortunately a common problem in many countries (Fransson & Gustafsson, 2008; Tynjälä & Heikkinen, 2011).

In the literature, the newly qualified teacher's early years in the profession are often referred to as the induction period³³ (Bjerkholt & Hedegaard, 2008). This period characteristically involves many challenges and is widely acknowledged as problematic (Cherubini, 2009; Coolahan, 2002; Heikkinen et al., 2014). The period involves the transition from being a student to assuming the role of a full-fledged teacher. In Finland, as in many other countries, this change can be rather drastic, seeing that NQTs are given full responsibilities, both pedagogical and legal, from the day they start work³⁴ (Tynjälä & Heikkinen, 2011). NQTs thus find themselves in a situation where they have to simultaneously develop professionally, while getting acquainted with and socialised into the new surroundings, the culture of the school and the people working and learning there (Väljjarvi, 2006). Their own inexperience combined with a heavy workload (Aspfors, 2012; Blomberg, 2008; Marti & Huberman, 1993) and a feeling of constant lack of time (Anderberg 2008; Aspfors, 2012; Janssens, 1987) that does not allow them to overview, prioritise and structure their work in a satisfying way, makes for a very stressful start of the career (Paulin,

³³ The term induction is also used in a more limited sense to refer to specific support programmes employed after initial teacher education as the teachers have started working. These can include mentoring, group-mentoring, specific courses for new teachers and so on (cf. Bjerkholt & Hedegaard, 2008)

³⁴ Finland does not have a statutory induction programme for new teachers, but some schools assign mentors for new teachers and teachers can also opt to take part in a nationally coordinated mentoring programme that offer peer-group mentoring within the framework of a network called *Osaava Verme* (for more detail see e.g. Heikkinen, Jokinen & Tynjälä, 2012a, or Heikkinen et al., 2015, for an overview of available forms of support at the start of the career).

2007; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997). NQTs also commonly find it hard to switch off thoughts about the job and to strike a balance between work and free time. Instead, they feel like they are being teachers 24 hours a day (Aspfors, Bendtsen & Hansén, 2011; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997).

NQTs' experiences of the transition from education into the workplace is often described in terms of a *reality-* or *praxis shock*, where teachers' ideals and idealistic notions are confronted with the realities and responsibilities that comes with the job (cf. Huberman, 1993; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Pigge & Marso, 1987; Veenman, 1984; Wideen et al., 1998). As Brouwer and Korthagen (2005) point out, the reality shock can also involve having to deal with discrepancies between practices learnt during teacher education and the rules and patterns of practice of the new school. The teachers may discover that what worked in one context does not necessarily work in another (Quaglia, 1989).

Considering the nature of teachers' initial workplace experiences, it is not surprising that researchers have found that at the start of their careers, teachers experience a higher level of self-concerns about their survival as teachers (Fuller, 1969; Huberman, 1993; see also Cherubini, 2009). Fuller (1969) defines self-concerns as "concern with self-protection and self-adequacy: with class control, subject matter adequacy, finding a place in the power structure of the school and understanding expectations of supervisors, principal and parents" (p.211). These early self-concerns that Fuller found to be common among student teachers and beginning in-service teachers are gradually replaced by concerns about pupils and their learning and progress, as teachers become more comfortable with their role and the early concerns are resolved (p. 223).

A phenomenon commonly noted among NQTs is that, as they enter the workplace, they seem to forget all the things they have learned during teacher education (referred to by Zeichner & Tabachnick (1981) as *the wash-out effect*). They become more traditional and resort to models from their own experience as students. There may be several reasons for this. One explanation is offered by Brouwer and Korthagen (2005), who found that the NQTs in their study felt pressure to adapt to the traditional practices of the school, which led them to postpone what they had learnt in teacher education during the first year to comply with the dominant school practice and pupils' expectations. However, the researchers found that teaching behaviours practised during pre-service programmes resurfaced during the second in-service year and they suggest that there seems to be an initial *latency period* before

teachers start connecting to the things learnt during teacher education³⁵. A second explanation is that new teachers' focus on survival makes them prone to using safe and familiar methods from their own school days instead of experimenting with new approaches that they are not thoroughly familiar with (cf. Virta, 2002).

How the induction period is experienced by NQTs is largely dependent upon the school culture, the leadership of the school and the reception and support of the new teachers by their colleagues (cf. Day & Gu, 2010; Farrell, 2003; Flores & Day, 2006; Fransson, 2002). Research has also shown that induction and mentoring programmes can have positive effects on how teachers experience and cope with their initial years (Aspfors, 2012; Richter, Kunter, Lüdtke, Klusmann, Anders & Baumert, 2013). These factors in combination with aspects connected to personality and the personal life of the teacher means that there will always be individual variations as to how the first years are experienced (cf. chapter 2.1.3).

2.2.4 Pre-service teachers' views of the profession

When it comes to pre-service teachers' views about the job of the teacher, two commonly reported themes can be discerned. First of all, pre-service teachers find relationships between teachers and pupils important and they are concerned with developing good relationships with their pupils. Empathy towards pupils is great, especially towards pupils with problems of some kind (Biddle, 1997; Paulin, 2008; Wideen et al., 1998). They want to be approachable and available to pupils in and out of class (Ethell & McMeniman, 2002) and they tend to find the interpersonal aspects of the teacher's role more important than academic aspects (Biddle, 1997). Calderhead and Shorrock (1997) thus found that student teachers measured the success of a lesson based on the emotional atmosphere in the classroom and it was emphasised that relations to pupils functioned and felt right.

Secondly, pre-service teachers are often reported to view teaching as transmission or a mechanical transfer of information (Biddle, 1997; Ethell & McMeniman, 2002) and from this perspective, they have a very teacher-centred perception of their role (Wideen et al., 1998). However, studies have also shown that during the course of teacher education, a shift towards greater learner-centeredness and more

³⁵ Featherstone (1993) also noted that new teachers can rediscover and suddenly see the relevance of e.g. propositions taught during TE. The so called *sleeping effect* has similarities with the latency period described by Brouwer and Korthagen, but the reasons and explanations for the delay differ. The sleeping effect occurs as teachers gain experience and see the relevance and understand the meaning of what was taught during teacher education. The latency period suggests that teachers temporarily leave aside what they have learnt during teacher education as they struggle to adapt to the new context.

constructivist views can be noted (Eisenschmidt et al., 2010; Leavy, McSorley & Boté, 2007; Virta et al., 2001).

Studies comparing entering views of the profession with views at the end of teacher education have found that apart from the progression from teacher-centred to student-centred views reported above, student teachers at the end of their formal qualification have been found to have a more complex and versatile view of the teacher's role and of the tasks of the teacher and they recognise that there is more to being a teacher than just teaching and classroom work (Jönsson, 1998; Virta et al., 2001).

Although these two themes seem very prevalent among student teachers, studies have also shown that the views prospective teachers hold at the beginning of their teacher studies may vary considerably between different teachers (Wideen et al., 1998). Liu (2010) compared the views of prospective teachers at the beginning of their education, in China and the USA. Both similarities and differences between the two groups were found, but when it came to the role of the teacher, the US student teachers emphasised the importance of motivating students and meeting their needs. Similar comments were not found among the responses of the Chinese student teachers and Liu suggests that this reflects a cultural difference, as Chinese society and families expect pupils to work hard at their studies, regardless of motivation. Bramald et al. (1995) who studied groups of teachers of different subjects, found that patterns of movement between teacher-centred and student-centred views varied between groups but also between individuals. This led them to conclude that both the course of study, as well as prior beliefs, influence the views and how they change.

2.2.5 Newly qualified teachers' views of the profession

When it comes to the views of NQTs, a shift from idealism to practicality can be noted (cf. Biddle, 1997). The focus of the student teacher on the affective side of teaching and establishing a warm atmosphere in the classroom seem to be replaced, at least temporarily, by a control-orientation and a focus on classroom management (cf. Wideen et al., 1998). Considering that a commonly reported concern among new teachers is classroom discipline (see e.g. Avalos & Aylwin, 2007; Fransson & Morberg, 2001; Paulin, 2007; Veenman, 1984), this shift in focus seems only logical.

The focus on control and classroom management can be seen as a reflection of increased self-concerns that are commonly found among NQTs (cf. Fuller, 1969). In a study by Thomas and Beauchamp (2011), the NQTs changed their focus from being student-centred and focused on helping and supporting pupils, to a focus on themselves and their own survival. The researchers explain: “[t]he first year in the

profession forces new teachers to confront themselves and their professional identities on a regular basis and in multiple ways” (p. 767). Especially the daily interactions with pupils seem to impact on whether they see themselves as successful or not. This, in turn, affects self-confidence and self-efficacy. Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) provide a descriptive example of the change in views regarding the role of the teacher among the NQTs. After graduation, the teacher was seen as ‘the captain of a boat who is responsible for guiding the students through the storms’ whereas half way through the first year yielded quite a different metaphor of the teacher as ‘a survivor of the Titanic, without a lifeboat and struggling to swim to shore’.

The relational and social aspects of the teacher’s job seem to be a salient part of NQTs’ experiences and views of the profession. As we have seen, relationships to pupils and learning how to relate to pupils are often major concerns for the new teacher. In line with this, Marti and Huberman (1993) report that new teachers struggle with finding an appropriate role in relation to pupils. This may involve a conflict of roles as the teacher tries to balance between the roles of being a friend, a teacher, a former student, and so on (p. 196ff.) Furthermore, learning how to relate to and cooperate with parents (Avalos & Aylwin, 2007; Fransson & Gustafsson, 2008; Paulin, 2007; Veenman 1984) and relationships to colleagues (Marti & Huberman, 1993) also constitute integral parts of the teachers’ experiences of the job. Commonly, new teachers look to their colleagues for professional and emotional support, guidance, and practical, concrete advice (cf. Anderberg, 2008, p. 36; Jokinen et al., 2013, p. 51).

3 The setting of the study

In order to enable an evaluation of the relevance of this research for other contexts, a description of the Finnish teacher education programme and the Finnish school as a working context is necessary. This chapter starts out with an overview of the basic structure and central aims of teacher education in Finland, with particular focus on the subject teacher education programme at Åbo Akademi University. Subsequently, a brief description of the Finnish school as a place of work will be provided.

3.1 Teacher education in Finland

Teacher education for prospective teachers in comprehensive and upper secondary schools is provided by eight universities in Finland³⁶ of which one, Åbo Akademi University, is responsible for the education of teachers for the Swedish medium schools³⁷. In Finland, all teacher education programmes have been university based since the late 1970s and all teachers have to complete a Master's degree comprising 300 ETCS³⁸. There are separate programmes for primary and secondary school teachers. In keeping with the focus of the study, the following presentation focuses the programme for secondary school teachers, or subject teachers as they are also referred to.

3.1.1 The subject teacher education programme

Subject teachers become qualified to teach their respective subject(s) in the upper level of comprehensive school (grades 7-9) and in upper secondary school. They are also qualified to teach their subjects in the lower grades of comprehensive school and in vocational institutions.

Subject teacher education is arranged in cooperation between academic subject faculties and faculties of education. Prospective subject teachers major in the field they will be teaching (e.g. languages, mathematics, biology) and initially apply to subject faculties, where they study one major and one to two minor subjects. The pedagogical studies comprising 60 ECTS are the responsibility of the teacher

³⁶ On top of this, vocational teacher education is provided by five institutions of higher education (Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2011)

³⁷ Today about 5% of the population in Finland is Swedish speaking and alongside Finnish, Swedish is an official language in Finland. There are separate Swedish-medium schools but these are regulated by the same law and national curricular frameworks as their Finnish-medium counterparts. For more details, see e.g. Sjöholm, 2004.

³⁸ One ECTS, or credit, equals about 27 hours of work.

education departments. These studies may be taken concurrently as part of the MA programme or consecutively, as separate pedagogical studies.

In order to be admitted to a teacher education programme, prospective students have to pass an entrance test in the form of an individual interview assessed by three independent assessors³⁹. The aim of the interview is to assess the aptitude, motivation and qualities of the applicant, in terms of interaction skills, ability for self-reflection and ability to reflect on the teaching profession and the role of the school in today's society.

In Finland, universities have a high degree of autonomy in deciding the specific contents of the teacher education programmes (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2014). Still, the general structure of the programmes and the guiding principles are similar, partly due to close cooperation between universities during the structural updating of the teacher education programmes in connection to the Bologna process in 2003-2006 (see e.g. Jakku-Sihvonen & Niemi, 2006).

The TE programmes are commonly structured around three basic elements: studies in educational sciences, studies in subject didactics and teaching practice. Studies in educational sciences include content such as sociology of education, educational psychology, special needs education and theory in general education. Studies in subject didactics aim to develop pedagogical content knowledge in relation to the different subjects and include content such as teaching methods, planning and evaluation. Teaching practice is mainly arranged at special practice schools⁴⁰ connected to the universities but at least one practice period is set at a municipal field school. Practicum experiences comprise about 20 % of the overall preparation time⁴¹. For students following the concurrent model, the practice periods are arranged so that they are integrated into the programme at different levels and at different times throughout the studies. During the practice periods, students plan and (co-)teach lessons, participate in guidance sessions lead by supervisors, observe lessons, and observe or take part in other tasks included in the teacher's job such as supervisory duties or staff meetings. The practice periods are jointly supervised by

³⁹ Here I describe the specific procedure used at Åbo Akademi University at the time when the study was conducted. For more information about the procedures used at other Finnish universities, see e.g. Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2011.

⁴⁰ The university practice schools follow the same curriculum as other public schools but they are governed by the university and have higher professional staff requirements, as teachers also need to be able to function as supervisors of student teachers.

⁴¹ The percentage given is based on the subject teacher education programme at Åbo Akademi University. Sahlberg (2011) estimates that on a national level between 15-25 % of the preparation time is devoted to teaching practice.

university lecturers and teachers at the practice school. (Ministry of Education, 2007)

The theoretical and practical elements of the education are considered equally essential and complimentary (cf. Selander, Wermke & Geijer, 2013; Välijärvi & Heikkinen, 2012) and an important principle is the integration of these two elements. In order to promote integration, the programme is organised in such a way that theoretical studies and practice periods alternate and student teachers are required to report and/or reflect on their teaching practice and their own learning, in light of relevant theories. Furthermore, the university lecturer, who also functions as a supervisor during teaching practice, has an important role in connecting between the two learning contexts and bridging the gap between theory and practice, for instance by helping student teachers transform situation specific experiences to a more general, conceptual level (cf. Jyrhämä, 2006).

During their educational studies, the student teachers are exposed to a variety of instructional methodologies, including lectures, seminars, workshops, small group tuition, group-work, individual guidance and feedback, individual work (including portfolio work, written reflections, and a shorter formal research paper on an educational topic) and e-learning.

3.1.2 Research-based teacher education

Perhaps the most prominent trademark of Finnish teacher education is that it is research-based. The research-based approach is the main organising theme that permeates the entire education (cf. Heikkinen et al., 2015; Jakku-Sihvonen & Niemi, 2006; Kansanen et al., 2000; Mahlamäki-Kultanen et al., 2014). Accordingly, an integral aim is to develop autonomous professionals with a research-oriented approach towards their work. In other words, it is considered important that prospective teachers learn to approach their work with the open-minded, critical and analytical attitude of a researcher. This includes being able to systematically develop teaching and learning environments by reflecting in and on action, by drawing conclusions based on systematic observations and experiences, and by connecting to and applying research-based knowledge in their work. Thus, the ability to reflect is considered crucial, but teachers also need to be familiar with the latest research in the fields of education and the subjects that are taught (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2014). Furthermore, the development of scientific literacy is also promoted, to enable teachers to evaluate the quality of research and to utilise it as a guide for their work (cf. Niemi, 2010; Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2011).

In accordance with the aim of educating autonomous professionals, a constructivist, dialogical approach is preferred (cf. Välijärvi & Heikkinen, 2012). It is important that teachers learn to take responsibility for their own learning but also that they learn to cooperate with others, to enable them to continuously work towards developing themselves, their work and their work community, in cooperation with other stakeholders (cf. Jokinen et al., 2014; Ministry of Education, 2006; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2014).

The underlying assumption behind the Finnish model is that a research-generated knowledge base integrated with a research-oriented approach towards one's work will provide teachers with the necessary tools for and enhance their ability to work as autonomous professionals (cf. Westbury, Hansén, Kansanen & Björkvist, 2005). Indeed, a high quality teacher education in combination with broad pedagogical freedom and high educational autonomy at the school level (see chapter 3.2), have been identified as contributing elements to the good learning outcomes of Finnish schools, as reflected in the results of the OECD Programme for International Study Assessment (PISA) (Taajamo et al., 2014). Still, in two recent surveys, Finnish teachers express that teacher education did not sufficiently prepare them for the more practical aspects of the job (Jokinen et al., 2013; Taajamo et al., 2014), such as cooperation between home and school, disciplinary issues and dealing with demanding pupils (Taajamo et al., 2013, p. 48). The fact that teachers, by the time they start work, do not seem to have a sufficiently developed know-how of working life is currently an issue of great concern and it has been addressed in a number of recent reports (see e.g. Jokinen et al., 2014; Mahlamäki-Kultanen et al., 2014).

3.2 The Finnish school as a place of work

Previously, in chapter 2.2, I have discussed issues in relation to the job of the teacher and since the study is conducted in a Finnish context, the focus has been on circumstances surrounding the job of the teacher in Finland. Here I will briefly sum up and somewhat expand on central characteristics of the Finnish school as a place of work for newly qualified teachers.

The Finnish school is characterised by high educational autonomy at all levels (Ministry of Education and Culture, National Board of Education & CIMO, 2013). The state and the municipalities finance the education⁴². On a national level, educational policy is drawn up by The Ministry of Education and Culture, whereas

⁴² This applies to basic education, upper-secondary and vocational education.

the Finnish National Board of Education is responsible for its implementation. Municipalities, as the providers of education, are responsible for practical arrangements and for ensuring quality of its education. Together with the schools, they draw up local curricula on the basis of national guidelines. Schools and teachers are required to follow the guidelines of the curriculum and the collective agreement for teachers, but apart from that, teachers are relatively free to plan, realise and develop their work (FNBE, 2012; Heikkinen et al., 2015; Innola & Mikkola, 2014). The system of school inspection was abolished in the early 1990s (Jakku-Sihvonen & Niemi, 2006; Ministry of Education and Culture et al., 2013) but regular sample-based national evaluations of learning outcomes are administered to check how well the objectives set in the core curricula have been met. Education providers receive these results and are expected to use them for development purposes and there is generally a strong focus on self-evaluation of schools (Ministry of Education and Culture et al., 2013).

Regrettably, it seems that the strong reliance on the professional autonomy of the teacher also comes with a price. Hence, the results from the *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (TALIS) 2013 show that Finnish teachers, in fact, receive very little feedback on their work, as school leaders and fellow teachers are reluctant to infringe on the professional territory of their colleagues (Taajamo et al., 2014, pp 45-46). This is to say that high professional autonomy seems to have brought about individualistic working cultures, where autonomy has been confused with individualism⁴³ (Heikkinen et al., 2015; Taajamo et al., 2014). Taajamo and his colleagues (2014) thus suggest that more systematic, collaborative evaluation practices and collegial cooperation need to be developed in schools, in order to better support teachers' continuous professional development.

As previously mentioned, teachers in Finland are considered fully qualified upon completion of teacher education. To date, there is no statutory formal induction programme for NQTs in Finland (Jokinen et al., 2014) and by international standards organising orientation for new teachers is comparatively low (Taajamo et al., 2014). In fact, mentoring programmes as a systematic practice is a relatively recent phenomenon in the Finnish context. According to Heikkinen et al. (2012), "one of the first concrete mentoring development projects was implemented in Helsinki in the early 2000s" (p. 15). Schools are free to decide how they want to go about introducing new teachers to their work community and practices vary widely (cf. Aspfors, 2012). Out of the nine teachers who took part in the final phase of my

⁴³ As Heikkinen et al. (2015) point out, professional autonomy does not mean that teachers can do what they like, but instead of being externally steered, they have the collective responsibility to develop and carry out their work in the best way possible.

study, only one was appointed a formal mentor at the new school. At this particular school, the mentor's task was more that of helping the new teachers to find their way around the school and to help them with practical issues such as ICT⁴⁴ and administration, rather than to provide support for professional development. The teachers' federation also organise courses for "young teachers" and since 2010, NQTs have the option to take part in peer group mentoring (PGM) sessions offered nationwide by the Finnish network for teacher induction, *Osaava Verme*⁴⁵.

CPD for teachers is arranged by different agencies, such as education providers (local authorities), in-service training centres at universities, the Finnish National Board of Education, regional state administrative agencies or subject federations. A teacher holding a full-time job is required to take part in three in-service training days per school year but teachers are also increasingly encouraged to take greater responsibility for developing their own professional skills and expertise (FNBE, 2012).

Lately the system for organising CPD in Finland has received rather harsh critique (see e.g. Heikkinen et al., 2015; Kumpulainen, 2014). Since it is largely up to the teachers to take responsibility for their own professional development, it has led to a situation where some teachers actively take part in CPD and others do not. In the TALIS 2013-survey, as many as 20% of the teachers reported that they had not taken part in CPD in the past year (Taajamo et al., 2014). Another overarching problem is that with the various stakeholders involved in arranging CPD, the structure becomes very fragmental and unsystematic, and there is no framework for long-term support of teachers' professional development (cf. Heikkinen et al., 2015; Taajamo et al., 2014).

⁴⁴ ICT= Information and communication technologies

⁴⁵ For more information see: <http://www.osaavaverme.fi/eng>

4 Methodological considerations

In chapter 2, I accounted for the theoretical frame underpinning my understanding and approach towards the phenomena under study. In this chapter, the specific research questions are presented, after which I account for the methodological underpinnings and research approach used in this study. Next, I present the data collection process and account for the data analysis procedures. Finally, issues pertaining to validity and reliability are discussed, along with the ethical issues guiding the study.

4.1 Research questions

The aim of this study is to deepen the understanding of the process of becoming a teacher by describing how teachers view the process of becoming a teacher and the teaching profession at different phases during the transition from university to work. The broader intent is to contribute to the understanding of how teachers' professional development can be promoted and supported during the early stages of professional learning.

As the previous theoretical discussion shows, becoming a teacher is a complex process, covering a wide variety of perspectives. The term teacher learning highlights the central role of learning in the process and this is where I choose to place the focus in this study. Consequently, I want to find out how the teachers think that they learn to become teachers, and more specifically, what learning opportunities and activities they consider beneficial in this process.

How prospective teachers approach and view teacher learning is also connected to how they view the job of the teacher. What kind of a job is it that they are preparing for? What are the tasks and functions that a teacher has to perform? Depending on how one answers those questions, teacher learning can have very different implications.

The fact that cognitions are affected by experiences has important consequences for this study. First of all, since prospective teachers come to teacher education with different experiences, their views are also likely to be different. As views are affected by our experiences, they are not constant but subject to change. One can thus presume that teachers' views of teacher learning and the teaching profession will change.

This research project thus aims to contribute to the understanding of how (prospective) teachers' view the processes of becoming and being a teacher by addressing the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1. How do (prospective) teachers view teacher learning during the initial phases of professional learning?

RQ2. How do (prospective) teachers view the teaching profession during the initial phases of professional learning?

RQ3. What patterns of change can be discerned between the different phases?

Because of the complexity of the two concepts under study (teacher learning and the teaching profession, respectively), it is necessary to further specify and operationalise the research questions in order to bring more focus to the study. In terms of the first research question, I deduced from the literature that how teachers perceive that they learn to become teachers affects both what and how they learn. This means that unless a specific activity is perceived by the teacher as a learning opportunity, it will not necessarily have the intended effect⁴⁶. Furthermore, learning opportunities may also be perceived in different ways and thus serve different purposes. Consequently, I decided to focus on trying to identify and describe the learning opportunities the teachers recognise. The concept learning opportunity, as it is used in this study, includes both overt (observable) and covert (mental or internal) forms of learning (cf. Vermunt & Endedijk's (2011) definition of *learning activity*) while being sensitive to the contexts where these forms of learning are seen to occur (cf. Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1995). As the word 'opportunity' signals, a learning opportunity is a possibility for learning, which means that no claims are made about whether or not it results in learning.

When it comes to the teachers' views about the teaching profession, I decided to focus on the tasks and functions connected with the teacher's job. What aspects of the job are recognised by the teachers and how do they relate to these various aspects. What is considered important or central and what is not?

⁴⁶ In this sense, the concept *learning opportunity* has parallels to the concept *affordance*. Van Lier (2000) defines affordance as follows: "An affordance is a particular property of the environment that is relevant- for good or for ill – to an active, perceiving organism in that environment. An affordance affords further action (but does not cause or trigger it). What becomes an affordance depends on what the organism does, what it wants, and what is useful for it." (p. 252). Similarly, different contexts offer different learning opportunities, but the learners, or teachers in this study, need to recognise them as such.

Thus, the first two research questions materialise into the following operational questions (OQ):

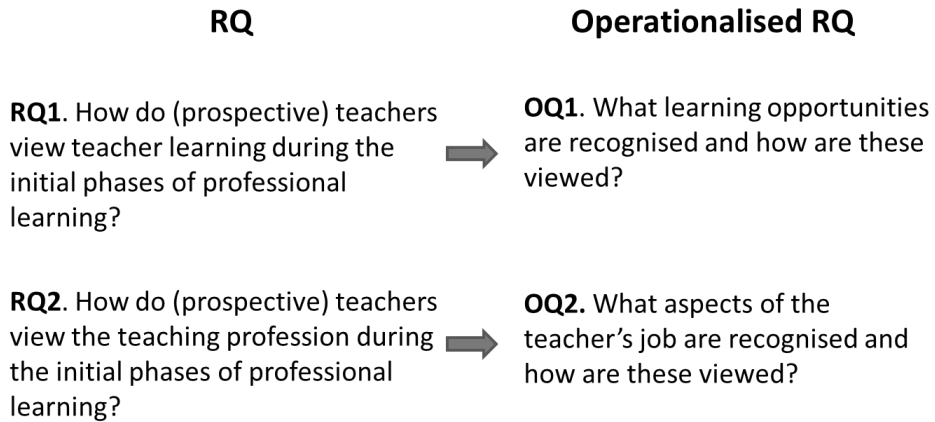


Figure 2. Operationalised research questions.

Having established the aim and specific research questions for the study, the question of how to obtain knowledge and collect data about teacher's cognitions becomes pertinent. Since cognitions are abstract, internal constructs, they are not directly accessible to the researcher but must be inferred. Kvale (2007, p.1) suggests that knowledge about another person's views can be obtained through communication with other people, in other words through the medium of language. I decided to use narrative essays and interviews as data collection methods and these procedures are described in more detail in chapter 4.3.1.

In order to be able to access teachers' evolving cognitions, it was decided that a longitudinal research design would be appropriate. As cognitions about teaching and learning and the teacher's job start to form prior to teacher education, it was considered important to obtain the views of students before entering teacher education. A cohort of student teachers about to start their first course at the Faculty of Education was chosen as informants. With this as a starting point, I had to consider at what points and how frequently to collect subsequent data. As Lankshear and Knobel (2004) point out, data collection can be both resource and time intensive, and the researcher needs to carefully consider how much data that needs to be included. I decided to include two more interventions; one immediately after the group had completed their teacher education and one after an additional two

years, when the informants had experience of working as qualified teachers. In the following chapter, the ontological, epistemological and methodological underpinnings of the study are discussed.

4.2 Research approach

In a scientific study, the choice of method not only needs to correlate with the research objective but it needs to be warranted by a methodology, which in turn, is based on ontological and epistemological assumptions (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2000; Wadenström, 2003). These assumptions need to be explicitly stated and thus made available for critical examination (Bengtsson, 1999, p. 31). Next, I will position my research and delineate the principles and perspectives that have guided the research process.

I position my research within what Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.19) refer to as the constructivist-interpretive paradigm⁴⁷. The interpretive paradigm is concerned with individuals and seeks to understand their subjective interpretations of different phenomena in the surrounding world. As opposed to its normative, or positivistic, counterpart that strives to generate a generalisable theory applicable to all contexts, interpretive research aims to reveal the complexity and multifaceted nature of different phenomena (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

The constructivist-interpretive paradigm is based on a relativist ontology, which assumes the position that there is not one single, “objective” reality or truth, but rather many alternative varieties of reality. It includes a subjectivist epistemology whereby knowledge is viewed as something relative, situated and co-constructed. This means that individuals are seen to continuously construct and re-construct reality on the basis of experiences and in close interaction with other individuals and the environment. From this perspective, knowledge is seen as a dynamic concept and there is no ultimate truth to be arrived at. The outcome of the research process is thus to be viewed as an interpretation, as a perspective or a particular version of reality. Furthermore, as both researcher and research participants bring their own perspectives and experiences into the research process, they can be seen to co-create understandings, through their interactions. Finally, knowledge is never neutral, as it is always produced in and shaped by a specific social, political and cultural context. Research is thus to be viewed as situated practice, which, in turn, requires

⁴⁷ In Denzin and Lincoln’s (2000, pp.19-20) terms, a paradigm contains the researcher’s epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises. They distinguish four major paradigms within qualitative research: the positivist or post-positivist, the constructivist-interpretive, the critical and the feminist-poststructural.

researchers to be attentive as to how their particular perspectives and their relationships with the participant(s) may influence the research process.

The study can also be positioned within the qualitative research tradition. As the name implies, qualitative research emphasises qualitative entities and aims for an in-depth understanding from the subject's point of view. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on the complexity and multi-faceted nature of different phenomena and thus qualitative research strives for rich descriptions that are both detailed and sensitive to the context. (cf. Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

Qualitative research incorporates a variety of research traditions (see e.g. Creswell, 1998) and next, I will discuss the specific methodology underpinning this work. First, I will introduce Hermeneutic phenomenology as a research approach after which I will present some of the central tenets of this approach that have been of specific relevance for this study.

Hermeneutic phenomenology

Hermeneutic phenomenology has a phenomenological approach (Henriksson & Friesen, 2012; Van Manen, 1997). Phenomenology is the study of phenomena as they appear to us and is thus concerned with the study of experience, as it is lived and structured in our minds (Henriksson & Friesen, 2012). Hermeneutics, again, is concerned with interpretation, understanding and meaning. An emphasis on understanding implies that the researcher looks for the meaning that a particular phenomenon has, for an individual in a specific context. In order to access meaning and inform understanding, interpretation is necessary. These two approaches are combined in hermeneutic phenomenology. Here the phenomenon as such, is not in focus but rather how it is understood, its meaning in other words. This fits well with the focus of this study, where I am concerned with how teachers view teacher learning and the teaching profession, in other words, how they understand these phenomena and what meanings they assign to them.

Hermeneutic phenomenology does not involve a specific method or technique for investigating a phenomenon. Instead, Max van Manen⁴⁸ (2011) explains that the researcher needs to “bracket all established investigative methods or techniques and seek or invent an approach that seems to fit most appropriately the phenomenological topic under study” (“The methodological reduction: approach”, para. 1). In other words, a hermeneutic phenomenological approach places focus on the phenomenon under study and subsequently, methods and techniques are chosen

⁴⁸ Van Manen is one of the main proponents of the hermeneutic phenomenological approach.

based on how they fit the purpose and help clarify the phenomenon. According to van Manen (1997), the meaning of a phenomenon is never simple or one-dimensional but always multi-layered and multi-dimensional⁴⁹ (p. 78). This means that during the interpretation process, the researcher has to be open towards variety and consequently a mode of presentation that reflects the varieties of meaning must be chosen. As Annells (1996) explains, hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry aims to “identify and provide an understanding of the variety of constructions that exist about a phenomenon and to bring them into consensus” (p. 708). The researcher thus needs to utilise a method that is “faithful” to the phenomenon under study but also a method that is as comprehensive as possible, in order to represent the whole phenomenon (cf. Hycner, 1985).

Specifically because there is no set method that can be employed within hermeneutic phenomenology, the importance of keeping to the methodological underpinnings of the approach has been stressed (Laverty, 2003). Next, I will consider some central principles connected with this approach that have guided the current study.

According to the views of Heidegger and Gadamer, whose philosophies have largely shaped hermeneutic phenomenology, the interpretive process is necessarily influenced and guided by the researcher’s pre-understanding. The idea of “bracketing” or putting aside one’s preconceptions, commonly applied within phenomenology, is to Gadamer and Heidegger totally absurd. In Heidegger’s view, pre-understanding is a way of being-in-the-world, in other words something so essential to our existence that it is impossible to disregard or exclude (Laverty, 2003, p.24). Gadamer (1994), on his part, stresses that pre-understanding is a prerequisite for understanding and interpreting the situation of another. He writes, “we must always already have a horizon in order to be able to transpose ourselves into a situation” (p. 305).

Thus, we can say that to understand presupposes pre-understanding, but at the same time pre-understanding can also be an obstacle to understanding, if we let our prejudices or “habits of thought” guide the interpretation to the extent where our ability to understand becomes restricted (cf. Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2000, p. 84; Gadamer, 1994, p. 266-267). To avoid this, the researcher needs to adopt a disposition or attitude of openness, sensitivity and flexibility (cf. Henriksson & Friesen, 2012; van Manen 1997). Such a disposition implies that the researcher needs to be aware of and open about the influence of one’s pre-understanding. Openness is

⁴⁹ Hermeneutic phenomenology thus emphasises Gadamer’s core tenet that meaning and interpretation are never fixed.

required in order to communicate our pre-understandings, both to ourselves and others, for instance, by considering and explicitly communicating the experiences or theories that might affect our interpretations. Instead of making futile attempts to eliminate one's influence on the research process, researchers thus need to acknowledge that they are, in fact, a part of the social world they are studying and critically reflect on their own role in the process (Cohen et al., 2007; Laverty, 2003).

Furthermore, the researcher needs to be sensitive and open towards what is actually said in the text (or expressed in the empirical data) and let the text speak for itself. Gadamer (1994) emphasises that in order to understand the other, we need to put ourselves in their situation or "transpose ourselves into the horizon of the other" (p. 303). Gadamer suggests that this can be achieved through using our pre-understanding and by employing imagination or as Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000) explain it, by balancing and alternating between "merging into another world and linking back into our own reference system" (p. 84). Gadamer also stresses that if we wish to understand another person, we must go behind and beyond what is said (p. 370). This means that if we want to understand the meaning of what is communicated, we need to be sensitive not only towards what is explicitly expressed but we also need to consider what is implied, for instance by attending to how something is expressed, when it is expressed or even how often it is expressed.

Another characteristic of the interpretive process is the interplay or alternation between part and whole, usually referred to as *the hermeneutic circle*⁵⁰. Ödman (2007) likens the process to doing a jigsaw puzzle. You have to look around, compare different pieces, and look for similarities and differences in order to find a way of piecing together all the different parts. In doing so, you also need to consider the whole picture, in order to figure out where the individual pieces could fit in. Similarly, in an interpretive process, the meaning of a part can only be understood in relation to the whole but at the same time, the whole cannot be understood, unless the meaning of the parts is understood (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2000, p. 53; Sjöström, 1994, p. 82). In the research process, the parts can be an utterance or a word and the whole can either refer to the text⁵¹ of which the utterance or word is a part, or it can refer to the larger situation or context of which the text, in turn, is a part.

A further characteristic of the process of interpretation is its dialectical nature and the fact that it is ongoing and always open to re-interpretation (Annells, 1996;

⁵⁰ Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000) refer to the relation between part and whole as the first hermeneutic circle and the relation between pre-understanding and understanding as the second hermeneutic circle.

⁵¹ I use the word *text* here in reference to both written and spoken texts. Texts can have different lengths and be produced for different purposes. Thus an interview, an essay or a poem are all examples of texts.

Henriksson & Friesen, 2012). In line with Gadamer's relativist view, there is no ultimate, objective truth to be reached through interpretation. This does not mean that any interpretation is equally valid. There are limits as to what interpretations are feasible but within those frames, there is room for different interpretations. Still, this means that we need to constantly scrutinise our own interpretations by considering whether there might be other possible interpretations or whether ours is the most probable, in light of all available information (Sjöström, 1994). We can do this by constantly alternating between parts and whole and between our own observations and interpretation and the ideas of others (e.g. in the form of theories or research findings) (cf. Sjöström, 1994; Starrin, 1994). This gives the interpretive process an abductive⁵² quality, in that our interpretation is formed as we alternate between empirical data and the current knowledgebase of the research field (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000).

The hermeneutic circle serves to illustrate the iterative nature of the research process, but the evolving nature of the process and the resulting growth in understanding is even better captured in *the hermeneutic spiral* (Ödman, 2007). The researcher tries, from her own perspective or horizon⁵³, to understand the phenomenon as it is understood by the research participants. The researcher's understanding evolves as her perspective meets the perspective of the other in a constant dialogue where interpretations are formed, tested and retested in light of new information. The researcher may need to step away at times and look at the data from a different perspective, in order to be able to see the larger whole and the relative importance of the constituent parts (cf. Gadamer, 1994, p. 305). This is where theories and empirical findings from other studies may help broaden one's understanding, by providing additional perspectives or alternative horizons. The process thus evolves, until an understanding is reached through a *fusion of horizons*, described eloquently by Koch as "a dialectic between the pre-understandings of the research process, the interpretive framework and the sources of information" (1995, as cited in Laverty 2003, p. 30). In Gadamer's view (1994, pp. 305-307), the fusion of horizons involves reaching a higher level of understanding that goes beyond one's own horizon and the horizon of the other.

⁵² Induction, deduction and abduction are different forms of reasoning and involve different approaches to research. Deduction starts from a hypothesis based on theory that is then tested against empirical data, whereas induction starts from empirical data and seeks to find patterns within these. Induction is generally associated with qualitative research, but according to Starrin (1994) abductive processes, where one alternates between empirical data and theory, have great potential for producing genuine understanding of phenomena.

⁵³ *Horizon* is originally Husserl's term and Gadamer (1994) defines it as "the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" (p. 302).

In the following chapter, I will account for how the principles described above have been applied in the study.

4.3 Implementation of the study

4.3.1 Data collection procedure

As previously explained, data were collected over a period of four years and at three different points in time: Phase 1 at the beginning of the subjects' teacher studies by means of narrative essays, Phase 2 at the end of teacher education, and Phase 3 after 1-2 years of working as teachers. In the latter two phases, interviews were used. When decisions had to be made regarding how I would go about accessing the teachers' cognitions, I immediately thought of interviews. When used sensibly and sensitively, interviews can provide access to the insider's perspective, as people get to describe how they view phenomena, from their point of view and in their own words (cf. Kvale, 2007; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). Still, for practical reasons, I decided to use narrative essays in the first phase. I considered I stood a better chance of getting a high response rate when data could be obtained as part of compulsory coursework, without involving any extra work for the student teachers. I also felt that a written reflection would be more appropriate at a time when the student teachers were perhaps not so familiar with the phenomena in focus. When writing, they had more time to reflect over the issues and what they wanted to express, compared to an interview situation when they would have to respond more or less instantly.

The participants⁵⁴

The participants of the study constituted a group of twenty prospective language teachers, who did their teacher studies at the Faculty of Education at Åbo Akademi University during the latter half of the first decade of the 21st century. In order to protect their identity, the names of participants used in the research report are pseudonyms assigned by the researcher.

The participants were all female⁵⁵ and aged between 22 and 42, although the majority was between the ages of 22 and 26. By the time of the first intervention, everyone had completed all or most of their language studies at their respective university language departments. Different languages and language combinations were

⁵⁴ In Hermeneutic phenomenological studies the subjects of the study are usually referred to as participants, in reference to their integral role as co-creators in the research process.

⁵⁵ In Finland, teaching is predominantly a female profession. Currently more than 70 % of teachers working in basic education are female (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2014).

represented: English, Finnish, German, Russian and Swedish. All but two of the participants had attended a few pedagogical courses prior to the upcoming course, which was to be their first educational course set at the Faculty of Education⁵⁶. The previous courses had not included any teaching practice.

Half of them (Astrid, Denice, Helen, Mary, Bridget, Christine, Lisa, Linda, Simone and Susan) had some previous experience of working as teachers. None of them had extensive work experience but their experiences ranged from occasional, shorter periods of substitute teaching at various schools, to teaching summer courses, to longer periods (almost a year) of teaching at one school.

Participation in the study was voluntary. Even if the essays used as data in Phase 1 were a required part of the coursework, a separate permission to use the material for research purposes was distributed to all participants (Appendix 4). In the letter of consent, the participants were informed of the general purpose of the study, which was described as a study concerned with prospective and newly qualified teachers' views about teacherhood. They were asked whether their essays could be used for purposes of research, and further whether they would consider taking part in two follow up interviews later on. They were informed of specific measures the researcher would take to avoid identification of individuals and they were also told that they could chose to drop out at any point.

All student teachers allowed their essays to be used for purposes of research and I thus ended up with 20 participants in the first phase. The ones that had expressed an interest to take part in the follow-up study were contacted towards the end of the teacher education programme. A few dropped out at this stage for various reasons, and I ended up with 12 participants in phase 2. In phase 3, I decided to interview only those who had worked as teachers after their qualification from the TE programme⁵⁷ and I thus ended up with 9 participants in the final phase. The nine teachers taking part in all three phases will henceforth be referred to as *core teachers*.

Dropout is always an issue in longitudinal studies, but I was determined not to pressure anyone into participating. Perhaps I could have been a little more persistent in this respect but even if some of the teachers decided against participating, I felt that the sample I ended up with was representative from two important perspectives.

⁵⁶ It would have been interesting to obtain the views of the prospective teachers *before* they had begun their teacher education studies altogether. However, students at Åbo Akademi have several options as to how, where and when to carry out the initial part of their pedagogical teacher studies, and for practical reasons I chose to approach them at a time before their first teacher education course set at the Faculty of Education. The upcoming course was thus to be my first encounter with the students.

⁵⁷ Some of them were still students at this point or they worked in other professions.

First of all, the sample included representatives of different languages, in other words, prospective teachers of English, Finnish, German, Russian and Swedish were included. This was considered important, since different language groups are exposed to different teachers, lecturers and supervisors, even if some are common for all students. Secondly, the group included participants who had previous experience of working as teachers as well as those with no previous experience.

In this thesis the participants are generally referred to as ‘the teachers’ or simply as ‘the participants’. When the term ‘student teacher’ is used, it is to signify that I am referring exclusively to a time when the participants were still unqualified, that is phase 1 in this study.

The role of the researcher

During the data collection process, my dual role as researcher and teacher educator had to be carefully considered. In a hermeneutic study, where the participants are seen as co-creators of knowledge, the relationship and communicative interplay between the participants and the researcher can greatly influence the outcome of the process (Johansson, 2005; Kvale, 2007; van Manen 1997). My relationship to the participants is complex: I am the researcher but I am also a teacher educator, a supervisor and an assessor of their performance.

On the positive side, the fact that the participants knew me from before (this applies to phases 2 and 3) meant that they did not have to feel nervous about opening up to a complete stranger. At the same time, I was worried that they would feel restricted and perhaps choose to withhold information that they felt could be harmful for me or for them. There was also a danger that the participants would, intentionally or not, express what they believed I wanted to hear, that is views that I, in the role of teacher educator, might have strongly enforced (cf. Kvale, 2007). In an attempt to avoid this, I made an effort to create a positive atmosphere during the interviews. I stressed that I was interested in *their* views on the matters and I strived to make the questions as open as possible and let the participants do most of the talking, while I listened attentively. I also tried to be attentive as to how the views were expressed; did they seem to express their own views or was it simply generalisations or the language of teacher education echoing back. This is, of course, difficult to determine, but in cases where I was unsure, I asked the participant to tell me more about the issue or to provide a concrete example. In that way, I could at least get some sense of whether the view was internalised, whether they had made it their own.

My own familiarity with the field of study is another pertinent issue to consider. As a teacher educator, I am well acquainted with how teacher education is organised. Just

like the participants, I am also a language teacher, I have also attended the teacher education programme at Åbo Akademi University and I have also worked as a language teacher. According to Kvale (2007, p. 13), a researcher's familiarity with the topic can make her sensitive to issues that may be overlooked by a researcher who lacks that specific insight. I felt that it was usually easy for me to understand and relate to what the teachers were expressing and I knew what they were referring to, when they used work-related language or when they referred to practices during teacher education or at the workplace. At the same time, I had to be careful not to let my own pre-understanding get in the way of my attempts to understand the participants' views. I could not assume that they saw and understood things the same way I did. Even if I recognised the terminology they used, I could never assume that we shared the same understanding of the concept. I thus tried to be open and sensitive to what the teachers were trying to express and how they talked about the issues. As a way of checking that I had understood and interpreted the teachers correctly, I used recasts (cf. Kvale, 2007, van Manen 1997). This is to say that during the interviews I offered the participants a reformulation and summary of what they had expressed, as I had interpreted it. The teachers could then verify or reject my interpretation. In some cases, the recasts offered the teachers an opportunity to clarify something, but it also happened that my interpretation was rejected and we had to discuss the issue further, until agreement was reached. In the research process the researcher thus uses his or her pre-understanding but with a sensitive, open and reflective attitude (cf. pp. 60-61 above).

The narrative essay

The data in the first phase consists of narrative essays that the student teachers wrote before attending their first educational course set at the Faculty of Education. The student teachers' names were obtained from a list of students who were registered for the course and they were contacted by email. They were informed that the upcoming course was to include lectures and seminars in education and methodology, lesson observation and practice teaching. The student teachers were asked to take time to write down a reflection on their experiences and views of their future profession. They were told that the text was to be used as a basis for discussions during the upcoming course as well as in later courses and that I also hoped to use it for research purposes, with their permission.

The guidelines (Appendix 1) were kept very open, since I did not want to restrict the student teachers too much but let them decide where they wanted to place the focus. They were thus asked to write a narrative essay around a given set of themes but they were free to decide in which order and to what extent they wanted to reflect around

any given theme. There were no requirements as to how long the essays were to be and the essays varied in length between 1-3 pages (Times new roman, font size 12, single spaced, margins 2, 5 cm).

Apart from themes focusing on the teacher's work, teacher learning and teacher education, the participants were also asked to write about their own memories of language teaching in school and their views about teaching and learning. The latter themes were not central for the research but they were an important part of their prior beliefs that I wanted to explore during the course. Background information was also obtained concerning their previous studies, experiences of the teachers' work and why they had chosen to become teachers.

The interviews

Interviews can be both structured and unstructured. In structured interviews a pre-formulated list of questions are asked in a fixed order to every respondent without any deviations from the protocol. Unstructured interviews have no pre-formulated questions and thus the interviewee has much more influence over the topics and themes discussed. Semi-structured interviews can be placed somewhere in between these two extremes. Semi-structured interviews usually include a set of questions or specific themes to be covered in the interview. The questions give focus and direction to the interview but are only used as a guide and thus not followed strictly. (Kvale, 2007; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004)

The semi-structured type of interview was considered most suitable for the purposes of this study. Since I was interested in the teachers' perspectives of the phenomena, it was important that the teachers were allowed sufficient room to decide what aspects of the phenomena they wanted to bring up and talk about. In order to get sufficiently rich and comprehensive material, the possibility of following up and further exploring interesting leads or comments made by the participants was also considered important. Thus, the protocol could not be too strict, but at the same time the interviews needed to have recurring set themes to allow for comparison and follow up on the evolving views between the phases.

The interviews followed up on central themes concerning the teacher's work and teacher learning that were introduced in connection to the narrative essay. Table 1 below shows how these themes were addressed in each phase.

Table 1. Research questions and themes applied to the different phases.

Research questions	Phase 1 questions (narrative essay)	Phase 2- questions (interview)	Phase 3 – questions (interview)
How do (prospective) teachers view teacher learning during the initial phases of professional learning?	(Tell about) your expectations of teacher education. The teacher's competence: What does a teacher need to know? What does a language teacher need to know? →How is this learnt?	Looking back on teacher education: - What thoughts come to your mind? - What have you learnt? - Was there anything you found especially worthwhile? How does one become a teacher? - Can it be learnt? - How?	How would you evaluate teacher education? - What was useful? - What was lacking? -How would you describe your development as a teacher after teacher education? - Is there anybody or are there any experiences that you think are important for your development?
How do (prospective) teachers view the teaching profession during the initial phases of professional learning?	(Describe) the teacher's work: what is included in your opinion, what is most important?	Describe the teacher's work to somebody who is not familiar with it. What is included? Anything you find more important? Describe the role of the teacher/the role of the language teacher?	Describe the teacher's work. What does a teacher do? What tasks does a teacher have? What is most important? Describe your role as a teacher/ a language teacher? What are your experiences of the job so far? - Anything that surprised you? - What are the positive aspects of the job? - What are the negative aspects? of the job?

The questions were somewhat adapted to suit the particular circumstances at the different points of intervention. For example, in phase 1, the student teachers lacked personal experience of teacher education (except for a few pedagogical courses). By phase 2, all of them had experience of teacher education and by phase 3, they all had experience of working as teachers after their education. Consequently, in phase 1, the student teachers were asked to write about their expectations regarding teacher education. In phase 2, I first introduced a very open question about their views of teacher education to elicit what learning opportunities that first came to their minds, after which more specific questions were asked, to get a more comprehensive view. In phase 3, when they had experiences of working as teachers, they were asked to evaluate their education in light of their current experiences. What aspects were useful, what was lacking? Still, in retrospect, I feel that for comparative purposes, I could have kept the questions more uniform across the phases. This was therefore an element that needed to be taken into account and carefully considered during the analysis and interpretation of the results.

Apart from the questions included in Table 1 above, the interviews also included other questions (the interview guides are included in the Appendices). As background information I wanted to know how committed the participants were to the job and to being teachers (question 2 in phase 2 and question 11 in phase 3). In phase 3, I also wanted to learn about their working context (how they were received as new teachers at the school and their perceptions of the working climate of their workplace), as their perceptions of the context may affect their views concerning the job, as well as their views of teacher learning. I also had questions concerning the teacher's competences in all three phases, as my initial idea was to explore the teacher's views concerning these as well. However, since the data proved to be rather extensive, I decided to omit this theme from the final analysis to provide a better focus.

The first interview took place after the teachers had completed their educational studies, almost a year after they had written the essays, during the summer and early autumn⁵⁸. By this time, two of them had just started working as teachers and two had been teaching summer courses. The second interview took place approximately two years after the first interview. The teachers had then worked between one to two years as teachers. Four of the teachers had been working full-time after completing their studies (2 years), the others had about a year of teaching experience, mostly full-time. Most of them worked as language teachers within basic education or upper secondary school, one worked as a primary school teacher and three others had experience of language teaching at other levels⁵⁹ (university, vocational university and professional education centre).

The time and place of the interviews were negotiated individually with each teacher. When a suitable date had been decided, I usually organised a place where the interviews could be held. It was important that we would be able to talk relatively undisturbed and in most cases, I was able to book a room for the purpose at different university campuses. In phase 3, one interview took place at the school where the teacher worked and three interviews were conducted over the phone⁶⁰. All interviews were audio recorded using a digital recorder. In phase 2, the average interview lasted 35 minutes (the longest approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes and

⁵⁸ One teacher did not continue her teacher studies in the subsequent semester and she was interviewed the following year, when she had completed her studies.

⁵⁹ For ethical reasons I have chosen not to disclose more detailed information concerning who worked where and for how long as this could too easily make the teachers identifiable.

⁶⁰ For different reasons a face-to-face meeting was not possible to organise in all cases. I then opted to interview these participants over the phone.

the shortest 20 minutes.) In phase 3, the average interview lasted 50 minutes (the shortest was approximately 30 minutes and the longest 1,5 hours.)

Each interview started with a short briefing with the purpose of re-establishing contact with the participant and making them feel comfortable in the situation. They were briefed about the general topic of the interviews and I pointed out that I was interested in *their* views on the matters and how they looked at the issues at this particular point in time. I asked their permission to audio-tape the sessions and when we both felt ready, the interviews commenced.

During the interviews, I tried to create a situation where the participants would do most of the talking. I introduced the themes with an open question, in keeping with the interview guide. I listened attentively to what they were saying, and was careful not to interrupt them prematurely and to allow for pauses in the conversation, if they needed time to think. Some themes had sub-questions and these were asked unless the teachers had already addressed them in their previous answers. Follow-up questions were asked if something remained unclear from my perspective or if additional information on a particular issue was needed. Recasts were used to check that I had interpreted their responses correctly. It was not uncommon that the teachers would return to an earlier question or issue they had talked about earlier in the interview. Sometimes a theme had already been addressed before it came up in the guidelines. In these cases, I established that we had already talked about this, before I asked if there was anything else they wanted to add on the subject. In this way, a dialogue was established where both interviewer and interviewee were co-contributors but each within their respective roles, guided by the interview situation.

At the end of the interview, participants were asked if there were anything they would like to add or comment on. They were also told that they could contact me, if there was anything they came to think of at a later stage. One of the teachers wrote me an email afterwards, where she wanted to specify some issues she felt might not have come out the way she had intended. The content of the email was also included in the data.

Transcription of the interview data

To transcribe means to transfer something from one form to another (Kvale, 2007). In this case, the audio-recorded oral interviews needed to be transformed into a written form to allow for closer analysis. In connection to this, the researcher has to make choices, for instance concerning how detailed the transcriptions should be and what features of the conversation to note. How transcriptions are made depends on the purpose of the study and the kind of analysis the researcher plans to do.

Since I was not just interested in what was said but also in how it was said, the interviews were transcribed verbatim, including possible false starts, grammatical errors, recasts, fillers (mmm, well...) and so on. Furthermore, in a conversation, meaning is not just created by the actual words spoken. As Hycner (1985) points out, different forms of non-verbal and para-linguistic cues may emphasise or even alter the literal meaning of the words (p. 287). For instance, emphasis may be added to signify the importance of something or the tone of voice may indicate that the person is being sarcastic. Thus, in the transcription, words spoken with particular emphasis were noted and capitalised, pauses were indicated with three dots and emotional expressions such as laughter and sighs were noted in parenthesis.

I transcribed a large part of the interviews myself but some of them were transcribed by a research assistant, who was instructed to follow the same principles I had employed. Transcribing the interviews proved to be a good way of getting acquainted with the data, as I had to listen to the interviews over and over again to the point where I could recall the tone of voice used by the participant just by reading the transcript. I also listened to the interviews I had not transcribed myself, to check the transcription and to see if there were additional things that I had noted in the actual interview situation that needed to be included in the transcripts.

4.3.2 Data analysis

In keeping with the methodological and philosophical underpinnings of the study, the data analysis methods chosen were based on phenomenological and hermeneutic principles and informed by general guidelines for qualitative data analysis provided in the literature. In this way, a procedure of analysis was developed that was specific for this study and specifically aimed at addressing the research questions.

The main data analysis was conducted after all data had been collected⁶¹. The data analysis procedure can be divided into five stages: 1) exploring the data, 2) classifying and coding the data (RQ1 & RQ2), 3) developing a descriptive framework (RQ1 & RQ2), 4) identifying patterns of change (RQ3), and 5) illustrating and contextualising findings by means of narratives. The stages⁶² are not to be viewed as discrete or chronologically sequenced but rather as distinguishable analytical tasks with specific purposes (cf. Baptiste, 2001). Even if the stages as well as the steps included within the stages to some extent followed the order presented here, the

⁶¹ Between the data collection phases, only preliminary interpretations were made.

⁶² Baptiste's (2001) uses the term *phase* in reference to what I have here termed *stage*. Since I use the term *phase* in reference to the different points of intervention, a different term had to be used here, in order to avoid confusion.

process was characteristically iterative, as the analysis evolved in accordance with the hermeneutic spiral.

Exploring the data

The first stage involved familiarising myself with the research data in order to get a general sense and understanding of the material as a whole, before breaking it into parts. I strived to immerse myself in the material with an open mind and read it several times from different perspectives. I read the material across cases, phase by phase, to get a sense of the general character of the different phases but I also read and followed up individual cases across phases to get an initial feel for the progression as well as individual variations.

This stage also included a preliminary interpretation of the data. As I read and re-read the material, I tried to identify common themes and patterns by noting commonalities, variations and differences between the accounts. Ideas, hunches and reflections were noted in a research journal that was kept throughout the process of analysis. The research journal served multiple purposes. With the help of the documentation, I was able to return to previous stages of the analysis at any time during the process. In this way, preliminary ideas and hunches could be reviewed and incorporated into the analysis, if they were still considered relevant. Furthermore, the research journal proved to be a useful tool in the process of reflexivity, so often emphasised in the literature (see e.g. Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2000; Cohen et al., 2007, Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Reflexivity involves critically considering how interpretations are made, on what grounds these interpretations are made and one's own role in that process. The documentation allowed me to trace back, overview and reflect on the process and the decisions made at different stages.

Classifying and coding the data (RQ1 & RQ2)

The next stage in the analysis involved segmenting and coding the data. With the help of the N'Vivo software, text segments pertaining to RQ1 and RQ2 were identified and sorted into two sets or *nodes*, one containing segments connected to teacher learning and the other segments pertaining to the teacher's job. Using tree nodes, I further separated the teacher learning segments into two subsets, one containing statements referring specifically to teacher learning during teacher education and the other statements connected to teacher learning at the workplace or teacher learning in general. During this initial stage, I was careful to include large enough segments of the text, so as not to lose sight of the original context. The two sets were then analysed separately following the procedures described below.

The next step, involved identifying and coding significant statements or meaning units pertinent to the respective research question. A meaning unit is a segment of the text that a) has meaning in itself and b) is concerned with and reveals something about the phenomenon under study. A meaning unit can be contained in a single word, a phrase or a longer text segment (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 479). Each meaning unit was then assigned a code that reflected the content and meaning of the segment (Creswell, 2005). Well aware that any transformation made to a text is in itself an interpretation, I strived to be open and sensitive towards how the meanings presented themselves (cf. van Manen, 1997). Thus, in assigning the initial codes, I strived to stay close to the participant's descriptions and when possible the wording of the participant was retained.

Still, in order to get at the meaning of a statement, it was not enough to consider the overt expressions used. I also had to consider the manner in which they were expressed and the relation of the individual statements to the context as a whole (cf. *the hermeneutic circle*, p. 61 above). For instance, it often occurred that participants returned to issues at different points in the interviews. As a participant returns to an issue, additional information may be provided that can shed light on how a particular phenomenon is viewed (cf. Georgi, 2009; Hycner, 1985). I then had to consider how this new information related to the previous statements and whether this new piece of information had consequences for the interpretation of the previous statement(s). At the same time, I needed to be open to the fact that participants may, in fact, hold mutually contradictory views (cf. chapter 1.4) and this possibility also had to be carefully considered.

The following step involved overviewing the initial codes and grouping together those that reflected the same meaning. This involved a further level of abstraction and in deciding which codes to merge into themes, I followed Georgi's (2009) advice and strived to look beyond the factual details of the various statements, to see where the meaning was essentially the same. The preliminary themes and patterns identified in the initial analysis also provided a useful backdrop, against which the emergent themes could be contrasted and verified.

Developing a descriptive framework (RQ1 & RQ2)

This stage involved scrutinising the themes even further, in order to refine, define and describe the distinctive patterns and variations that were identified. In order to get a better overview, I drew up three tables, one for each phase. Each table included three columns. In the first column, all statements were placed and grouped according to the emergent themes identified in the previous stage. In the second column, the initial codes were placed. The third column was used for preliminary

notes on patterns and sub-themes found in connection to the different themes. Gradually, a refined structure of themes started to take form as statements connected to each theme were compared and contrasted against each other and against statements connected to other themes. During the process, a hierarchical structure developed, as some themes were subsumed under others to form sub-themes or as variations within each theme were noted.

The themes and connected sub-themes were not randomly organised but arranged in a way that reflected my interpretation of the participants' cognitions. For instance, when I analysed the participants' views of the teacher's job, the different tasks were categorised and organised in terms of the different functions they were seen to have for the participants. When the preliminary results of the analysis were discussed during a research seminar, I was asked why the tasks of teaching and planning were split under separate themes. Are not these tasks connected and, in a way, inseparable and should they not therefore be included under the same theme? The question was valid and it could have been one way of representing the teacher's job, but it would not have been in keeping with the participants' views of the job. Even if the teachers naturally saw the connection between the two tasks, they clearly saw planning as a separate task surrounded by different conditions, compared to the task of teaching and thus the two tasks sort under different themes.

Even if the themes were inductively created, it needs to be recognised that my pre-understanding and familiarity with the literature in the field necessarily influenced what I noticed in the material. As the theories and research findings helped open my eyes to possibilities I might otherwise have overlooked, the process had abductive qualities (cf. p. 62 above). The connection to the literature in the field can specifically be noted in how the final themes and sub-themes were labelled. When a concept in the literature was seen to match the description of a theme, that concept was used as a label for the theme⁶³.

This stage was by far the most demanding and my understanding of the phenomena gradually developed, as I looked at the data from different angles. There were several contexts to be considered and each could further my understanding of the phenomena. First of all, the original texts (the narrative essays and the interview transcripts) constituted an important context and as themes were reformed or alterations were made, I went back and forth between the statements and the original contexts as a way of validating the themes. Secondly, the collection of texts connected to a specific phase constituted another context. Were the same issues

⁶³ When a concept has been adopted from the literature in this way, a reference is included in the presentation of the results.

evident in all accounts, what similarities and variations on the themes could be noted? Finally, each participant's collected texts also constituted a context that provided deeper insights into characteristic or differing ways of thinking.

The analysis resulted in a framework including both overarching themes as well as sub-themes on two levels. The framework illustrates and describes the scope and variation of cognitions found in the data, regarding the phenomena under study. The result is presented in chapters 5.1 and 5.2.

Identifying patterns of change (RQ3)

In the fourth stage, the focus shifted to the third research question and I needed to find a way of identifying and describing patterns of change between the different phases. In order to enable comparison between the phases, the analysis at this stage only included the nine core teachers, in other words, those teachers that took part in all three phases.

In order to get an overview of the data in terms of where focus was placed during the different phases, I decided to count the number of statements⁶⁴ connected to each theme for each phase. I also noted how the statements were distributed across the sub-themes. The underlying idea behind the procedure was that the frequency or number of times a different issue was addressed could give some indication of the significance of the issue (cf. Hycner, 1985), particularly since the participants had been free to decide what aspects of the phenomena to bring up.

In order to get an indication of the relative importance of each theme within each phase to enable comparison between the phases⁶⁵, I then calculated the percentage of statements connected to each theme, for each phase. In addition, I also noted how many of the teachers that espoused the views in question for each phase to get an indication of how common a certain view was during a particular phase and whether there were changes in this respect.

The calculations described above, gave me an idea of the pattern of distribution on a group level. Additionally, I did similar calculations on an individual level (calculating the number of statements for each theme in each phase) on the basis of

⁶⁴ In this study, quantification functions as a springboard for further qualitative analysis. Some methodologists represent the view that quantification is not compatible with qualitative research approaches. However, there are also proponents who feel that such a division is unproductive (cf. Åsberg, 2001) and, for instance, From and Holmgren (2003) maintain that on epistemological grounds, numerical data may very well be used as data in interpretive studies.

⁶⁵ Since the total number of statements varied between the phases, the number of statements would not have been comparable as such.

which individual profiles were drawn up for each core teacher. The profiles enabled me to see how the views evolved on an individual level and enabled me to compare the trajectories of the different participants.

The next step involved relating the quantitative overview to the qualitative data. In other words, I went back to the data to get a more thorough understanding of the changes involved. Based on this analysis, an overview was written, describing a) commonalities and discrepancies within each phase and b) patterns of change between the phases. The overview is presented in chapter 5.3.

Illustrating and contextualising findings by means of narratives

In chapter 1.4, I argued that teacher cognitions do not evolve in a vacuum. They are affected by our experiences, which, in turn, are affected by contextual affordances and constraints. In order to deepen the understanding of how teacher cognitions evolve, I decided to use individual narratives to illustrate and explore the interplay between the evolving views and contextual features, as well as between teachers' views of the profession and views of teacher learning. Narratives are powerful tools in the way they allow for the interlinking of the individual, or the cognitions of an individual in this case, and her interpersonal and environmental contexts (Polkinghorne, 1995). In the preceding analyses in relation to the first two research questions, the whole was broken down into elements, forming a framework of themes on different levels. In constructing the narratives, I place the elements back in their contexts and consider how they relate to one another as well as to the context as a whole.

Furthermore, as the results of the overview generated in stage four focused on patterns of change that could be discerned on a group level, it was felt that individual teacher narratives could help elucidate these results. I decided that two teacher narratives would suffice when it comes to illustrating variation and individual differences. I thus selected one teacher with previous experience of teaching before teacher education and one without experience. Some teachers were ruled out because of aspects in their stories that could make them easily identifiable (e.g. place of work). With the help of the individual profiles generated in stage four, I chose teachers who illustrated at least some of the common changes detected on the group level. The two teachers that were chosen are representative in the sense that they follow the general trends to some extent but on some issues, they go their own way.

Since the research process as a whole has not been framed by a narrative research approach, it is necessary to clarify how narrative inquiry has been applied in this

study. Initially, a couple of caveats need to be stipulated. First of all, when it comes to the type of data used in narrative studies, Polkinghorne (1995) points out that narratives are used to describe human action, events and happenings. Obviously, teacher cognitions fall outside such a strict definition. However, other studies within the field of teacher research (see e.g. Aspfors, Bendtsen, Hansén & Sjöholm, 2011; Eisenschmidt, Heikkinen & Klages, 2008; Furu, 2011) have focused on describing teachers' experiences. In line with cognitions, an individual's experiences are not directly accessible to the researcher but need to be inferred from verbal accounts. According to Heikkinen (2002, p. 19) "interviews of free form written answers in which the research subjects are given the opportunity to express their concepts of things in their own words" are suitable narrative material. This description fits well with the empirical material used in this study. Since I had taken care to allow the participants to speak freely about the topics in question and since the themes were developed and deepened from one phase to another, the material was considered rich enough to allow for narrative analysis.

Secondly, a characteristic trait of narrative research is the collaborative process between researcher and participant(s) (Heikkinen, 2002; Moen 2006). Ideally, the participants take part in the interpretive process throughout the entire research process. Commonly, participants read and comment on the narratives created by the researcher and their feedback is then attended to, so as to ensure that the voice of the participants is being heard⁶⁶. In this study, the narratives were not written until towards the end of the research project. Seeing that a fair amount of time had passed since data was gathered, which could make it difficult for the participants to recognise and validate their cognitions, they were asked to read the empirical data (the narrative essay and the interview transcripts) as well as the narratives. They were asked to comment on whether or not they felt that the narratives reflected and gave an accurate picture of their views on the specific matters and whether there were things that needed to be left out, changed or corrected (cf. Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 365). As both participants approved of the narratives, no changes were made as a result of this process, save for a change of the pseudonym used in reference to one of the participants (in keeping with the participant's request).

Polkinghorne (1995) distinguishes between two kinds of narrative inquiry. In the *analysis of narratives*, stories are analysed by means of paradigmatic processes resulting in the identification of common themes or taxonomies across the stories. Then again, *narrative analysis* involves drawing together events and happenings and

⁶⁶ This process can be understood as a form of member checking whereby the researcher seeks the participants' views of the accuracy and credibility of the research findings and interpretations.

synthesising them into a unified whole. Both forms of inquiry were used in this study. In creating the narratives, I employed narrative analysis and strived, in line with Polkinghorne's description, to "configure the data elements into a story that unites and gives meaning to the data" (p. 15). The narratives generated from the narrative analysis were, in turn, scrutinised by means of analysis of narratives, as I looked for common themes within the two stories.

In creating the narratives, I returned to the original texts to get a sense of the context. I read the empirical material of each participant carefully from phase 1 through to phase 3, noticing *when* something is expressed, *how* it is expressed, *how often* a particular issue surfaced, as well as how elements were linked. I used the descriptive frameworks developed in the previous analyses to identify and focus relevant themes. The interpretation thus occurred as I engaged in a critical and reflective dialogue between the empirical material and the perspectives provided by the descriptive frameworks developed during stages three and four (cf. Johansson, 2005).

After the initial readings and identification of central themes described above, the writing of the narrative and further interpretation occurred simultaneously (Johansson, 2005). In writing the narratives, a translation into English was made, a process which in itself involved interpretation. The narratives were condensed in the sense that salient elements were focused and elements that were superfluous and not relevant for the description of the evolving views were omitted.

4.4 Validity and reliability

The quality of a research study is not only dependent on the methods that have been used but of equal importance is how these methods have been applied. In this chapter, I will thus critically consider the methodological procedures applied in the study.

Within the quantitative research tradition criteria such as validity, reliability and objectivity are often used as a basis for assessment. However, researchers within the qualitative tradition have been cautious about adopting these criteria, since they do not lend themselves as well to studies based on interactive engagement and subjective interpretation, as opposed to those guided by objectivity and standardisation of procedures (Flick, 2011). Criteria for assessing qualitative research are not nearly as well established, although Lincoln and Guba's (1985, as cited in Flick, 2011) five criteria comprising trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability seem to be relatively widely

applied. Another option is to keep the terms validity and reliability but to apply them with caution and in accordance with the epistemological and methodological foundations of the study (see e.g. Kvale, 2007; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). I have opted for the second approach.

Initially, I will address the question of validity. Validity in a study concerns the issue of whether the methods used and instruments applied are able to provide information of the phenomena as they have been conceptualised in the study (cf. Kvale, 2007; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). If I aim to investigate teacher cognitions, I need to consider whether this is what the participants are actually reporting. Lankshear and Knobel (2004) point out that if researchers set out to investigate informants' beliefs or values, they need to ensure that it is, in fact, beliefs they are collecting information about and not superficial thoughts and opinions (p. 182). In practice, it is extremely difficult to separate mental constructs (Borg, 2006) and for this reason, I chose a broad definition of cognitions, including beliefs as well as thoughts and opinions, as they were expressed by the participants.

Kvale (2007) emphasises that questions of validity need to permeate the entire research process. Validity evokes questions concerning the credibility, plausibility and trustworthiness of the data, the interpretations and the procedures applied. Careful documentation and record keeping is an important prerequisite for establishing validity. In this respect, the research journal was a valuable tool where I could document, return to, evaluate and reconsider decisions made and measures taken, at different points during the process. I have also strived to make the process transparent and available for external scrutiny by carefully accounting for my own pre-understanding (i.e. my own experiences and the theories that have guided the research process), the choices made during the process as well as the methods chosen and how they were applied.

Furthermore, different measures for validating the interpretations and findings were taken. First of all, the process of analysis was holistic and iterative in keeping with the hermeneutic spiral. Classification and interpretations were continuously scrutinised and looked at from different perspectives, going from part to whole and vice versa. Participant checking was done in connection with the interviews when my initial understandings and interpretations of the participants' views were returned for feedback during the interview. The narratives were also read and validated by the respective participants. Furthermore, external evaluation of my interpretations was employed, as the initial findings of the study were presented and discussed during research seminars.

Reliability raises questions concerning the consistency and trustworthiness of the research findings (Kvale, 2007). This issue will be further discussed in chapter 7.2 but here I want to consider three aspects that are of relevance when it comes to the data collection procedure.

The first issue concerns consistency and is an aspect related to reliability highlighted by Lankshear and Knobel (2004). They point out that in order to produce comparable data, it is important that research participants understand the questions in the same way as the researcher but also in the same way as the other participants. In order to achieve this, the questions need to be as transparent and unambiguous as possible and Lankshear and Knobel (2004, p. 183) suggest that researchers test their questions in a pilot study. The interview questions were not piloted but the interview guidelines as well as the guidelines for the narrative essays were discussed during research seminars and together with colleagues. Furthermore, reflective essays around similar themes as the ones included in the narrative essay have been incorporated in our teacher education programme for many years. Prior to the study, such an essay was analysed as part of a course in my doctoral study programme and this provided an opportunity to reflect over the formulation of questions.

In the study, I strived to use open questions to allow the participants to express their views on the phenomena. Thus, the participants were asked to describe or tell about different phenomena. With open questions, there is always a possibility that participants may interpret and understand the questions differently from what the researcher intended. Another possibility is that participants get so wrapped up in their own stories as they let their associations run free that they forget what they were originally asked to talk about and drift off to other issues. These things are to be expected in an interview and it is the researcher's task to be attentive and keep the focus to ensure that one gets the information that is sought after. In these cases, I tried to avoid interrupting but listened attentively and asked follow-up questions, if I felt an issue had not been sufficiently addressed.

In semi-structured interviews, the general structure of each interview is similar in the senses that the same themes are addressed in all interviews and the themes are addressed in the same order. However, the questions are not necessarily worded in the exact same way across interviews. This was an issue that had to be taken into consideration during the analysis. As part of the process, I often went back to check the original context of the statements. For example, in cases where a particular view seemed particularly concentrated in one phase or the other, I went back to the original texts to check where and under what circumstances the views had been

expressed. Were the statements produced in connection to a specific theme or question? How were the questions asked and how does this compare to how the theme was addressed in the other phases?

The second issue concerns whether the data collected are trustworthy, in the sense that we can reasonably assume that the participants have provided genuine answers that reflect their cognitions. As Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) point out, there are no absolute guarantees that self-reports will capture the insider's perspective. For one thing, the participants may not be consciously aware of their cognitions (cf. tacit knowledge) or secondly, they may not be able to express or articulate their views. What is more, the participants may be inclined to give answers they believe the researcher wants to hear. These are caveats that are difficult to completely rule out but the researcher at least needs to be aware of them. By using prompts during the interviews, the researcher may get the participants to elaborate their answers and in that way both the participant as well as the researcher may get a better understanding of the participant's views. The researcher also needs to be attentive when participants echo the words of their teachers, when broad generalisations are provided or when jargon or educational concepts are used. In these cases, the literature recommends that the researcher ask the participants to elaborate or exemplify their answers during the interview. Also, during the analysis, the researcher can check for consistency of the views expressed within the interview as a whole (see e.g. Lankshear & Knobel, 2004).

The third issue relating to reliability and specifically then to consistency, is the question of whether data obtained during the different phases can be considered comparable, seeing that they were, in fact, collected by means of different data collection methods (i.e. narrative essays and interviews). Previously in this chapter, I discussed the reasons behind my choices and the benefits of the different methods. Still, writing and speaking are different modes of expression and some people are better writers than speakers, or vice versa. Even so, the focus of the study was the teachers' cognitions, not how eloquently they were able to express themselves and in my opinion, this information was equally obtainable by means of both methods. During the interviews, I had the possibility to interact with the participants and ask follow-up questions in case something remained unclear. The narrative essays did not allow for this, but at the same time, participants' familiarity with the conventions guiding the mode of writing meant that they took care to express themselves clearly. Furthermore, I also had the possibility of following up and asking for clarification during the interview in the following stage.

4.5 Ethical considerations

It is important that researchers pay attention to both scientific as well as ethical principles during the research process⁶⁷. According to Kvale (2007), ethical guidelines for social sciences usually comprise subject confidentiality, participants' informed consent, consequences of participation in the study, and the role of the researcher (p. 26). Some of these issues have been discussed elsewhere, but I will here briefly overview central principles and how these have been considered in the study.

When it comes to the issue of confidentiality, the researcher has to take measures in order to protect the identity of those participating in the study and of those indirectly influenced by the study, such as colleagues, supervisors or pupils. Both direct identifiers, such as names, and indirect ones, such as workplace, place of residence and family constellations, were attended to (cf. National Advisory Board on Research Ethics, 2009, p.10). Specific measures taken to protect the identity of stakeholders during this study involve using pseudonyms for the participants in the research report and omitting details that were not considered of immediate relevance for the purposes of the study, but that could make a stakeholder identifiable. Extra care was taken when it comes to the participants whose views were portrayed in the narratives. In order to ensure that I was not violating their trust or revealing issues they were not comfortable with, they were asked to read the narratives and to comment on whether they felt I had misinterpreted or misrepresented them in any way and consequently whether there were things they felt needed to be changed. As mentioned above, this process resulted in a change of the pseudonym used for one of the participants.

Another important issue is that participation in research needs to be voluntary and based on informed consent (cf. National Advisory Board on Research Ethics, 2009, p. 5). As previously discussed, a letter of consent (see Appendices) was distributed to and subsequently obtained from all participants. The teachers were informed about the general purpose of the study, the overall design of the study and ensured that if they chose to participate, their identities would be protected. All student teachers agreed that their essays could be used by me for research purposes but some of the teachers chose not to take part in the following phases of the study. This wish was respected.

⁶⁷ In Finland, the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics have published guidelines for the responsible conduct of research that apply to all academic disciplines (see Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity, 2012) and ethical principles of research for the humanities, social and behavioural sciences (see National Advisory Board on Research Ethics, 2009). The guidelines are in accordance with international rules of conduct.

It is not always easy to oversee what consequences participation in a study may have on participants. The researcher should at least try to avoid negative consequences and make sure that information is handled with respect for the privacy and integrity of the participants (cf. National Advisory Board on Research Ethics, 2009, pp. 8-9). I had been entrusted to represent the views of the participants and wanted to do so truthfully and respectfully. In no way did I want the participants to come across as ignorant or to portray them in a bad light. This was one reason for my choosing not to present the quotes used in the research report in a verbatim form. When typical features of spoken language such as false starts and grammatical errors are written out, it creates a very strange impression of the speaker.

Research interviews are not everyday conversations between equal partners. Interviews are contrived discussions where the researcher is usually the one asking the questions, as well as the one in control of the situation. The situation creates an uneven power relation of which the researcher has to be aware. As previously discussed, my dual role as researcher and teacher educator also had to be carefully considered. In order to avoid a further increase to the uneven power balance, I strived to carefully signal to the participants that during the interviews I was no longer Marina, the teacher educator but Marina, the researcher. I tried to empower the participants by stressing that it was *their* views I was interested in, as a way of signalling that in this situation, they were the experts, not me. Another important factor in this respect was the fact that the interviews took place after the teacher education programme had ended and grades had been given, so the participants had no reason to fear that their answers might affect their grades in any way (cf. Lankshear & Knobel, 2004, p. 111).

5 Presentation of results

This study aims to deepen the understanding of the process of becoming a teacher by describing the teachers' evolving views of teacher learning and the teaching profession during the early phases of professional learning. In this chapter, the results of the analysis of the empirical study will be presented. The presentation is structured around the three research questions. Thus, chapter 5.1. focuses on the teachers' cognitions of teacher learning and chapter 5.2 presents the results relating to the teachers' views of the teaching profession. The first two chapters focus on describing the scope and variation of cognitions identified in the data. In order to illustrate the different perspectives and to show how the findings are grounded in the data, a large amount of quotes have been used, thus providing an opportunity for the reader to judge the validity of the findings for him or herself.

Chapter 5.3 addresses the third research question and presents the results relating to the patterns of change discerned between the different phases. Initially, the group level is focused and commonalities but also noteworthy discrepancies within each phase are described. Chapter 5.3.1 deals with the evolving cognitions pertaining to teacher learning, separating between views relating to learning in teacher education and learning at the workplace, respectively. Chapter 5.3.2 presents the evolving cognitions relating to the teaching profession. Finally, in chapters 5.3.3 and 5.3.4 two individual teacher narratives are presented. The narratives serve the dual purpose of illustrating and contextualising some of the changes discerned on the group level from an individual perspective.

Issues pertaining to structure and organisation

In chapters 5.1 and 5.2, where the purpose is to illustrate the scope and variety of views represented in the data, I have opted to structure the presentation around the different themes rather than present one phase at a time. Instead, possible differences between the phases along with other noteworthy aspects are discussed in connection to the presentation of each theme. In this way, the presentation focuses on one theme at a time, using quotes from all three phases to illustrate the theme. Summaries are provided at intervals to help the reader keep track of the main findings.

In chapters 5.1 and 5.2, initial overviews of the main themes and connected sub-themes are provided to help readers orient themselves. Some sub-themes have been further divided into aspects but for purposes of lucidity, these have not been included in the initial, holistic figure overviewing the whole framework of themes.

Instead, a more detailed distinction is provided in the subsequent figures that depict each theme separately.

In the presentation, each quote is followed by a bracket that includes a name and a number. The name refers to the assigned name of the participant quoted and the numbers (1, 2 or 3) indicate which phase the quote comes from. In connection to the results pertaining to the teachers' views of teacher learning, an additional letter (W) or letter combination (TE) is added. The letters signify whether the quote refers specifically to learning opportunities connected to teacher education (TE) or whether it refers to workplace learning or teacher learning on a more general level (W). Thus, (Amanda 2, TE) signifies that the preceding statement is by the participant Amanda during phase 2 and that it refers to her views of learning in connection to teacher education.

The quotes have been translated from Swedish into English by the researcher. When translating the quotes, focus has been on rendering an accurate account of the content and meaning of the statement. For purposes of readability, grammatical errors or features of spoken language of no immediate relevance (e.g. false starts or repetitions) have been omitted⁶⁸. A slash followed by three dots and another slash /.../ indicates where parts of the text have been omitted. When direct quotes are used in the main body of the text, they are written out in italics and surrounded by quotation marks. In cases where participants are not directly quoted but their statements have been condensed and summarised, I have not used italics but a reference to the participant is given. Square brackets [] are used for explanatory comments or in cases where a specific reference has been omitted and replaced to protect the identity and interests of stakeholders. Underlining indicates when a word or phrase has been emphasised by the participant. Pauses are indicated by three dots.

5.1 Cognitions of teacher learning

In this chapter, the results of the analysis pertaining to the teachers' views of teacher learning will be presented. In line with the operationalised research question, the analysis focused on identifying and describing the learning opportunities recognised by the teachers in the study. In the analysis, a number of learning opportunities were identified and these were then grouped into four distinct and overarching themes, as illustrated in Figure 3 below. The four main themes *Experiential learning*, *Mediated*

⁶⁸ Verbatim interview transcripts are in many ways artificial as they are an aggregate of the different conventions that guide spoken and written modes of representation. For a reader who does not have access to the original spoken version, verbatim transcriptions may be rather confusing. (cf. Kvale, 2007)

experience, Interaction and Self-development, illustrate four qualitatively different ways of perceiving and approaching teacher learning. Each theme then includes a number of subordinate forms of learning.

It should be pointed out that even if the themes can be separated on a theoretical level, they are not mutually exclusive. Accordingly, an individual may hold views pertaining to several themes and views may also reflect qualities of more than one theme simultaneously.

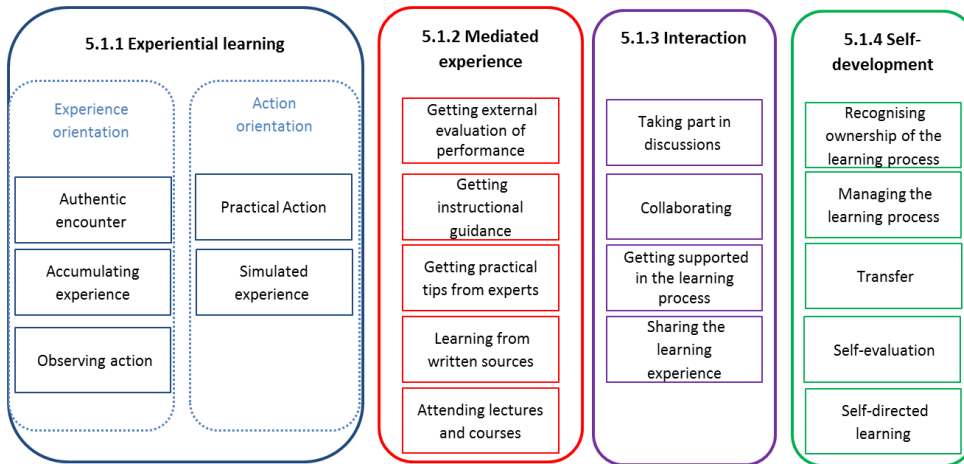


Figure 3. Cognitions of teacher learning: overview of learning opportunities.

5.1.1 Experiential learning

Experiential learning is a collection of forms of learning where the learner learns *through* experience with the phenomenon rather than, for instance, through hearing about the phenomenon, talking about it or merely thinking about it. The five sub-themes connected to this theme are divided into two orientations, an *Experience-* and an *Action-orientation*, illustrating two complementary ways of viewing this learning opportunity. The sub-themes *Authentic encounter*, *Accumulating experience* and *Observing action* are experience-oriented, as they focus on experience as a source or stimulus for learning (cf. English, 2005, p. 243). In other words, learning is here seen to occur through experience of and direct contact with the phenomenon in question. The remaining two sub-themes, *Practical action* and *Simulated experience*, are action-oriented as they highlight action and involve learning by doing practical work in a relevant and meaningful context.

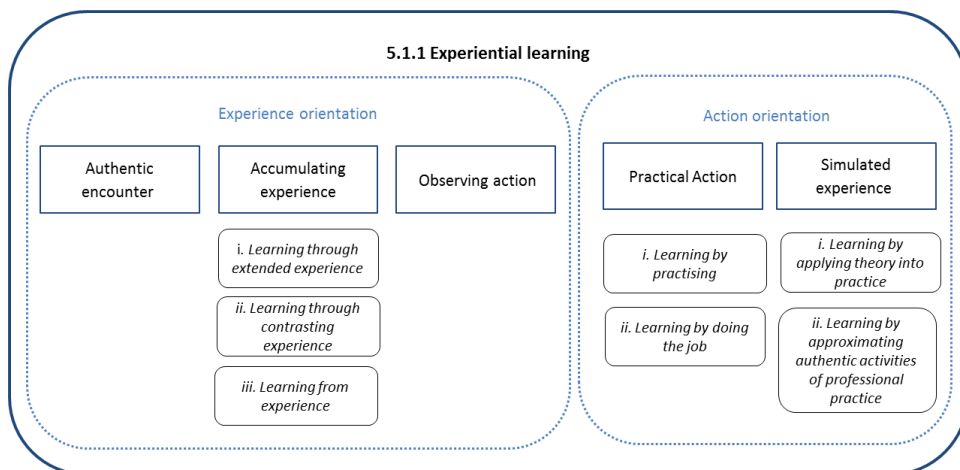


Figure 4. Learning opportunities connected to Experiential learning.

Experiential learning: Experience orientation

Authentic encounter

Authentic encounter is the first sub-theme connected to *the Experience orientation* and this sub-theme brings together statements where the teachers express a preference for getting first hand, authentic experience of the teacher’s job. The vast majority of statements connected to this theme concern learning in TE, where authentic experience is considerably more optional than at the workplace. In phase 1, the participants expect that teacher education will provide opportunities to personally experience what the teacher’s job involves and that these encounters will give insight into what the job is really like.

I myself have not yet worked as a teacher but I look forward to that part of my pedagogical studies when I personally get an opportunity to see and experience what it is like to work as a teacher. (Anne 1, TE)

I think I will get to experience the teaching profession in a completely new way, behind the scenes, so to speak. (Christine 1, TE)

In phase 2, Nancy speaks highly of the field practice period as it offered an opportunity to see “*what the job is like, for real*” (Nancy 2, TE). Apart from this statement, a narrowing of focus can be noted in phase 2, as the teachers emphasise authentic experiences, specifically of those parts of the job that are connected to the classroom. Most likely the change of focus is a reflection of the kind of experiences

offered in TE, where most direct encounters are classroom experiences.

Just being in the classroom for real is actually very important. (Daniella 2, TE)

It's been really good being in the classroom (Helen 2, TE)

In phase 3, when the participants have been working as teachers for some time, they are more critical towards the experiences provided in teacher education and feel that the encounters were not entirely authentic and that they did not provide an accurate picture of the teacher's job. Even if Helen still appreciates the opportunities of "*being in schools*" and getting "*practical experience*" offered during teaching practice, she feels that in teacher education too much focus and detailed analysis of individual lessons resulted in the teachers' getting a distorted view of the profession. Similar criticism is also brought up by Christine, who expresses that having relatively few practice lessons in TE compared to what you have as a practising teacher, meant that you got unrealistic expectations as to what could be achieved during a lesson and how much time you can reasonably spend on planning individual lessons.

There was tremendous pressure on a single lesson, whereas in reality it's not really like that. (Helen 3, TE)

Twenty lessons are really quite few, because later on you will have twenty each week, and that can have negative consequences. (Christine 3, TE)

Amanda and Susan, on their part, both express that there is a gap between the experiences they had as new teachers and their experiences at the practice school, where they did not have to encounter unruly pupils or more demanding situations. The lack of authentic experience during TE made them feel unprepared for the reality that they faced as NQTs.

Now that I'm working in different schools I think that the practice school gives you an overly positive view of pupils /.../ this is where the best pupils go, say what you like. But if you had, in some way, experienced some more difficult situations there already, then maybe it hadn't come as such a shock when you step into working life. I would say that I have experienced a whole lot of situations that I would never have encountered at the practice school. (Susan 3, TE)

At the same time, the difference really hits you when you come to a regular school. 'That's a new teacher, now we can do what we want' - in that way there is a big difference. Maybe the two realities could be brought closer to one another. I mean, what is it really like when you come to a new school as a teacher. (Amanda 3, TE)

In line with the other views expressed in connection to this sub-theme, Simone also stresses the importance of personal, authentic encounters. She believes that certain aspects of the teacher's job may be difficult to learn "*in theory*" since they require personal experience. However, in contrast to the other views expressed here, she does not seem to expect TE to provide these kinds of opportunities, which means that, in her view, certain aspects need to be learnt on the job.

This might be something that is difficult to learn in theory. Instead, it must be experienced first-hand. (Simone 1, W)

That's why it is not enough that teachers know their subject. He or she also needs knowledge of [how to maintain] discipline and how to solve conflicts. As I mentioned earlier, this knowledge may be difficult to obtain during your studies. Instead, you often have to experience it. (Simone 1, W)

In sum, *Authentic encounters* are a natural part of learning at the workplace but the teachers clearly express a need for authentic encounters during TE as well, as these are considered important prerequisites for dealing with the day-to-day work as NQTs.

Accumulating experience

Similar to the sub-theme *Authentic encounter*, learning through *Accumulating experience* involves getting exposure to and experience of the teacher's job. However, the main concern here is not with the authenticity of the experience but other issues such as time, amount, variation and use of experience are in focus. These issues form the basis for the three aspects that can be discerned in relation to this sub-theme. These are i) *learning through extended experience*, ii) *learning through contrasting experiences* and iii) *learning from experiences*.

i) Learning through extended experience

Learning through extended experience highlights the role of time in teacher learning. Here learning is seen as a gradual process, where you learn to become a teacher over time by accumulating a sufficient amount of experience. For the most part, the extended experience is seen as something you accumulate on the job, but a few teachers also hope that teacher education will provide them with extended experience so that they become habituated and used to teaching and working as teachers.

The most important thing would be to practise standing in front of a class, teach lessons and get used to that. /.../ For the most part I hope to get experience of the teaching profession. (Amanda 1, TE)

At the same time, I know that the experience that makes someone a good teacher often comes with time, along with the self-confidence that makes the teacher feel comfortable with her profession and her subject. (Tina 1, W)

Well, you develop all the time /.../ perhaps just because you keep working along and then you become more used to working life. (Mary 3, W)

The teachers express they want to develop routine and become experienced and habituated. In Nancy's view, experience is the key to learning and the more experience you have, the more you learn. Susan, on her part, believes that it will take years of experience in order to develop sufficient routine.

That's what it's all about, field practice... that you get experience. /.../ It all boils down to how many years you've been working and been a part of working life. I think that is the best way. (Nancy 2, W)

You don't become a good teacher overnight. It takes several years to grow into the profession and to learn all that is required of a competent teacher. Eventually everything that is connected to the teacher's job starts to go automatically. In order to learn everything that you need to be a competent teacher, you need to have studied and worked as a teacher for several years. (Susan 1, W)

ii) Learning through contrasting experiences

Learning through *Accumulating experience* can also be a matter of what I have termed *learning through contrasting experiences*, that is experiencing a range of different situations that provide contrasting experiences. The learners are, so to speak, loading their backpacks with different kinds of experiences. This form of learning is only mentioned in connection to workplace learning and is only found in phases 2 and 3. Below, Nancy explains that you need work experience and experience of different classes in order to get a feel for the pupils' varying levels and needs. Daniella expresses that she has experienced a range of both positive and negative experiences that have shaped her way of thinking.

Then when you have those experiences, when you are working, you see what issues you need to put effort into, what areas you might have to work on a bit more and on what level the pupils are...and that varies a lot from one class to another. /.../ So it is experience, working experience, plus all the different classes. (Nancy 2, W)

Yes, I don't know if I can think of anything specific but... there are different kinds of experiences that come to mind that have brought me onward. It can be negative experiences as well. It can be positive or negative experiences that make you think 'this might be a good method' or 'that's what I'm going to do' or 'I'm not going to do that', or something like that. (Daniella 3, W)

The teachers recognise that a useful way of getting contrasting experiences is through working in different schools. Susan has had experience of this and explains how the diametrically different experiences influenced and shaped her way of thinking. In the second quote, she expresses that she feels that working in another school form would bring new kinds of experiences and new insights. Similarly, Christine, whose post-educational experience is connected to one school only, feels it could be useful to experience a different school.

I knew that the pupils at the practice school were very well-behaved... extremely well-behaved. I've come to see that now that I've been working in a high school⁶⁹ here in [Town X]. It was a little different I would say. I sure have come across a whole lot ... I've found myself in all sorts of situations /.../ That school that I was working in is, in fact, somewhat of an ...extreme school in this town. So that might have had an impact as well and now that I'm working with these pupils in [another school], I haven't had any problems with them. They are totally... they are motivated and everything goes like clockwork, so then again...if I had just worked here, I wouldn't even be saying these things. I kind of experienced things there that I had not expected, so maybe that is why I think like this. (Susan 3, W)

I think I still have a lot to see and I want to work in different schools too... I would love to have a go at working in an upper secondary school, too, during a longer period of time. I think that that would teach me a lot of other things compared to what I've learnt in high school. It is a totally different world, I think, being a high school teacher compared to being a teacher at an upper secondary school. (Susan 3, W)

Then I would like to work in another school as well, to see what that is like. (Christine 3, W)

iii) Learning *from* experience

The aspect, *learning from experience*, includes statements where the teachers refer to a learning activity that involves using and drawing on one's own previous experiences for further learning and development. The experiences thus function

⁶⁹ In reference to grades 7-9, i.e. the upper level of comprehensive school, the participants sometimes use the word *high school* (Swe. *högstadiet*).

both as a source and a vehicle for learning, as the learners are using the accumulated experiences collected in their backpacks for further learning. In connection to TE, there is only one such statement when Heather expresses in phase 1 that she hopes to learn *from* the accumulated experiences gained during teaching practice.

I hope that my experiences from the initial practice period /.../ will give me some insight into how to behave as a teacher and that I will get lots of ideas and enlightening experiences that can be of help in my own teaching. (Heather 1, TE)

Below, Tina gives a step-by-step description of how accumulated experiences can be used for further learning. Amanda, on her part, explains that with more experience of pupils and as she got to know them better, it became easier for her to predict their behaviour. This, in turn, made her more confident and allowed her to adopt a more flexible approach in her teaching.

But I definitely think that it is something that develops with time as well. When you've acquired a certain amount of routine and you kind of know what it is all about... you have a comprehensive picture /.../ and then when you get into situations you could not have predicted that you would ever get involved in... it gives you different kinds of experiences that then help you on and then when a similar situation comes before you again, you have a better idea of how to handle it and what to do. So I think that experience is definitely something that is very important in this case. (Tina 2, W)

I also think that getting to know your pupils is important. When you get to know them, you become more relaxed and you know what to expect of all the groups when they are not all new to you. Then you don't have to be nervous about it and stick to what you've planned, just because you don't know what would happen if you suddenly were to change course and do it in another way. So I think that has helped a lot. (Amanda 3, W)

Obviously, learning from experience is not possible unless you have experiences to draw on. As Tina explains above, it takes time to accumulate experiences that enable you to form a sufficiently comprehensive frame of reference (in Tina's words "*a comprehensive picture*") that can be used in new situations. Simone specifically points out that she believes that this way of learning becomes easier with more experience.

With the help of experience, you realise how to best go about it. In this case, I definitely think that an older and more experienced teacher has a certain advantage, compared to a newly qualified pedagogue. (Simone 1, W)

For the most part, this form of learning is thus associated with learning at the workplace and only five out of fifty statements concern learning in TE. Still, as illustrated in Melissa's and Susan's comments below, TE can play an indirect role when it comes to learning from accumulated experience in that it provides a foundation for further learning.

I know that I need experience too so ... I think you learn a lot through experience as well /.../ so this [teacher education] forms a kind of basis. (Melissa 2, W)

Before TE, when I was working... well, I had some kind of experience but really I sometimes did the wrong thing and now I know better how to do it, much better. So I do prioritise education because after that you have the tools to start collecting experiences. (Susan 2, W)

Learning from experience can also be a relatively subtle process and some teachers express that they find it hard to pinpoint exactly when and in what situations they have learnt, which is illustrated in Linda's and Helen's comments below.

I wouldn't say any particular incidents, no. You kind of get something from every situation /.../ It's the everyday life that takes you onward I think. (Linda 3, W)

I don't know if there is any particular incident that you could attribute it to. It is more... like it slowly dawns on you... insights about different things. (Helen 3, W)

Thus, learning through *Accumulating experience* is mostly associated with learning at the workplace. It is a gradual, relatively slow and subtle form of learning. In order to draw on previous experiences and *learn from experience*, time and exposure to a variety of situations are needed, and it might therefore be difficult for a student teacher, who does not yet have a sufficiently comprehensive frame of reference, to fully benefit and draw on the experiences encountered. Still, TE can play an indirect role by providing a foundation for further learning.

Observing Action

There is a difference between doing the job yourself and observing other teachers doing their job. One could argue that observational experience is mediated rather than experiential since when you are observing somebody in the act of teaching, you are not experiencing teaching first hand, but rather watching somebody else's interpretation of teaching. However, after closely examining how the teachers talk about their observational experiences, I concluded that it is the experiential qualities

of the experience that are underscored. The teachers refer to the experience as being 'practical' and 'concrete' and even if they are not directly involved in the action, they are still able to experience and 'see for themselves'.

Especially in the beginning I observed lessons in other subjects, which was really worthwhile. /.../ So it is perhaps more the practical aspects I thought... it was just so rewarding watching how other teachers [taught]... (Helen 2, TE)

It would be great to get to experience those concrete classroom situations once again. (Linda 3, W)

All statements but one in connection to this sub-theme concern observing teaching and classroom work rather than other aspects of the teacher's job. In connection to TE, a shift in focus can be noticed between the expectations in phase 1 and the cognitions in phases 2 and 3. In phase 1, the teachers want opportunities to observe how classroom work and teaching is done and how experienced teachers work with a class.

Getting to see how other teachers teach their subject and work with the class. In that way I will surely learn a lot and I can compare my own methods with those used by other, more experienced teachers. (Susan 1, TE)

Observations of more experienced teachers (Janet 1, TE)

Thus in phase 1, when the focus is on learning the ropes and learning how to act as teachers, the experienced teacher functions as a role model but also, in the case of Susan, as a source of inspiration and a way of getting new perspectives on her own teaching. In phases 2 and 3, the experience or expertise of the teachers that are observed, seem no longer to be as important. A reason for this may be that the observations now serve the purposes of providing perspectives on and inspiration for one's own teaching and for this you do not necessarily need to observe an expert. In fact, as Christine comments below, it might even be positive when you get to observe situations where things do not go entirely according to plan.

I thought it was good that we observed each other's lessons. In that way you got to see different kinds of teachers. /.../ You realised that you can't say that a teacher is good or bad but rather that some things work better and other things less so. And that different people have different ways of doing things. (Christine 3, TE)

It was also worthwhile to listen to others teaching your own subject, because then you get to see things you yourself might be doing right or wrong from a

different perspective, ‘oh, that could actually be understood in this way’ and ‘I didn’t know that’. That was useful too. (Helen 2, TE)

As Helen points out in the comment above, when you observe a lesson it can help you notice things that you may not have realised just by teaching the class yourself. Then again, there are other issues that may be difficult to grasp just by observing action. Christine expresses that even if she had observed lessons in classes she had taught, she did not really get a sense of the progression of class work until she had taught a class herself, for a longer period of time.

Even if we have observed lessons and attended prior lessons⁷⁰, these experiences are still somewhat unconnected. (Christine 2, TE)

Initially, learning by observing action is not a form of learning that the teachers connect to learning at the workplace. By phase 2, only one teacher, Nancy, expresses that observing other teachers’ lessons could be a useful way of learning even after formal qualification. She had found the activity very useful in TE and would have liked to see it continued as she felt she got useful “*ideas from others*” when observing lessons.

But I also think that you should be able to continue observing lessons and continue to get these ideas so that it would be more of a process. That it wouldn’t stop there, when you could actually continue to develop. /.../ You could actually continue attending other people’s lessons and even the lessons at the practice school so that you could experience new students and see what new things they bring along and what kind of ideas they have. That was very instructive, I thought. (Nancy 2, W)

As it turns out, in phase 3, observing action is recognised as a form of learning at the workplace for the beginning teacher. When starting work as a new teacher, Amanda would have liked to get help and support from her colleagues but when this did not happen, she had to resort to observing how the other teachers did things. Her comment is the only statement that does not explicitly focus on classroom observation. Daniella, on her part, had problems dealing with a pupil in her class who did not listen to her or show her any respect. Below, she explains how she learnt from observing another teacher interacting with the pupil.

The instructions were very few, so one just had to notice or watch how others were doing it (Amanda 3, W)

⁷⁰Before student teachers begin their teaching practice in a particular class, they are expected to attend the preceding lesson taught in that class in the particular subject they will be teaching.

Then she walked in, the Finnish teacher, who had been working there a long time, and she just told him 'be quiet, you mustn't talk in that way', really with kind of... authority and in an experienced manner that she probably takes to when she wants them to be quiet. And I just noticed how his [the pupil's] attitude towards me was completely different from the one he had towards her. /.../ anyway, he had a very shameless attitude towards me and then when she walked in, he became like a little puppy dog. It was a complete turnaround. And there I noticed that there is something about her manner... she is a little older and maybe just her tone of voice... Just that, a simple thing really, that she kind of just said it in a low tone of voice. Then I actually tried it myself an hour later when I walked in to start the lesson. I tried to have that tone of voice and told them 'stop that immediately', and already from the start they actually behaved. /.../ I think I've actually seen that before as well. It was the former principal, /.../ she also had that same tone of voice. /.../ So there I noticed it too, but after that I kind of forgot about it. Since she hasn't been around I haven't heard it and repeated it so to speak /.../ But then when I heard the Finnish teacher doing it, it was like, 'Oh yes, I see. There was that tone of voice again'. (Daniella 3, W)

Daniella is, in fact, describing a complete process of observational learning, including elements of observation on repeated occasions, reflection and imitation as she models the behaviour of the experienced teacher she observed.

For the qualified teacher, observing other teachers' lessons can serve multiple purposes. Christine and Linda recognise that observing their pupils as they are taught by another teacher, is a good way of getting to know your pupils better. Furthermore, observing others can also serve as a much needed boost to self-confidence for the newly qualified teacher. Linda seems to have been reassured by the fact that the other teachers used similar teaching methods and from Christine's second comment we can deduce that she believes that observing others would be reassuring and give her new perspectives on her own teaching.

It would be really interesting to observe the other teachers and see how my pupils behave during their lessons. Are they as troublesome or do they work equally well? (Christine 3, W)

I do not teach my class [where I am a form teacher] so in order to get to know them, I have attended other teachers' lessons and they have used similar teaching methods. (Linda 3, W)

Sometimes you compare yourself to others in a bad way and think 'Oh no, they have wonderful lessons and probably do really cool things and they use computers and what not, and here I am working with the textbook' /.../ but I think you would be positively surprised, or kind of see yourself in a new light if

you were to compare yourself with the others. In the classroom that is.
(Christine 3, W)

In sum, two things can be noted in relation to the role of *Observing action*. First of all, observing action is seen to serve different purposes. It can be an opportunity where the teacher observed is seen as a role model and ideas and inspiration are sought after. In these cases, the expertise of the teacher is considered important. Then again, observing action can also be an opportunity for getting new perspectives on oneself and on the role of the teacher in classroom interactions and here both successful and unsuccessful examples can be equally enlightening. Secondly, in phases 1 and 2, the participants mainly connect observing action to learning in TE, whereas by phase 3, they recognise that it can be a way of learning at the workplace as well.

Experiential learning: Action orientation

Practical action

As opposed to the previous three sub-themes that were experience-oriented, this sub-theme along with the following one are action-oriented, as they focus on learning by doing practical work in a relevant and meaningful context. More specifically, learning through *Practical action* refers to learning by actively carrying out the target behaviour in an authentic situation or setting, for instance when a teacher learns by teaching pupils in a classroom. Learning through practical action can take place during field practice periods, as part of an educational programme, or as one is doing one's job in a workplace setting. Most statements connected to this sub-theme focus on those aspects of the teacher's work that take place in the classroom. Two different forms of learning could be discerned and consequently there are two aspects connected to this sub-theme: i) *learning by practising* and ii) *learning by doing the job*.

i) Learning by practising

Learning by practising focuses on activities such training, experimenting and applying, that is learning activities that are deliberately employed as one strives to improve one's skill⁷¹. This aspect is mainly connected to learning in TE and can be

⁷¹ Cf. Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) distinction between acting and *enaction*, where the latter term is described as "the putting into action of a new idea or a new belief or a newly encountered practice" (p. 953).

found throughout all three phases. In phase 1, the teachers express that they expect TE to provide first hand practice and training of teaching and working in a classroom. In phases 2 and 3, they express appreciation for the opportunities for practice offered during TE.

The most important thing would be to practise standing in front of a class, to teach lessons (Amanda 1, TE)

To get practice /.../ of working with a class (Helen 1, TE)

It was good that you got to try your hand at teaching lessons (Linda 3, TE)

Practising can also involve applying and testing your theoretical knowledge. This particular form of practising is only found in phase 2. Here the teachers express how important it is to get opportunities to try out teaching methods and working principles in practice. As Daniella points out, just learning about methods and approaches in a classroom context is not enough; trying out the methods and doing it yourself in practice are seen as essential parts of the learning process.

Well, all these ...teaching methods and different... how to get pupils motivated so that it doesn't turn into the same old boring teaching that I myself experienced /.../ just to be able to make lessons varied, and I think we got to try that a lot here, we got to try things out (Nancy 2, TE)

Pupil centered teaching, most definitely /.../ before I had done the practice... /.../ I'd say it was a matter of huge importance that one has actually employed pupil centered activities. (Susan 2, TE)

And then doing it for real during lessons (Daniella 2, TE)

One essential difference between practising an activity and simply doing an activity is that when you practise something, it means that you are not yet fully skilled at that particular activity. When it comes to a complex activity such as teaching, it may be difficult for a novice to identify, keep track of and simultaneously handle every aspect involved. From this perspective then, it might even be good that your first experiences of teaching are not entirely "authentic" but that you are allowed to take things one step at a time. Amanda struggles with conflicting opinions in this respect. On the one hand, she is one of the teachers who express that TE should provide more authentic encounters (cf. the sub-theme *Authentic encounter*) but on the other hand, she implies that in an authentic situation there may be too many issues for a novice to consider and take into account at one time.

The practice lessons that you teach are really useful. Since I hadn't taught at all before [teacher] education, it was good that you got to try it there. And in a way I think the fact the pupils are used to being around new people and well-behaved and nice in general is a good thing. /.../ it is so much easier when you don't have to think about disciplinary issues at the practice school. (Amanda 3, TE)

Even if practising, in the sense of doing deliberate regular training to improve your skill, is most readily connected to teacher education, it can be a part of the overall teacher learning process as well, especially if you are a new teacher. Susan (2, W) describes that you can become a teacher by "*training and practising*" alongside studying and by "*simply going at it by practising, practising, practising*". Amanda stresses the importance of feeling your way and proceeding by trial and error, and Melissa feels that making mistakes is a necessary part of the process.

I think it takes time. You just have to feel your way towards what works best for you. You have to feel your way so that you know what works best for the pupils too. What is interesting, what you might be able to skip and what is important... I think with time, maybe after ten years or so /.../ so it is a matter of trial and error. (Amanda 2, W)

You learn by making mistakes, this is true for both pupils and teachers, because then you don't make them again. (Melissa 1, W)

Susan refers to her first six months of work as a continued period of practice. She considers this period an essential part of her development and only after this experience, she feels like a full-fledged teacher.

For me, as a relatively young teacher, the first six months were almost like a continued practice period. After those six months and my maternity leave I am able to say that I feel like an educated, competent teacher. For the first time I also see myself as an equal in relation to my colleagues. You can't generalise this in any way, but personally I can admit that I needed those six, at times a little trying, months in that school, which was the complete opposite of the practice school, in order to acquire the self-confidence, the social and problem solving skills I consider I have today. (Susan 3, W)

ii) Learning by doing the job

The aspect *learning by doing the job* includes statements where the participants refer to learning by teaching or, on a more general level, by simply working as a teacher.

I hope I will learn a lot from the initial practice period this autumn, especially practical things, since I have never taught before. But since we are to teach our own lessons, I should learn something. (Melissa 1, TE)

It is a good thing that one continuously develops. One year ago I had not taught a single day in any classroom. Now I am more acquainted with the day to day work in the school and I have learnt certain principles to live by. For example, it is no use giving pupils choices in every single matter unless it is necessary. /.../ I have also learnt that it pays off to be in control of the classroom and, when necessary, to be a little more authoritative rather than a democratic leader of the group. In my opinion, you learn small things like that best just by teaching. (Mary 1, W)

You can work your way towards becoming a good teacher /.../ with time you learn how to work with your pupils in order for them to learn... (Amanda 2, W)

When the teachers talk about their experiences of learning by doing the job, there are three features connected to this form of learning that can be noted. First of all, when you act, your actions and the outcomes of your actions become tangible in a way that allows you to reflect on them. Thus, like Daniella and Helen below, the teachers express that doing the job made them realise and notice new things. Denice, on her part, views reflection as an essential and integrated part of learning by doing the job.

But then when you stood there, in front of the class, you noticed that you really have to have your head screwed on the right way, so that you are able to present things in such way and in such an order so that it might stick, so that it captures the audience so to speak. (Daniella 2, TE)

An area where I think I have probably developed the most is that I have become much more self-aware. When I have started working, I realise that I actually know this, and I really can do this and I know how to do this and that, and I also know how to manage, if I've had little time to prepare. (Helen 3, W)

I think that in my case, I have benefited more from experience...so far. Just standing there in the classroom and doing it and preparing things and preparing material has been rather... because then you are forced to really think about what you are doing and what it is that you want to accomplish. (Denice 2, W)

Secondly, as a new teacher you are often faced with situations that you have not experienced before. Thus, handling new situations can be an important learning activity, where the outcome of the situation significantly influences what the teachers

learn from the process. In connection to TE, some student teachers had their first experiences of teaching classes. Tina and Amanda both express how important it was that they had these experiences, but also that they were able to handle these situations successfully, which gave them self-confidence.

But of course it was extremely important that you got to have a go at it yourself too, about twenty lessons or so /.../ because, as I said, I hadn't worked as a teacher before, or done substitute teaching or anything like that, so it was all new to me in that way. But it was such a relief to notice that you could manage...that it will be all right. (Tina 2, TE)

Those practice lessons were most important /.../ just realising that I can do this. When you don't have any previous experience of the teaching profession ... that you can manage it. (Amanda 2, TE)

When you, as a teacher, are faced with a new situation, you have to act in one way or another. Even if you do not know how to best deal with a particular situation, you are forced to deal with it in some way or other. Helen and Susan see a learning potential in having to handle new situations as a teacher.

I don't know whether it should be considered a part of development, but in some way you get to apply both what you have learnt what you have not learnt. (Helen 3, W)

Then you learn a lot about yourself too /.../ all the time you are faced with new situations, so every day is challenging. Especially as a new teacher, you are faced with a lot of situations you haven't met before, and then you get to... it really puts you to the test, how you handle all the different situations. (Susan 3, W)

Furthermore, in Susan's view, TE did not and could not have prepared her for dealing with the kinds of situations she met at the workplace. She feels that you need to learn by experiencing and dealing with them yourself. In her second comment she expresses that she learnt a great deal about herself from how she handled a particular situation.

The school where I worked previously was, as I said, extreme and I don't think anything could have prepared me for what I met there. Now that I think of it, I don't think you can prepare for or train to handle difficult situations like that. You simply have to 'learn by doing', learn by experiencing them yourself. (Susan 3, W)

It took me a while to get over that. Those kinds of situations have made me... stronger. I would never have thought that I would be able to keep my calm like that. I thought I would have flipped out and been the first to run out. You sure learn a lot and afterwards it has hit me, 'blimey, I sure handled that well'... (Susan 3, W)

Finally, doing the job can also involve handling similar situations, which involves encountering opportunities for repeating similar activities. Two teachers in phase 2 refer to a sequence of lessons that they taught towards the end of their teaching practice. During this sequence, the student teachers worked with the same group of pupils around a set theme and this is what Melissa says:

Especially that sequence [of lessons] was very worthwhile, I thought. When I got to work six lessons with one and the same group, I could more easily see development in myself too ... and I thought each lesson was an improvement compared to the previous one. That was gratifying. (Melissa 2, TE)

When the learning context, in this case the teaching group, remained the same, Melissa found it easier to recognise and pinpoint her own change and development. A workplace setting also offers opportunities for handling similar situations. Linda recognises an opportunity for development and learning in having to teach the same content three times during a relatively short time span. This gives her an opportunity to compare and contrast the consequences of her actions.

Already by the third time you teach something... I teach the same thing three times a week, since I have three groups. I have noticed that when I've done it three times then...the grammar and everything falls into place... (Linda 2, W)

In sum, *Learning by practising* is thus mainly connected to learning in TE. The teachers appreciate opportunities to try things out for themselves and to apply what they have learnt during courses in practical situations. The results also highlight that classroom contexts are very complex learning environments that may be difficult for an inexperienced student to deal with.

Furthermore, *Learning by doing the job* is clearly seen as an essential part of teacher learning, both in TE and in a workplace context. Action and repetitive elements highlight awareness and provide opportunities for reflection. The handling of new situations is seen to provide opportunities for growth and opportunities to develop self-confidence, especially if the outcome of the situation is positive.

Learning through simulated practice

Simulated practice is typically connected to an educational setting, as it is founded on a mutual understanding between the learner(s) and the teacher that even if the action does not take place in an authentic setting or situation, the learner carries out the action as if this were the case. The statements connected to this sub-theme all concern learning during lectures and seminars at the university, as part of teacher education. The teachers express they want to have an active role in the learning process and they want to learn in a concrete way. Learning through simulated practice as experienced by the participants involves two basic learning activities: i) *learning by applying theory into practice* and ii) *learning by approximating authentic activities of professional practice*.

i) Learning by applying theory into practice⁷²

When it comes to *learning by applying theory into practice*, the teachers express that they appreciated when they, during a lecture or seminar, had the opportunity to practise and apply what they had previously learnt in theory. As Helen and Linda explain below, you get a more thorough understanding of the issues and you remember them better, when you have to do them yourself.

There we had some theory and then, even if we practised on each other, it was still a sort of practice. /.../ we practised and some things we actually taught as if we were teaching in a classroom. I thought that was much more efficient than ...those lectures /.../ I think you learn things better if you do them, too, and have to reflect on them and think about them. In that way you go through them more times, instead of just hearing it once. (Helen 2, TE)

I remember [Teacher X] used to make us practise. We got to try it out ourselves, which made you understand things in a different way, so I thought that was just great. (Linda 2, TE)

ii) Learning by approximating activities of authentic professional practice

The second group of activities involve doing tasks that the teachers recognise as being similar to the tasks included in a teacher's job. Instead of being told things during lectures, Helen would have liked to have been instructed to prepare for the lecture by finding out information herself. She explains that in an authentic situation, a teacher has to be able to find out how things work and what to do in a

⁷² The aspect *Learning by practising* (connected to the sub-theme *Practical action*) also includes the activity of applying theory into practice. Essentially the learning activity is the same, the only difference is that, in this case, the practice context is not a "real-life" context but a simulated one.

particular situation (Helen, 2, TE). Christine (3, TE) is also critical towards how she was taught during lectures. She expresses that TE did not prepare her for handling teacher-parent conferences or confronting and approaching pupils about bullying. She would have liked to learn in a more “concrete” way, she explains, for instance by setting up a mock confrontation where one student plays the role of the pupil and the other one is the teacher. Daniella, on her part, appreciated that she learnt to use the curriculum as a tool. She tells about how she felt a bit reluctant about having to “work with” the curriculum but that she, in this way, learnt how to find information in it (Daniella 3, TE). Finally, Bridget talks about a task that she found “surprisingly worthwhile” where student teachers of different subjects had to work together to plan a mock theme day at school. She explains “there you could see the actual work that is required among colleagues and I felt this was missing from the other parts of the education. You do not work merely with your [subject] colleagues” (Bridget 2, TE).

Even if the teachers see many benefits to learning through simulated practice, there are also possible drawbacks. Since a simulated activity only approximates authenticity there may be a discrepancy between the educator’s intentions with the activity and the learner’s interpretation of how the activity resembles real practice. One such drawback can be induced from Mary’s comment about learning to plan lessons by writing lesson plans in TE.

Even if planning was really thoroughly carried out during TE, I knew that it couldn’t be like that in working life. /.../ nobody could handle such meticulous planning. It is good to practise it, but it is not like that later on /.../ Still, it is a good way of learning how to estimate time, which can be a problem for me from time to time, when you never know how fast pupils learn. (Mary 3, TE)

From Mary’s comment we can deduce that lesson planning as a learning activity in TE can be understood in two ways. You can see it as an activity where you learn to follow a procedure that you can directly apply as you plan your lessons as a teacher or you can see it as an exercise where you learn to identify and deal with issues that may be of relevance as you draw up and carry out your plan, for instance learning to estimate time. Christine had problems in this respect. She had internalised the procedure of doing detailed lesson planning in TE to such an extent that it was difficult to modify the procedure to better fit the circumstances at work.

In order to learn to plan, you have to write lesson plans. But the fact that you have them in the back of your head all the time when you start working, and a feeling of.... just a demand on yourself of applying it to every course in upper secondary school and that for every lesson you need to be able to say why you did what you did and what that exercise lead to... and that just doesn’t work. (Christine 3, TE)

In sum, the results regarding learning from *Simulated practice* highlight that, in connection to TE, the student teachers appreciate concrete and practical learning opportunities that simulate and approximate their future job as teachers. We could also see that learning opportunities can be understood in different ways and that they can be seen to serve different purposes.

Experiential learning: summary

Thus, *Experiential learning* seems to be a much appreciated and even preferred learning opportunity among the participants. It involves a variety of experiences from authentic encounters and observational experiences to a focus on action and learning by doing, both through engaging in authentic and simulated learning opportunities.

The teachers recognise that teacher learning is a continuous process and that much of the experience needed will come after formal education, by doing the job. Still, experiential learning is considered essential in TE as well, where these learning opportunities are seen to directly prepare teachers for their future jobs.

5.1.2 Mediated experience

When it comes to learning through *Mediated experience*⁷³ the learners are not involved in direct encounter with the phenomena but the experience is mediated through different channels, e.g. through a teacher, a colleague or through different kinds of media such as television, computers, books etc. Peter Jarvis (2004, p. 99ff) uses the term secondary experience and points out that mediated experience is often linguistic and communicated in a written or spoken way, for instance as we listen to a lecture or read a book or a research report. The learner's focus is on receiving information, knowledge and/or feedback from external sources.

Five sub-themes that reflect different forms of learning are identified in connection to learning from *Mediated experience*. The first two, getting *External evaluation of performance* and getting *Instructional guidance*, refer to activities that are directly linked and communicated in reference to the teachers' own classroom experiences.

⁷³ Within sociocultural theory, the human mind and human experience is essentially mediated. This means that we perceive and interpret the world around us by means of tools and artefacts that can be both symbolic (e.g. language) and physical (e.g. technology)(Lantolf, 2000; van Lier, 2004). In this study, the term mediated experience has narrower scope in keeping with Jarvis's definition (2004, p. 99; see also pp. 21-22 in this document) and the description provided here.

For the most part, the statements connected to these two sub-themes reflect the teachers' views of supervision in TE. The other three sub-themes are *Getting practical tips from experts*, *Learning from written sources* and *Attending lectures and courses*.

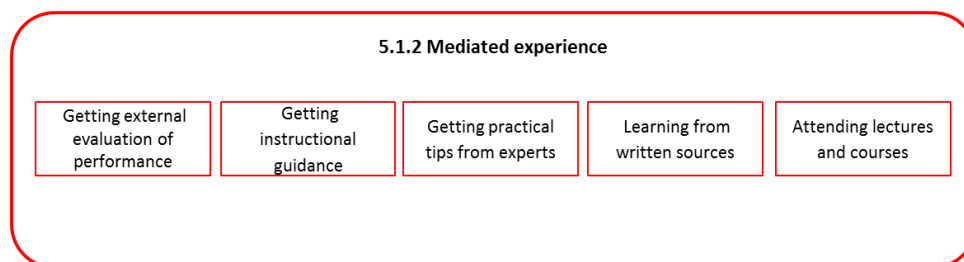


Figure 5. Learning opportunities connected to Mediated experience.

Getting external evaluation of performance

Supervision in connection to teaching practice can serve multiple purposes in teacher learning. Two purposes can be connected to learning through *Mediated experience* and these make up our first two sub-themes. In practice, these two purposes are often linked. The first of these involves *Getting external evaluation of one's performance*. Here the teachers are interested in hearing the supervisor's opinion of their teaching performance. The statements connected to this sub-theme reflect an authority-oriented view, in that the supervisor is ascribed the role of an expert who sets the standards and passes judgment on the performance of the trainee.

Get feedback on how I teach and how one should teach. (Daniella 1, TE)

Teaching real lessons and then hearing what it was like. (Daniella 2, TE)

Critique is good, you cannot develop without critique (Helen 3, TE)

In Daniella's comments above, we read that she wants to know "*how one should teach*", and she wants to hear an expert's opinion on how well she did, in relation to these standards. Denice would also have liked to get more feedback on work she handed in, as well as on her performance in the classroom.

You never got any feedback on stuff you handed in, which I think would have been good to get. You just wrote texts and they disappeared into nothingness. It just would have been great to get that response from somewhere. As it was

now...grade [X]... is it good, is it bad, what is it? /.../ I have no idea if I am a good teacher, or if any of the supervisors thought that I could be a good teacher for that matter... (Denice 2, TE)

The student teachers find themselves in a situation where they are new to a field and they do not know what constitutes good performance. With this in mind, it is not surprising that they look to their teachers and supervisors to provide this information.

Getting instructional guidance

The second purpose, *Getting instructional guidance*, involves getting concrete instructions and advice from the supervisors. Here the supervisor has the role of directing the learning process, and the teachers express they want hands-on, focused guidance. Daniella vividly remembers the concrete advice given by her supervisors in the form of propositions, 'do this', 'do not do that'.

Things that my supervisors have said to me, 'think about this'... for example [Teacher X] said something like 'Remember that you are speaking to the whole class' /.../ 'You shouldn't just talk to the little group here in front of you, but you have to talk to the whole class'... and somebody also said something like 'You need to be firm' so that you are not jumping back and forth like 'Oh, I didn't mean it like that now' and back to something else. Instead, you should say it confidently and then try to be consistent, 'this is the way it is, this is what we decided' and then if the pupils try to say 'can't we work with our friend' or something like that, if you are doing group work, you just have to go 'No, now I've decided that we're going to do this because...' and then it is good to have an explanation /.../ and even if the explanation is not the best one, you have to stick to it. 'This is the way it is...and that's the end of it.' (Daniella 2, TE)

Those experienced teachers, to get ideas from them. That was really great during teaching practice. You got ideas and they knew what to do. When you were unsure of something: 'Well, you could do like this...' (Nancy 2, TE)

We had really great supervisors in my subject, I thought. Some supervisors even worked overtime and gave really concrete instructions when you asked for it. (Linda 2, TE)

[Supervisor X] gave very concrete feedback and it wasn't too much at the time either, but each time he asked us to concentrate on one thing for the following lesson and when that part was okay, there was something else. We never got like four things at a time, 'think about this, and this and that', because that just wouldn't have worked. (Christine 2, TE)

In phases 2 and 3, when the teachers have personal experience of supervision, they are more concerned with but also more critical towards how feedback and guidance are delivered. One can sense that they want their supervisors to be more sensitive to the emotional and developmental needs of the learners. Daniella points out that sometimes she had troubles understanding the “*critique*” from the supervisor during her field practice period, because of her own lack of teaching experience (Daniella 2, TE). She further expresses that in order for her to internalise and implement in practice the advice and pointers of her supervisors, she needed to hear the advice on several occasions (Daniella 2, TE). Daniella and Helen both prefer more holistic feedback that is sensitive to individual learners’ needs. Helen expresses that many of her peers lost their self-confidence when they got “*too much and rather harsh critique that they were not ready for*” (Helen 3, TE). Daniella, on her part, says:

When you come to a lesson and then afterwards get to listen to a really long account of everything that was wrong with it... you just don’t remember any of it. For me, it went out the other ear. You don’t want to hear it and you won’t remember anything. It would be better if they were to focus on just a few things and always say something positive. /.../ break it up into parts or something, focus on the biggest issue maybe. Otherwise you can’t... develop in that way. You forget everything and then you make the same mistakes all over again somehow. (Daniella 3, TE)

The first two sub-themes relate to feedback and guidance linked to the teachers’ own experiences in the classroom. At the workplace, in contrast to the practice lessons during TE, teachers are mostly alone in the classrooms with their pupils, which makes getting external guidance and feedback more difficult. However, one teacher, who had previous experience of working as a teacher, reports that she benefited from the feedback she received from her pupils⁷⁴.

The feedback I’ve received has assured me that I will make a good teacher and that I handle the job like an old-timer. (Susan 1, W)

Getting practical tips from experts

In connection to TE, this sub-theme includes statements where the teachers express they want to get tips, advice and ideas that are “*practical*” (Amanda, 1; Lisa, 1; Melissa, 3) and “*concrete*” (Daniella, 2; Linda, 2). In contrast to the previous sub-

⁷⁴ One other teacher also mentions that she benefited from feedback from students. Since she actively sought pupils’ feedback as part of her own self-development, her statements sort under the theme Self-development. More specifically, they sort under the aspect *seeking feedback*, which is connected to the sub-theme *Self-evaluation* (see p. 134 ff).

theme, the sought-after advice is not directly linked to the learner's own performance in the classroom. Instead, the ideas and tips are of a more general character and originate out of somebody else's experience.

To get general tips and advice that only come with experience. (Helen 1, TE)

Primarily by talking to language teachers with practical experience of both teaching and of pupils with different personalities. (Nancy 1, TE)

The teachers express they want tips that can be directly applied in practice, as well as advice that in a direct and concrete manner tells you what to do, what not to do, and how you should do it.

Practical tips about how to plan lessons and exercises for the pupils (Amanda 1, TE)

We have been given many good tips during teacher education /.../ concrete exercises and things you can do with pupils. (Daniella 2, TE)

Concrete tips.... for the day-to-day work (Linda 2, TE)

[For example] don't place too much text on each slide and.... sort out the material. So what if you don't have everything included, but at least they learn what you have there... (Daniella 2, TE)

When it comes to learning at work, it seems that in the process of adapting to a new school context, the new teachers want to be instructed and informed about how things are done and operate at the particular school where they have come to work. They look to colleagues and school leaders for instructions and advice.

More instructions like 'this is how we do it in this school'. It was a little like 'nice of you to come and work here' but those instructions were very few, and you just had to notice or just watch how others did it... More instructions and that sort of thing... (Amanda 3, W)

The [teacher] I was going to replace was really helpful, and suggested we meet one evening to go through everything I was to do. So I went to her house one evening, and stayed for quite some time, so I think she really put an effort into it in that way. She explained everything and showed me all the books and things like that. (Daniella 3, W)

But I still would have wanted it to be more regulated in a way. More regulated in the sense that there should have been an interest in telling the new teacher that ‘this is how we think, this is how we’ve planned it’. But it was more like ‘just do it’. (Bridget 3, W)

There are also other situations, where a new teacher may want advice and tips from more experienced colleagues. Christine struggled with finding her own role as a teacher and got useful advice from two relatives that were also experienced teachers.

I talked a lot with [my relatives] who really gave me good advice /.../ in the sense that you do the best you can and you can’t do more than that. (Christine 3, W)

Learning from written sources

Apart from getting advice and tips from more knowledgeable and experienced experts, other external sources such as books, magazines and educational broadcasts can function as mediating sources. Two teachers mention books as a source for learning. Mary remembers a book she read in TE, whereas Melissa talks about a book she read after having started working as a teacher. Both of them express that the books provided them with practical tips. From the way they talk about the books, we can note that apart from the use of a medium that is written rather than spoken, learning in this way is relatively similar to learning from spoken instruction (cf. Brookfield, 1983, p. 24ff).

Then there was a book that... I’ve forgotten the title, I almost said ‘that good book’... something in the lines of ‘The best teacher in the world’ /.../ I liked that one, because it was so practical. Or there were a lot of things I hadn’t thought of like ‘choose a place in the room and always stand there when you want to say something’. Many times it left you thinking ‘ah, I wonder if that would work’. Or to choose a symbol to help pupils concentrate if there is a lot of noise in the classroom, I remember that one. I’m not sure how useful it has been, maybe I’ve forgotten all that I’ve read, but I might have applied something. (Mary 3, TE)

During the summer, I read a book that I found in England, actually. It contains a lot of practical tips about how to get pupils to settle down, how to get their attention, and, in general, how to establish their respect. You have to be consistent and even if you feel insecure, you always have to keep up an appearance of self-confidence. I guess it was these kinds of practical tips I was lacking, when I started working as a teacher. (Melissa 3, W)

Learning from written sources is not a form of learning that receives much attention among the teachers. However, when books *are* referred to, we can deduce that they

are regarded as significant because they meet the needs of the (student) teacher, in combination with providing practical, concrete tips to deal with specific situations connected to the teacher's job.

Attending lectures and courses

When the teachers talk about learning from lectures and courses in TE, they focus on their experiences rather than expectations of this form of learning. This means that in phase 1, the teachers refer to their experiences of courses in pedagogy that they have previously attended. The teachers' views of this form of learning are generally very positive. They describe the lectures as being worthwhile (e.g. Christine, 3; Linda, 2, 3; Mary, 2) and out of the 33 statements connected to this sub-theme, 18 are positive, 13 both positive and negative, and only 2 negative.

What is it then about this form of learning that the teachers find so appealing? The content but also how that content is delivered seems to be of importance for the teachers. The teachers want concrete, practical content that is connected and applicable to the teacher's everyday work and to teaching. Courses in subject didactics and professional voice management thus receive a fair amount of positive comments, whereas more theoretical courses with content that is indirectly connected to practice and that requires processing and adaptation before it can be applied to practice receive more tentative comments.

I thought the subject didactic course was a great success. The practical aspects there were great, there could have been more of that... (Linda 2, TE)

Most of all, I thought subject didactics was really great. From that course you got concrete tips and concrete things that you could take with you and use in your own teaching. (Tina 2, TE)

Especially important in my opinion was the 'voice course'. That was something practical that you need in the future. How to use this important tool in your work, your voice, I liked that. (Mary 2, TE)

I have to say... there were certain courses...for example [Course X], it was great that you got some understanding of different theories and things like that but from that course, I personally didn't get a lot of input to take with me. Of course it was great to see that there are these kinds of theories and those kinds of theories, and I use them to some extent in my teaching but.... If I compare to, for instance. subject didactics, I got a lot more out of that course. (Tina 2, TE)

One reason as to why more concrete and practical content is preferred may be that the teachers' lack of experience makes it difficult for them to see the relevance of more abstract and theoretical content, as an experiential frame of reference is missing. From the comments below, one can see that there are ways of compensating for the teachers' lack of experience. Linda found it easier to follow lecturers who talked about their own experiences and Daniella felt it was useful when authentic examples are used as a starting point.

I liked the concrete, things that are close to everyday life. If we start with those TE lectures, I especially liked those where someone told about their own experiences. /.../ it was good if you could connect it to real life, to school, because then you could somehow picture it and in that way remember it better. Those [lectures] that were more administrative in a way, when you don't have any experience, you just have no idea of what they are talking about and then it is difficult to learn from it. That information is probably more useful later on when you know and have that experience from school, when you know what he or she is actually talking about. (Linda 2, TE)

In a way it is not all that theoretical in TE after all./.../ And most of the time theory emanates from real examples. (Daniella 3, TE)

Attending lectures and courses can also be a part of a teacher's continuous professional development. This form of learning is not afforded much attention among the teachers and they seem to prefer other forms of learning at this stage. In phase 3, four teachers mention this form of learning. Linda and Christine have attended courses that specifically target new teachers (cf. 5.1.3 *Interaction: Sharing the learning experience*) but they have also benefited from CPD-lectures they have attended with their colleagues.

We sometimes have lectures or similar events/.../ so from each such event you take something with you that gives you additional energy or leads to your coming up with a new idea for teaching or... (Linda 3, W)

We've actually had really great training at our school. These are two recognised special education teachers /.../ and they've been great. Not every school has the fortune to get so well-informed. (Christine 3, W)

In Helen's and Mary's view, attending courses and getting further education can be a way of evolving, and something that provides added flavour and inspiration to their work in the future.

Well, in my job, it would be nice to some time or some year study L2 Finnish, Finnish as a second language⁷⁵. /.../ But I haven't yet looked into how and where /.../ At least that would be good. (Mary 3, W)

When you only have short-time or non-permanent positions, you are not really fully integrated, which makes it difficult to influence bigger questions and issues at the school. I sort of need to be able to do that... so maybe I should attend some kind of education for head masters later on or something. (Helen 3, W)

Finally, Christine points out that teachers should not have to deal with the changing realities and new reforms introduced in schools on their own. She wants external support from her employer in the form of CPD courses.

Today's pupils, they know a lot about computers, they know exactly how to format a hard disc and things like that. And then to come to school where the teacher can barely turn on the projector, that can't be all that challenging for them either. But we should really have the opportunity to attend ICT classes, like CPD, in order to get to their level. (Christine 3, W)

For example, this KELPO⁷⁶ thing, suddenly you basically have to be a special education teacher and be able to assess pupils /.../ I mean, many don't even have the knowledge or experience for doing something like that. The idea is good, but we need to get more training. (Christine 3, W)

Mediated experience: summary

The first two sub-themes connected to *Mediated experience*, *Getting external evaluation of performance* and *Getting instructional guidance*, highlight the fact that different expectations and needs are connected to supervision during TE. On the one hand, the teachers expect the supervisor to appraise their performance and tell them how best to teach. On the other hand, they want supervisors to provide concrete guidance that is sensitive to individual and emotional needs.

When it comes to *Getting practical tips from experts*, we can note that both in connection to TE but also in situations where they are new to a workplace, the teachers express that they want practical, hands-on tips and advice from people with experience.

⁷⁵ Finnish is not among the languages that Mary has studied at a university level.

⁷⁶ KELPO is the project name used for the implementation of a system for organising learning support in basic education.

Learning from written sources is afforded very little attention among the teachers. However, when books are referred to and considered significant in relation to teacher learning, they are seen to meet the needs of the (student) teacher, both in terms of content but also in terms of approach, as the teachers look for practical, concrete tips to deal with specific situations connected to the teacher's job.

When it comes to *Attending lectures and courses*, the focus of the teachers' expectations varies between the two contexts. In relation to TE, the teachers prefer content of practical and concrete character that they can connect to and apply in their future work. The student teachers' lack of experience can make it difficult to fully benefit from more abstract and theoretical content, unless the lecturer is able to show how the theory is connected to practice, for instance by providing concrete and/or authentic examples. CPD courses are also seen to have a mediating function but here the teachers mainly look for information or inspiration from experts in fields where they are not primary experts themselves, such as special education, technology and media.

In sum, *Mediated experience* is recognised as an important form of learning for student teachers and a learning opportunity that seems highly connected with formal learning contexts. Thus getting feedback on your performance, advice and practical tips from experts are recognised as important forms of learning during teacher education. Concrete, practical, hands-on tips that can be directly applied in practice are much preferred by student teachers, and it seems that their own lack of experience can be an impediment to learning from more theoretical courses. Learning opportunities connected with *Mediated experience* are not as readily associated with learning at the workplace, with the exception of situations when the teachers are new to the school context and want to be provided with advice and instructions for "how things are done". For both student teachers and NQTs, people seem to be the most commonly recognised mediating source. Books are mentioned by a few teachers but no direct references are given to other types of media, such as the Internet or professional journals.

5.1.3 Interaction

Learning through *Interaction* involves taking an active part in the learning process but not in terms of taking sole responsibility or directing the process (cf. chapter 5.1.4. *Self-development*). The learner does not just want to receive information from outside sources but wants to engage with it, engage with others in the process, and even work together with others to negotiate and co-construct new knowledge. The learner can thus interact with other individuals, as well as with the learning content. In contrast to experiential learning, where learning is seen to take place as the

learner directly engages with the phenomena, learning through interaction involves secondary rather than direct experience, for instance as the learners discuss different aspects connected to teaching with each other.

Four sub-themes have been identified in connection to learning through interaction. *Learning by taking part in discussions, Collaborating, Getting supported in the learning process and Sharing the learning experience.*

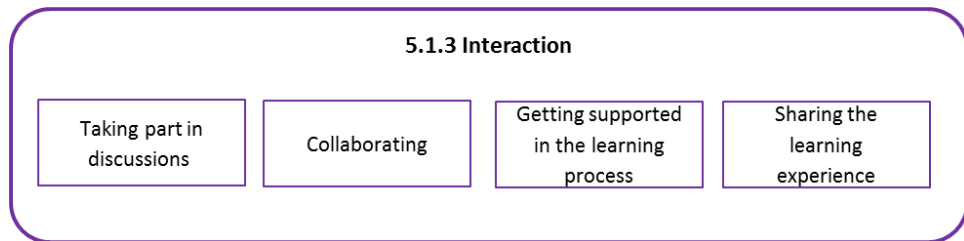


Figure 6. Learning opportunities connected to Interaction.

Taking part in discussions

The statements connected to this sub-theme reflect a view of knowledge as something that is neither internal nor externally determined. Knowledge is co-constructed in a process, in this case in the form of discussions, where meaning is negotiated. Below are four statements that illustrate central aspects connected to discussions.

Our fruitful discussions [...] it was always worthwhile sitting there. Had one not taken part in lectures and discussions, one would have missed out on a lot. The open discussions usually concerned practical things, like discipline and how to get pupils motivated. Those kinds of things you get more out of when you take part, listen and discuss, instead of just reading about them on your own, so... at least that. (Mary, 2 TE)

Listening to others has been very productive /.../ sometimes it would have been better if there had been more time to negotiate things. A lot of seminars that, at least in my opinion, dealt with pretty self-evident issues, and we often sat and listened to things I think everyone knew about. It would have been better if we had discussed it instead of just sitting there listening, because you might have had certain experiences and then 'oh, I hadn't thought about that, oh no...'. Because if you sit and listen to a lecturer you easily think that 'well, I know this already' and especially with sixty to seventy students, it is kind of hard to really get the feeling that it is worthwhile, if you feel you already know the subject. But if you get to take part yourself or work in smaller groups... I missed interdisciplinary discussions. (Helen 2, TE)

So I think it would have been more worthwhile to do it in another form or to ...somehow make use of all the students there, instead of getting it presented ... from above. (Helen 2, TE)

Drawing together the central aspects that the teachers highlight in connection to this form of learning, we can note that some teachers prefer this form of learning to solitary work (cf. Mary's comment), they want to be actively involved by taking part in discussions rather than listen to a lecture (Helen's second statement), and they want to hear other people's perspectives (not just the lecturer's) and negotiate meaning together with their peers rather than being told "how it is" (Helens' third and fourth comment).

As illustrated in statements above, most of the statements connected to this sub-theme refer to TE and to discussion as a form of learning during lectures. Two teachers also mention discussions in connection to teaching practice and express that they would like the pre- and/or post-teaching conferences to take the form of discussions, where everyone takes part.

When it comes to practice lessons, I hope we get to plan them thoroughly and discuss them together beforehand as well as afterwards. It is important that the practice periods do not just involve independent planning and teaching, since you can do that yourself, by doing substitute teaching. I want to get something out of that practice and that is best achieved by going over the lessons afterwards and, for example, by thinking about solutions to possible problems that occurred during the lessons. (Mary 1, TE)

To go over them once more afterwards /.../ to come together with the supervisors and discuss at the end [of TE]. To sum up... and take note of all the good parts from all the different student teachers, like 'this was good' and what constituted good instruction and what was well handled.... Because towards the end [of TE] it was usually just the supervisor and the student teacher that met up and discussed, everyone just had so much going on. So that could have been ... useful /.../ if everyone had taken part and discussed... But for that to happen, everyone would have had to attend each other's lessons in order to have a kind of final discussion... with everybody. (Nancy 2, TE)

When it comes to learning at work, Linda expresses in phase 3 that at this point, when she has more experience herself, she would like to go back and *discuss* with the supervising teachers she met during TE⁷⁷. She explains that there were some things that were said during TE that she understands more fully now that she has more

⁷⁷ As I have previously mentioned, Linda would also like to observe the supervising teachers' lessons once more (cf. 5.1.1 *Experiential learning: Observing action*)

experience herself. In phase 2, she also points out that “*talking to other people*” (Linda 2, W) is one way of learning to become a teacher.

If you could just go back to Vaasa⁷⁸ for a week and discuss with the supervising teachers and observe their lessons once more. Because now you kind of understand ‘oh, this is what he or she meant then’. /.../ you could have a meeting for a couple of hours, for example with the teachers from the university but also with those from the university practice school. (Linda 3, W)

Bridget and Mary think that discussions with colleagues can be one way of learning at work. Bridget, on her part, describes a vision of scheduled pedagogical discussions among the teachers in the school, whereas Mary refers to more informal discussions among colleagues.

In my opinion we lack a pedagogical discussion in most staff rooms....instead you focus on it during CPD courses. But in my opinion that means you have somehow declined responsibility. (Bridget 2, W)

Discussions are always interesting when we get to share how we teach and share problem situations with our colleagues. (Mary 3, W)

It should be pointed out that two of the teachers seem to feel particularly strongly about this form of learning. Mary refers to discussions in all three phases and Helen talks about this form of learning repeatedly and extensively in phase 2. Their contributions stand for more than half the statements connected to this sub-theme.

Collaborating

Collaboration involves working together with others towards achieving a common goal. Collaboration can also involve discussions, but here there is more of a task focus rather than a focus on negotiation of meaning. For the most part, the collaboration concerns different aspects connected to teaching, such as planning and sharing or exchanging teaching material.

When the teachers talk about collaboration in TE, they place it in the context of teaching practice. The teachers, Mary, Christine and Helen, appreciate the opportunities they had of working together with their peers, as they co-planned and co-taught lessons (Mary, Helen) and as they shared ideas and teaching material with one another.

⁷⁸ Vaasa is the location for the Faculty of Education as well as the university practice school.

It has been really helpful that we have been able to get tips from each another without feeling that you are taking their ideas. Instead, people have gladly shared even bad exercises and explained why they went wrong, which allowed you to improve them. (Christine 2, TE)

Thinking about the practice lessons that we taught, then we did quite a lot together and that too was useful, having to be a little flexible and remembering that you are not the only one deciding here... knowing that there are many involved in that project and that lesson... to cooperate. (Mary 2, TE)

I thought it was useful that we shared the material and thought and did things together... because later on, you only have yourself and it might be good that you've previously been exposed to other people's thoughts and ideas and tips. So that you actually have something that you can use when you are there. That you don't have just yourself and your own little world. That has been really good. (Helen 3, TE)

All of the above statements concern collaboration with peers. Only one teacher, Nancy, specifically mentions collaboration with supervising teachers during teaching practice. Nancy appreciated the opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas with her supervisors (referred to here as "experienced teachers"). The supervisor thus has the role of collaborator and sounding board.

That you then get to bandy ideas and discuss with these experienced teachers. (Nancy 2, TE)

When it comes to collaboration at work, the participants express they want to collaborate with their colleagues. Since the collaboration mostly concerns planning, teaching and sharing of teaching material, they want to collaborate with teachers who teach the same subject. However, as Linda and Bridget express, it is not always that easy to find somebody to collaborate with. Either because, you do not have a colleague teaching the same subject or the other teachers do not seem willing to cooperate.

It was good that they cooperate a great deal, the language teachers there, and there was another one who also taught [the same subject as me] so she helped me a lot and we sometimes introduced the same things in our various groups and without her it would not have gone so well. (Helen 3, W)

But in my subject I am pretty much on my own, since the other teacher teaches [another level] so we don't really have the same subject and couldn't really plan together that much. (Linda 3, W)

I think that as a teacher you could perhaps ask ‘hey, couldn’t we sit down together or exchange exercises or something.’ But you get the feeling that there is a barrier there somewhere. (Bridget 3, W)

Denice expresses that when you work together with your colleagues, you can learn from them. Mary, again, is inspired by the idea that if she takes part in CPD, she can share her newly acquired knowledge with her colleagues.

At the same time, you should be able to cooperate with your colleagues and learn from them. (Denice 1, W)

Now that I have this job, I am more inspired to learn or take part in some kind of education so that I then get to share my knowledge. (Mary 3, W)

Getting supported in the learning process

The last two sub-themes, *Getting supported in the learning process* and *Sharing the learning experience*, both concern the affective side of the teacher learning process. *Getting supported in the learning process* concerns a need for the integration of both emotional and professional support and guidance, as you are learning to become a teacher. It is not so much about being told what to do but rather having somebody there *with you*, whom you can trust, feel safe with, and turn to in times of need.

Two teachers talk about getting this kind of support from their supervisors during TE. The focus is on getting support and guidance in your professional development but simultaneously the need for emotional support is underscored.

I got really great guidance and.... it also gave me confidence. (Tina 2, TE)

That was perhaps the best part, to have somebody there that ... kept an eye on you and your development throughout. (Susan 3, TE)

Then again, Bridget feels that this aspect has been neglected in TE, and she feels that a mentor or tutor could fill this void of providing support that is both professional and emotional.

What I felt was missing was some kind of social network. That is a tutor, a mentor, something /.../ I missed not having that /.../ social [support]. It is not really sufficiently stressed during TE, how important these contacts are that we make here, also later on in working life. They help you get jobs, they help you enjoy your work and they provide you with help when you need it (Bridget 3, TE).

Being new at work seems to be a time when the need for this kind of support culminates. Thus, all statements connected to workplace learning under this sub-theme refer to either the teachers' initial encounters with the new school where they are going to work or experiences during their first year at work. The teachers look to more experienced teachers (Amanda and Linda), to the school leader (Melissa), to professional counsellors (Bridget, Christine), to teacher education (Amanda), and to colleagues and other NQTs (Christine) for support. Christine also finds that one of her teaching groups at school was very supportive and appreciative and thus gave her confidence to develop professionally.

I would have needed more support from somebody more experienced /.../ also pedagogical [support]. (Amanda 3, W)

It would have been good to have a small-sized version of some of the [supervising] teachers in your pocket, so that one could have gotten a little support or something. Initially it was just about trying to survive the working day. (Linda 3, W)

That was such a nice class and there I kind of regained my self-confidence to... I don't know... find myself. It made you feel that at least somebody appreciates what you do. (Christine 3, W)

I go to [a professional counsellor] who is a coach, a work counsellor and a psychotherapist at the same time. /.../ We have worked rather multi-dimensionally. And that has made me ... sort of find my way back to that part of me that is a teacher in my own way. Because I think I lost some of that during TE. (Bridget 3, W)

The teachers seem a bit hesitant to ask for this kind of support and it does not seem to be automatically provided at the schools. Christine expresses that it would have been good to have a designated person that you could turn to. Even if your colleagues are nice and helpful, you may not feel comfortable asking them for this kind of help, or they may not even be able to provide it. Amanda therefore suggests that TE could step in and help new teachers in this respect, whereas Bridget thinks of forming an informal network of language teachers from different schools.

I was well received and they helped me. But it still would have been easier to have somebody that you could talk to when things were tough. Several times last autumn I thought that I'm not going to school the next day or I'll quit. It was really tough. And then it would have been easy to have somebody there you know you can turn to. (Christine 3, W)

Something I think would be really good in connection to TE is that you would get support when you start working, since it doesn't come naturally in the schools in the sense that 'this is a new teacher and we have to help her'... Maybe it would be possible somehow. But at the same time you are qualified then and not in education anymore... but in some way, a bit more support when it comes to how to manage when you start working. To have an opportunity where all new teachers could meet and discuss and maybe there could be a supervisor that would be a little bit more experienced and who could provide support in that way. (Amanda 3, W)

Maybe one should try forming an informal network with other teachers of English. So that one would have something to fall back on. (Bridget 3, W)

Sharing the learning experience

Sharing the learning experience concerns the teachers' need for fellowship and belonging as they are learning to become teachers. Whereas the teachers in connection to the previous sub-theme often turn to more experienced teachers or professionals for support, this group of statements focuses on sharing the experience with people who are in a similar situation and who understand what you are going through.

In connection to TE, the statements thus concern fellowship with other student teachers. The participants express that having a group of fellow student teachers to fall back on and to spur you on was important for their development.

The fellowship in the group /.../ that has really helped, otherwise you would have felt rather alone. That is a feeling you haven't felt here. (Christine 2, TE)

I started to feel really at home in that group. I thought it worked well even if everyone had different backgrounds and were of different ages... we were all in the same situation so we spurred each other on. You knew that they knew exactly how you felt and that they felt the same way. (Nancy 2, TE)

Sharing, fellowship and belonging can also be important elements of learning at the workplace. For different reasons, the participants identify with two different groups of teachers. First of all, as new teachers they feel it is important to keep contact with other NQTs. Two of the participants have taken part in special courses for NQTs and this is what Christine reports:

I also think it is important to have contact with other young teachers. On Friday, I'm actually taking part in a course in [Town X] called "Unga lärare" [Young

teachers] arranged by FSL⁷⁹. Out of twenty-three [participants] I know seventeen by name... It is going to be great fun because these have been working between two to five years, to hear what they have to say and their experiences. When you compare with other people's experiences you think that 'my goodness, my situation really isn't all that bad'. (Christine 3, W)

Secondly, the teachers express a need for fellowship with their colleagues at the school.

I feel that I need some kind of fellowship, a collegial body, somebody to discuss with. It's perfectly fine if others don't need it, but in some way I still think the workplace should somehow create a framework for it. (Bridget 3, W)

I thoroughly enjoy being together with colleagues, getting ideas and getting support, because it isn't a kind of thing you can... You can't really talk about your job with anybody else and no one but your colleagues really understands your job. (Linda 3, W)

Interaction: summary

As reflected in the teachers' views, *discussions* as a form of learning can serve multiple purposes in connection to learning in TE. The teachers express a preference for this form of learning because it is seen as an active and engaging form of learning, because they prefer to negotiate or co-construct knowledge rather than have it presented to them, or because they prefer social rather than solitary forms of learning.

Collaboration as a learning activity is here mainly seen to occur among peers (i.e. fellow STs in TE and colleagues at the workplace) and only one teacher specifically recognises that supervisors can function as collaboration partners. From the teachers' accounts of collaboration in workplace settings, we can deduce that opportunities for collaboration may be limited if your colleagues are not open towards collaboration or if you do not have a colleague teaching your subject at the school where you are working.

The last two sub-themes, *Getting supported in the learning process* and *Sharing the learning experience*, highlight the emotional aspects of teacher learning as the teachers express a need for support, fellowship and belonging during TE, but especially as they start working as teachers. During TE, the teachers look for support

⁷⁹ FSL is short for *Finlands svenska lärarförbund*, which is the teachers' federation for Swedish speaking teachers in Finland.

from supervisors and fellow STs, whereas these needs are met by a broader and more diversified group in connection to the workplace as the teachers also mention members of other professions, TE, other teachers, other NQTs and pupils. The teachers also feel that more formalised forms of support could be provided, both during TE but especially at the workplace.

In sum, learning opportunities connected with *Interaction* reflect a view of teacher learning as a social, interactive but also emotional learning process.

5.1.4 Self- development

In many ways, the theme *Self-development* is the opposite of what Jarvis (2004, p.128) has termed 'other-directed'. Other-directed learners are dependent on a teacher, as they want to be told what to learn, when and how. Here, however, the learner is in command of the learning process. Indeed, the learner may choose to consult an expert, a peer or a book but the responsibility of learning is ultimately seen to rest with the learner (cf. Brookfield, 1983, p. 25). There are many different terms used in the literature that refer to behaviours and actions connected to this theme, for instance self-directed learning, autonomous learning, individual learning, independent learning and self-development (cf. Brookfield, 1983, p.22). I chose the term self-development as it does not rule out learning in an educational context and since it is a broad enough term to incorporate the learning opportunities that could be distinguished in the material. I identified five qualitatively different forms of learning that make up the five sub-themes connected to self-development. The first four are found both in connection to TE and workplace learning and include the themes *Recognising ownership of the learning process*, *Managing the learning process*, *Transfer* and *Self-evaluation*. The remaining theme, *Self-directed learning*, is here found only in connection to learning at the workplace.



Figure 7. Learning opportunities connected to Self-development

Recognising ownership of the learning process

This sub-theme includes two different aspects, i) *having a disposition to learn* and ii) *taking responsibility for one's own learning*.

i) Having a disposition to learn

The first aspect, *having a disposition to learn*, is about having a mind-set that is open towards and willing to engage in learning opportunities as well as having a disposition to sustain learning over time.

When it comes to learning in TE, the teachers mainly stress that they want to be receptive and open towards learning opportunities and that learning can be enhanced if you are motivated and have a positive attitude.

I feel that I will be responsive to new impressions, new ways of operating, new ways of looking at things. (Christine 1, TE)

It [Teacher education] was a very positive experience for me, because I was so motivated when I started. I knew that this was what I wanted and what I was interested in, so I had this positive feeling and a positive approach from the start. And I think I kept that throughout. (Nancy 2, TE)

Even a qualified teacher has to constantly adapt and learn new things. This was something Bridget realised during her teacher training. She reports in phase 2 that she had expected that TE would provide her with answers or models for teaching that she could then use in her work. However, at some point during her teacher education she realised that no such models exist and that being a teacher is a constant learning process.

Just that there are no answers and that you learn as you go. There are, so to speak, no ready to use [answers]. I mean, I somehow wished that I, with the help of my education, would have had everything there, ready to hand out on a silver platter, like ‘this is the strong inflection of adjectives’. But you also realise that you don’t know all those things. /.../ as a non-native speaker you can’t know everything, and there are certain nuances you will have to work on, and there are grammatical details you actually will have to thoroughly study. There is nothing in my education so far that prepares me for or provides me knowledge of all those things that are contained in the books that I am supposed to be teaching those youngsters. It is a matter of learning by doing. (Bridget 2, TE)

When it comes to teacher learning at the workplace, the teachers emphasise the importance of having a disposition and willingness to learn continuously, throughout one’s career. Many teachers particularly stress the importance for language teachers of keeping up-to-date with cultural changes, as well as upholding their command of the target language.

Languages and countries keep changing, so it is good to keep up-to-date with what is happening in the specific countries. (Denice 1, W)

I would say it is especially important for language teachers. To try to... maintain contacts too, in order to keep up your language skills, because languages change all the time. (Bridget 2, W)

Apart from continuously developing your subject competence, the participants also point out that teachers should strive to and be willing to continuously develop their teaching methods and themselves as teachers.

I want to continue to develop and learn new things. It is instructive to take up new teaching methods and to dare to try new ways of teaching. (Astrid 1, W)

To keep yourself up-to-date and in some way keep developing, I would say. (Bridget 2, W)

That you have the will to somehow come up with and develop, develop new ideas. (Linda 3, W)

For one of the teachers, Susan, the idea that a teacher needs to be willing to constantly change and develop seems to be extremely important. She takes up the issue already in phase 1 and returns to it several times in phases two and three. She stresses that although the goal of becoming a competent, experienced teacher is reached after some years of working as a teacher (cf. 5.1.1. *Experiential learning: Accumulating experience*), one still has to make a constant effort to keep up-to-date and try to improve.

That you don't allow yourself to get into a rut, so that you just go there and teach the lessons you have taught many years, just to get it done, and then count the hours until you can go home. Instead, you should renew yourself /.../ and plan your lessons even if you've been working for 25 years. I mean new lessons and not just... because I think there is a risk that you just get into a rut and start using old material and have neither the strength nor the desire to renew yourself anymore. But to stay up-dated and have the desire to improve and develop, even if you have been working for ever so many years. (Susan 2, W)

ii) Taking responsibility for one's own learning

The second aspect connected to *Recognising ownership of the learning process* concerns *taking responsibility for one's own learning*. This involves recognising that you are in charge of your learning process and that you are personally responsible for seizing and engaging in possible opportunities to learn.

The strongest opinion in terms of recognising agency and one's own role in the learning process is represented by Bridget, who expresses that "*I am of the opinion that it is my duty [as a teacher] to motivate myself to develop and to do things better or differently*", and she also expresses that teachers need to take responsibility for their own development (Bridget 3, W). Even if the others also recognise that it is up to them and that they are in charge of their learning process, they do not necessarily see it as their duty or assume sole responsibility for their development. For instance, in phase 3, Daniella, Bridget and Amanda recognise that as a new teacher you cannot just sit back and expect things to work themselves out or that other people will automatically offer their help. Instead, they recognise that it is also up to them to get involved and seek the help that they feel they need.

Maybe I myself could have asked more too. (Daniella 3, W)

Then I also think it is a matter of how much you take it upon yourself to do it. I think that as a teacher you could also ask 'how about if we sat down and planned together or exchanged exercises' or something like that. (Bridget 3, W)

It might have been that I would have needed to put a little more effort into looking for where I could have found that support. (Amanda 3, W)

So far, the statements connected to this aspect have concerned learning at the workplace. One could assume that when teachers take part in a formal, organised learning situation such as TE, they would not as readily assume responsibility for their own learning, since the framework is already set by the curriculum. Still, in phase 1, four teachers expect that TE is going to be about self-development and that they have to assume responsibility for that process, and that they are the ones who will have to do the work and make the necessary changes.

To develop yourself to become a better teacher by learning what your strengths and weaknesses are. (Helen 1, TE)

I think that these five months will contribute to my being able to better see my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher and that I will be able to see myself objectively, through other people's eyes and in that way develop what needs to be developed, and add the finishing touches to things that are already good. (Christine 1, TE)

In phase 3, Daniella recognises that what you get out of TE depends on how much work you are willing to invest: "*it was completely up to you, if you had and took the time to read everything. I mean, you could find out more for yourself*" (Daniella 3, TE). Even if there are no statements in phase 2 and only Daniella's in phase 3 with an overt focus on taking responsibility for your own learning in TE, it does not mean that the learners do not recognise their role in the learning process during teacher education. The other sub-themes connected to self-development more or less presuppose that the learners recognise agency, even if the focus is on other activities or behaviours.

Managing the learning process

The sub-theme *Managing the learning process* involves different ways of monitoring your development in an effort to enhance learning. The sub-theme includes the following aspects: i) *changing your approach*, ii) *reflecting on your own learning process*, iii) *dealing with feedback*, iv) *identifying learning resources* and v) *identifying the best way for you to learn*. The teachers refer to these kinds of activities both in connection to TE, as well as in connection to workplace learning.

i) Changing your approach

The teachers recognise that in order to develop, you may have to change your approach. In connection to TE, Bridget came to realise that instead of focusing on getting explicit answers to her questions, she should focus on working with the questions instead. Another example is when Daniella realised she had to change the way she presented herself to the pupils, in order to improve the working conditions in the classroom.

I very much sought after 'black and white-answers' to different questions /.../ and perhaps also help with different moral dilemmas that I see /.../ with the professional role of the teacher. And I wanted to get answers to those [questions] but, as I said, at some point I think it just dawned upon me, as I was writing a reflective task or something, that it is not the answers I should be looking for but it is the questions. And that... as long as I have questions, I have something to work with. (Bridget 2, TE)

That was rather difficult, at least for me since I am like, 'ah, I really don't want to direct other people', but you just have to take on that role, then. (Daniella 2, TE)

Amanda (3,W) and Bridget (3,W) report that their teaching and their relationships with their pupils improved as they changed approach and started taking more risks instead of playing it safe, as illustrated in Amanda's comment below.

During the first and second year, you kind of held on to what you had planned and didn't dare to do anything else, even if you noticed that it didn't go all that well. But now I've started to dare and when I notice that we don't have the energy to work with this the whole lesson, we do something else instead. You're able to be more flexible. And it is a lot easier for yourself, when you don't have to work with something that clearly isn't working but still you just keep at it... (Amanda 3, W)

ii) Reflecting on your own learning process

Reflecting on your own learning process can be another way of enhancing learning. Amanda appreciates the written reflections the teachers had to write in TE, as they helped her pinpoint and monitor her own development. However, reflection requires time and the intensive pace of TE is not always conducive to this practice, which Christine's comment below illustrates. Still, as illustrated in Melissa's comment, the process of reflection can continue, even after the formal programme has ended.

To think through everything that happened. Like we've written a lot of... these [reflections]...where we've sorted out what we have felt and how things have gone, what has improved and what must still be worked on. I think that has been really good. To reflect afterwards about how it went and why it went that way, and so on. (Amanda 2, TE)

At the same time it is a very short time, just half a year [in teacher education]/.../ even if you wrote a lot of reflections, there really wasn't enough time to reflect, since it was such an intensive period. (Christine 3, TE)

I've learnt a lot during the past five months... and it was a lot at one time, so there is a lot that I still need to process and reflect upon. (Melissa 2, TE)

Finding the time to reflect on your own development and your work is also important for a qualified teacher, as Susan points out. Unfortunately, it can also be difficult to find the time to reflect during your busy workday.

From time to time, it is good to reflect on these questions [in the interview], even for a qualified teacher. During the hectic working day, you don't get around to analysing your job, even if it would be necessary at times. (Susan 3, W)

Taking the time to sort out and in that way reflect on what you have learnt is another process mentioned by the teachers.

... I wrote a lot down. I have a book where I documented everything that worked for me and what I would do differently and I think that has been really good, because when you browse through that, you can better recall what worked and in what classes. (Tina 2, TE)

I then had to sort it out, bit for bit, for myself afterwards, when I had written down all the information. (Daniella 3, W)

iii) Dealing with feedback

Another way of managing your learning process is by finding ways of handling feedback that allows you to benefit from it in your further development. As Christine points out, she had to learn how to deal with the feedback from her supervisor, in order to be able to profit from it. Denice feels colleagues can provide valuable feedback, if you take it the right way and are willing to accept and deal with it.

With time, you learnt to filter out half of what was said and to draw on that which was essential. (Christine 2, TE).

To be able to work with your colleagues and accept feedback (Denice 2, W)

iv) Identifying relevant learning resources

Managing your own learning process can also involve identifying and employing relevant learning resources that can be of help in your quest for new knowledge and information. This is an important prerequisite for becoming a self-directed learner, as opposed to being externally- or other-directed. Daniella was not prepared to handle pupils with different learning disabilities and she explains how she employed a variety of different sources.

When it comes to the special students that I have in my class, who are sometimes only barely able to read... you really have to use all available resources and try to remember what you've read about dyslexia and things like that and where you can find new... During TE I learnt a little bit, you got some information there, and then you try to read new things that come up and tips that can help you. And ask for help from the special education teacher. But you really have to figure out how to do certain things. (Daniella 3, W)

v) Identifying the best way for you to learn

Since everybody brings his or her own experiences and learning preferences into the process, becoming a teacher is not a set procedure that everyone follows in the same way. Part of the process is then not just about finding your own way of being a teacher but also finding *your* way of becoming one. Christine and Bridget comment on this.

Everybody has to reach the ultimate role as a teacher in her own way, or go her own way. Some might not quite get there but that is okay too...as long as you are yourself, I believe you can go pretty far. (Christine 2, W)

Then when you go out to work, it kind of hits you. That this is the world, this is how I handle things, and this is how I choose to deal with different issues in different situations. (Bridget 3, W)

Transfer

Transfer as a form of learning involves being able to see connections and parallels between different situations and contexts in order to ultimately be able to use previously acquired knowledge and skills in a new context (cf. Eraut, 2004, p.13). Four main aspects of transfer have been identified: i) *connecting theory and practice in education*, ii) *activating and engaging prior educational experiences*, iii) *connecting between TE and work*, and iv) *connecting between other experiences and work*. The

first aspect concerns learning in TE, the second is mainly about learning in TE, the third concerns how knowledge gained in TE transfers (or not!) into the working context, and the last aspect concerns learning at the workplace.

i) Connecting theory and practice in education

In connection to TE, the teachers are concerned about being able to connect the theory dealt with at the university with the practice at the university practice school. Susan expresses that she was able to transfer what she had learnt in theory into practice and Mary feels that learning was enhanced when the issues dealt with in class could later be observed in a practice setting.

I actually used the methodology in my lessons (Susan 2, TE)

So maybe they support one another, here [at the university] we discussed how to be in the classroom and what is important and then you got to see it in practice ... yes, it actually works (Mary 2, TE)

Then again, Melissa recognises that transferring knowledge from one context to another is not an easy task and she sighs when she thinks about “*all the theory you should try to apply in practice*” (Melissa 2, TE). Linda, on her part, expresses that she was not able to connect theory and practice and that, for her, they constituted two separate entities.

There was a difference between theory and practice, and it is probably meant to be that way, too. But it wasn't really possible to connect them, so to speak. They were like two separate parts but both were equally important and good, in my opinion. (Linda 2, TE)

ii) Activating and engaging prior educational experiences

Prior educational experiences include experiences of the teacher's job both from a teacher's and a pupil's perspective. Mary, who had previous experiences of working as a teacher, felt that her previous experiences of school contexts helped her understand and see the relevance of the content dealt with during TE lectures. Similarly, she was able to transfer knowledge gained from previous experiences of meeting new classes into her first encounters with new classes at the practice school. In other words, knowledge gained in one context helped her learn in another context.

When you are in teacher education, you can think about things that occurred if you have done substitute teaching and you might then recognise something, like 'yes, that's how it was' (Mary 2, TE)

Since I've done substitute teaching since 2006, I already knew what a classroom looked like. /.../ So that was helpful in the sense that I wasn't at all worried about meeting the class and making a good impression. /.../ When you have been working, you already have some idea of what it will be like. (Mary 3, TE)

In the literature on teacher learning the role of teachers' prior beliefs that stem from their own experiences as pupils is often emphasised. If a learner is unaware of the influence of these prior experiences, they may hamper development. However, when the learner is aware of prior beliefs and willing to consciously work with and even modify them, learning and development is possible. Simone is aware of her prior beliefs in phase 1 and she wants to consciously involve them in her learning process during TE.

To see if the opinions and ideas I have about the teaching profession are true and work in practice (Simone 1, TE)

Similarly, in connection to teacher learning at work, Mary explains that she uses her prior experiences as a pupil when she considers how to explain a particular issue to her pupils.

Well, you can think of a subject where you yourself might not have been all that good. So if I think of maths, for example, I can try to think how I would have liked the maths teacher to explain it to me. (Mary 2, W)

iii) Connecting between TE and work

The third aspect connected to transfer concerns transfer between TE and the working context. Mary, who started working towards the end of teacher education, feels that she is able to apply what she had learnt in TE in her own work and that applying this theoretical knowledge makes her more aware of what she is doing, enables her to reflect on her actions, and monitor her own behaviour if necessary.

Yes, I've had the opportunity to try out what we went through there [in TE] even if I might not at all times have consciously remembered that 'okay, now I'm using this method'. But there are certain things I've remembered and thought that I will try to implement and I can actually notice myself that when I teach here at [School X], I try to be more pupil-centred and try to get the pupils to say it instead of me... I've forgotten the fancy word... inductive, yes, that was it. To get the pupils to come up with the answer instead of you saying it, or instead of explaining the rule and providing examples, the pupils somehow realise it and figure it out themselves. [I've] tried not to be the centre of attention that everybody just looks at. Instead, the pupils work and I lead. (Mary 2, TE)

In that sense they support each other. Here we discussed the inductive approach, which I hadn't thought about or done earlier /.../but now I've done it and realised 'oh, now I have this approach' and I've also thought about how to do it in that way and how I can get the pupils to do it. (Mary 2, W)

There are also instances of what I choose to term *delayed transfer*, when the teachers, as they get more experience of working as teachers, are able to connect to, understand and grasp more fully what they met or were taught in TE.

Maybe understood things that you at the time... [for instance] during TE when somebody, with more experience of teaching than I, said something that I didn't quite understand and I thought 'what did she mean by that'. So something that somebody said and afterwards I've thought 'yes, that actually was true'. (Daniella 3, W)

I remember that a teacher at the practice school told me 'you can start the lesson by telling them what it is that you want to do, what you are going to deal with' and things like that. Kind of stipulate the aims for the lessons. But now, partly with the help of this book and partly... I understand why. The pupils can also see that I have an aim for the lesson. The clearer I am about what I want from them, these aims that we've talked so much about during TE, the clearer I am about my aims, the more respect they'll probably have for me as a teacher. (Melissa 3, W)

Melissa's statement above illustrates that transfer is, in fact, a rather complex process. She seems to have understood the supervisor's advice about stating the aims of the lesson but she did not see the relevance of it at the time, and could not see what purpose it could serve. That meant that the advice did not make any sense and was of no use to her at the time. As she starts working, she experiences discipline problems and she struggles with trying to get the pupils' respect. She is in desperate need of advice and turns to a book that she says gives her a lot of useful tips and at the same time she is reminded of her previous experiences in TE. With her current experiences in mind, she is able to see the relevance of the advice and now transfer is possible.

Unfortunately though, unless the teachers themselves see the relevance of something they have met in one context for another, transfer is not possible. When Linda, as a new teacher, faced having to plan her lessons all by herself, she explains how she turned to her own school days and searched through material she found in the cupboards at the school. Interestingly enough, there is no mention of applying what she had learnt during TE.

I was mostly alone with the planning and all that. You just had to take what you had from your school days and then whatever I found in the storage room, old tests and exercises and things like that, trying to see how it had been done before. (Linda 3, W)

The transfer can also be negative in the sense that you transfer a behaviour that worked in one context to another, without making necessary modifications. Christine experienced that during TE she had internalised a procedure of planning lessons to an extent where it was difficult to adapt it to the new context, where she had thirty lessons a week rather than two or three.

[The problem was] that TE was still fresh in my mind, even if it had been a year. You just can't plan every lesson the way we did with our lesson plans. Still, all you had in your head was that there should be a connecting thought linking the elements and then a connecting thought to the next lesson to form a coherent whole. There is no time for that. With thirty lessons a week, you have to rely on good luck. (Christine 3, W)

iv) Connecting between other experiences and work

The fourth aspect found in the material concerns transfer between other experiences and work. With other experiences I mean experiences that are not connected to school or education. Linda expresses that she gets ideas and inspiration for developing her work for instance from watching TV programmes. Susan explains that becoming a parent has changed her as a teacher as well.

From time to time, I get ideas from the strangest contexts. I might be watching a show on TV and someone says something. [and I think] 'So that's how it goes' and 'that's what I have to do' and 'I'll have to try that'. Sometimes I might even get an idea from a children's show or a children's game or something. (Linda 2, W)

I was rather unsure of myself then, during the practicum. Now I am more self-confident and maybe that also comes from becoming a parent. It really is a huge thing, the greatest thing that can happen to you, so it has certainly influenced me. (Susan 3, W)

Self-evaluation

The sub-theme *Self-evaluation* involves two aspects: i) *evaluating and reflecting on one's actions* and ii) *actively seeking feedback* for the purpose of self-development.

i) Evaluating and reflecting on one's actions

Whereas the sub-theme *Managing the learning process* (cf. p. 127) involves reflection of a more metacognitive character as the teachers focus on how to enhance their own learning, reflection in connection to the current aspect is focused on the teachers' actions in the classroom with the aim of improving one's performance.

I want to learn to reflect on my own lessons so that I can improve and get new ideas. (Astrid 1, TE)

It is interesting to prepare lessons and to prepare different kinds of exercises. Afterwards you should still remember to reflect on your own lessons, in order to establish how well you have done or what you could improve for next time. (Astrid 1, W)

The teachers recognise their own role when it comes to pupils' learning and well-being in general and this seems to give them an incentive to reflect and in that way try to improve their performance.

Then you develop... by thinking about how you have acted there and how it turned out... and then if you are having a bad day you can consider what it is that is not working and what is disturbing the balance. And then you may notice that perhaps I was too much to the point and forgot to ask how they were and just jumped straight to the theme. So instead of allowing room for the pupils' experiences, I was too focused on the fact that we needed to get through the words. (Mary 2, W)

Well, I think it comes rather naturally that you notice every pupil every lesson and talk with them and stuff. But then perhaps I should be thinking even more about how this particular pupil could learn something more easily. That is certainly something one has to think about as well. I think about things like 'if I want to get this one to work harder, I might have to give more encouragement rather than whine about them not doing their homework again'. (Amanda 3, W)

Denice uses the words *criticise* and *critique* instead of reflection. She clearly recognises that the teacher has an important role and feels there is a need to scrutinise one's own behaviour, in order to improve and develop. At the same time, she reasons that there is also a danger that one takes the criticism too far, which could then hamper development.

[be able to] criticise your own work and behaviour. (Denice 1, W)

A little bit of self-criticism is probably good. But maybe not.../.../ You can take it too far. You can't be thinking about everything all the time. That just makes

you paralysed... so a little self-criticism and honesty towards yourself. (Denice 2, W)

ii) Seeking feedback

The teachers also actively seek feedback from their pupils in their endeavours to improve their own performance. As exemplified below, the teachers either directly ask for the pupils' feedback (Mary) or they have a more indirect approach of establishing rapport with their pupils (Susan and Mary). The latter involves being in close contact with the pupils, trying to read and interpret their behaviour and reactions.

You can always develop by asking the pupils to provide some feedback. /.../not too much and not about little things but, for instance, now that I am working, it's good if I can ask the pupils about what has been good and if there is anything that has not been so good. And then to think about what was said, especially the negative things. If someone writes that you speak too fast, you should try to work on that later on. And then if you've been told that something is excellent, you keep that. (Mary 2, W)

But for the most part it is the pupils who give the most important feedback. I think I can read the pupils rather well, I can tell when they think that something is not that good or boring or if they are uncomfortable or unmotivated. And then I can also tell when things are alright. (Susan 2, W)

Well, you have to constantly watch the pupils as they work /... / maintain contact with them and make sure everyone is with you and that everyone understands. (Mary 2, W)

Self-directed learning

According to *the International Encyclopedia of Adult Education* (English, 2005) the best-known definition of self-directed learning is that of Malcolm Knowles. He defines it as:

[A] process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes."(Knowles, 1975, as cited in English, 2005, p. 565)

Apart from this, the above mentioned handbook concludes that there is no commonly agreed upon definition of this term in the literature and subsequently the

term is used interchangeably with other terms referring to a wide variety of different learning behaviours (cf. Brookfield, 1983, p. 23).

All the learning behaviours connected to the overall theme *Self-development* can be regarded as examples of self-directed behaviour. However, self-directed *learning* is a process where a set of deliberate measures are employed in order to achieve a specific learning goal. This means that the learner must diagnose a learning need, identify appropriate resources and/or strategies that are then consulted, employed and evaluated in order to reach the intended learning outcome. Reflection plays an integral part throughout the process, starting with the identification of the “problem” to reflecting on options and determining what to do, to evaluating and monitoring the progression and the outcome(s) of the process.

Amanda recognised that she had problems with managing the class and giving clear instructions. She wanted to develop a more disciplined but fair classroom culture and she decided she had to develop a set of rules. She recognised that she could use some ideas from TE and modify them to suit her current purposes. She evaluated the outcome of her intervention (“*it gets better every year*”) and continues to develop the plan further.

Then I also think that one could, or I could, become clearer in my instructions... so that everyone can follow them easily. And you should always be consistent, which can be difficult at times. For instance where toilet visits are concerned. You easily say to a well-behaved girl ‘ok, you can go’, whereas the unruly boys are told ‘no, you can’t’. It should be the same for everyone. /.../ Then I’ve tried to draw up clear rules for classroom work during my lessons. /.../ The first year you just didn’t know what kind of rules to have and then you easily get a situation where everyone runs to the toilet every lesson and everyone has their books in their lockers. Then a lot of lesson time is wasted on unnecessary things. But then you need to enforce rules such as ‘If your notebook is in the locker, you’ll have to do without’. We can’t waste ten minutes of every lesson on people having to fetch their things. /.../ So, this is what I’ve done this year. Already during my studies in Vaasa, we talked about drawing up a plan for classroom management. So I’ve thought a little about that and tried to draw up my own plan. It gets better with every year, once you know what it is that you want to include in it... (Amanda 3, W)

Christine also had problems with discipline in some of her classes. She recognised that a key to the problem was that she needed to find her role as a teacher. She chose a strategy where she tried to be very strict but that did not work out and she reflected that she did not like being that kind of a teacher. She then changed approach and

reasoned with the pupils and together they discussed disciplinary rules. That approach worked, she reasons.

It was extremely difficult for me to find myself as a teacher last autumn. I am usually a rather easy-going and happy person, but to be that person in an unruly class just didn't work, because with everything being so laid-back, they just didn't have any respect for me. Then I decided to become, maybe not strict, but very firm during lessons. I didn't like that either, because it wasn't nice to just walk in and directly kind of throw your books on the desk to make them quieten down. But then at the start of a lesson, I took it up with the pupils that 'this just isn't working. I get really tired when I think of having to yell, well, maybe I didn't yell, but just that I have to be in a certain way for forty-five minutes is not working. So now I demand something from you, too.' Then we went over the school rules and after that, everything worked smoothly. (Christine 3, W)

Finally, Bridget finds that at times, she has a great deal of correction work and as this work piles up, she feels that she needs to find of way of handling her bad consciousness and managing her stress level. In order to solve her problem, she identifies different strategies and employs them as well. At the time of the interview, she recognises that she has not yet reached her goal but she is confident that with more practice and by taking it one step at a time, she will eventually get there.

I wish that I could manage to let go of that assignment and think that 'ok, I need one day to do this, it takes one day to correct the assignments'. /.../ But I constantly have a bad conscience/.../ That is something I need to learn how to handle /.../ just to decide that this is my strategy and I'll do one half immediately when I get home and the other half the day before the deadline I stipulated. But even if I have a strategy /.../ I just see the big pile of papers. There will be so much work before I get to the end. I just can't handle it. /.../ It would be good if I could just be like 'now I've thought out a plan, this is it, and now I just have to take one bit at a time'. That I have to practise. (Bridget 3, W)

Self- development: summary

In connection to the sub-theme, *Recognising ownership of the learning process*, the teachers express that in order to learn, one has to be open and willing to engage in learning opportunities throughout one's career and that teacher learning is ultimately one's own responsibility.

Views in connection to the sub-theme, *Managing the learning process*, highlight that teacher learning does not always happen of its own accord and measures can be taken to enhance and monitor learning. For instance, the teachers recognise that it is

not enough just to receive feedback; you may also have to put efforts into learning how to deal with and handle the feedback received.

The teachers recognise many opportunities for *transfer*: between different educational settings, between education and work, between workplace settings but also between working and private life. Transfer is possible when learners see the relevance of something learnt in one context for another and this often involves having to modify or adapt the knowledge to suit the new context (cf. Bengtsson, 1993). The results highlight that transfer is not always a straightforward process. Sometimes teachers fail to see the relevance and connection (zero transfer), they may have troubles adapting the knowledge to the new context (negative transfer) or there may be a sleeper effect (Featherstone, 1993), where transfer is delayed until later experiences allow you to fully comprehend and see the relevance of what you have previously encountered or been taught.

The sub-theme *Self-evaluation* highlights two different approaches to improving one's performance as a teacher in the classroom. It is recognised that a teacher can develop by reflecting on and scrutinising one's own work and actions taken or by employing direct or indirect feedback from pupils.

Self-directed learning is a complex form of learning, as it requires the ability to reflect on professional situations in order to be able to detect and diagnose possible problems and further to identify and seek out possible means by which to solve the problem. As the examples illustrate, the process often involves repetitive procedures of trial and error until the goal is eventually reached. Time for reflection and application are important prerequisites but also a sufficient amount of experience is necessary in order to enable detection of recurring patterns and identification of learning needs. In this study self-directed learning is only connected to work place learning.

In sum, the views connected to *Self-development* reflect an awareness that teacher learning does not just happen of its own accord. The views highlight teacher learning as a deliberate and active process of which the learner is ultimately in charge.

5.2 Cognitions of the teaching profession

My second research question concerns how the participants view the teacher's job during different phases of early professional development. What aspects of the job are recognised and how are these viewed? The analysis revealed a broad variety of

different tasks and eventually a pattern emerged around three central themes: *Teaching*, *Handling out of class work* and *Managing the job*.

The themes along with the connected sub-themes are illustrated in Figure 8. The theme *Managing the job* has been placed in between the other two themes, as part of the backdrop, as a way of illustrating the specific characteristics of this theme. Whereas the tasks connected to the other two themes are more overt and self-contained, the tasks connected to *Managing the job* are more internal and co-dependent and can thus be seen to form a meta-level.

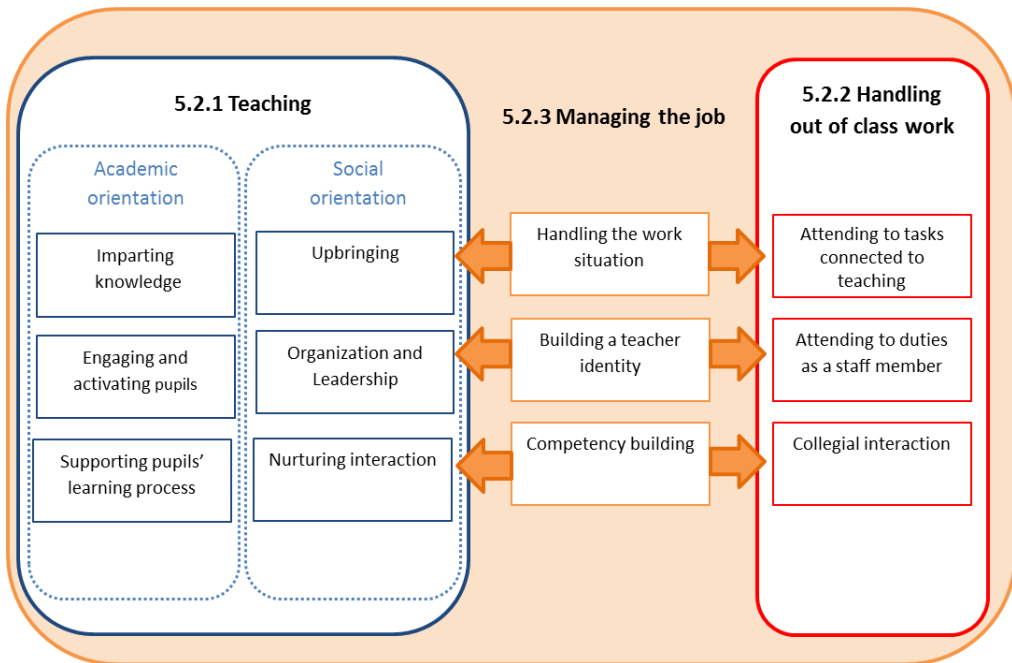


Figure 8. Cognitions of the teaching profession: overview of tasks and functions of the teacher.

5.2.1 Teaching

Teaching is one of the more easily observable parts of the teacher's job and from this perspective it is not surprising that the participants consider it a central aspect of the teachers' job. As illustrated in the quotes below, some participants even consider it to be the most important part of the job, even if they clearly indicate that there are other aspects to the job as well.

Even if the language teacher's main task is to teach a foreign language, I also consider it important that these teachers have knowledge about how people function and how to deal with different people and how to make instruction interesting and motivating. (Heather, 1)

All things considered, teaching is perhaps what is most important, but prerequisites for that are functioning relations to pupils and colleagues and a positive atmosphere in the classroom as well. (Denice, 1)

Well, first of all, to teach your own subject and then to educate⁸⁰ the pupils (Amanda, 2)

The main thing is teaching but then many other things are included as well. (Linda, 3)

As illustrated in Figure 9, the theme *Teaching* is further divided into two orientations: an *Academic*- and a *Social orientation*. *The Academic orientation* contains perceptions of the teacher's role in connection to the pedagogical practice of mediating between content and pupil. The ensuing sub-themes illustrate three different ways of viewing this practice. *The Social orientation* focuses on aspects of teaching connected to pastoral care⁸¹. Here focus is placed on the relation between the teacher and her pupils as well as on the personal and social development of the pupils, as opposed to the cognitive, academic focus of the former orientation. The second orientation also contains three further sub-themes that highlight different roles of the teacher in this respect.

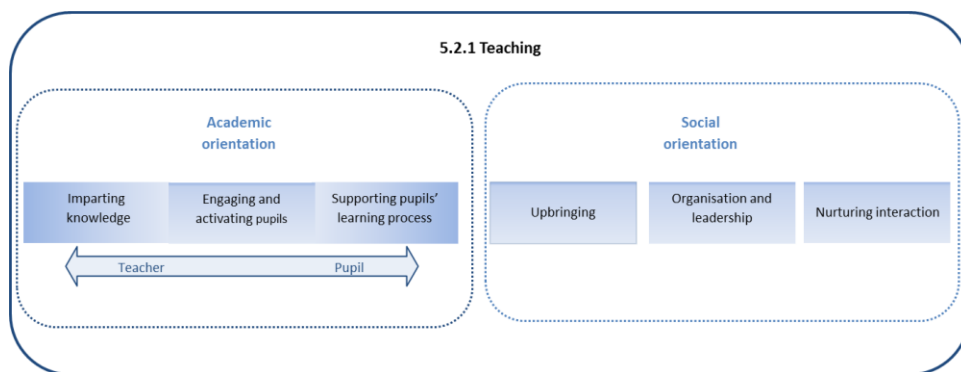


Figure 9. Tasks and functions of the teacher in relation to Teaching.

⁸⁰ Here Amanda uses the Swedish word *fostra*

⁸¹ See pp. 40 ff. for a discussion on the term *pastoral care*

As Figure 9 illustrates, the three sub-themes connected to the academic orientation to teaching are partly overlapping and should be understood as a continuum, where the focus shifts from teacher-directed towards pupil-centred learning. Thus, the locus of control changes from teacher to pupil and from more direct to more indirect influence on the part of the teacher. Then again, the sub themes connected to the social orientation are to be seen as separate constituent entities. For purposes of clarity all themes are here presented separately.

Teaching: Academic orientation

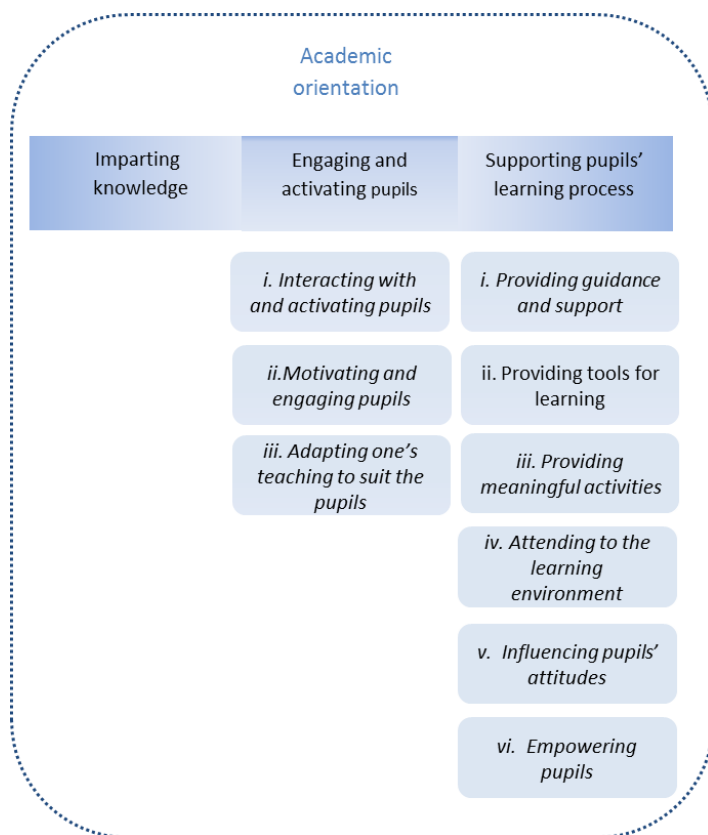


Figure 10. The academic orientation to teaching.

Imparting knowledge

The first sub-theme connected to the Academic orientation contains statements where the focus is on imparting knowledge. The teacher's action is typically described by the use of expressions such as to pass on knowledge (in Swedish: *lära ut*), to convey knowledge or information (Swe.: *förmedla*, *bibringa*, *överföra*), to

impart knowledge (Swe.: *ge kunskap*) and to share one's knowledge and experience (Swe.: *dela med sig kunskaper och erfarenheter*).

As I mentioned earlier, I consider it extremely important that a language teacher not only imparts and conveys the language but also all the other things that are connected with a language: history, culture, manners and customs, the people, the language in question etc. (Christine, 1)

My role would be to... well, convey the information I am expected to teach the pupils. (Amanda, 2)

I want to impart knowledge /.../ it is knowledge I want to impart so that they have something up their sleeves, something to take with them. (Bridget, 3)

The teacher has a very central and active role in the classroom. While the teacher's actions are focused, the pupils' role is largely downplayed to that of being recipients of knowledge passed on to them by the teacher. The teacher's role as expert is highlighted and how the pupils feel about the subject and what they learn is seen as largely dependent on the competence, performance, attitude and approach of the teacher.

The central task is to impart knowledge to pupils and because of this it is important that the teacher has strong subject knowledge. (Heather, 1)

Because if you have a real passion for your subject, the pupils will notice it ...and it will affect them as well. (Nancy, 2)

I noticed when I stood in front of the class that you really need to be on the alert, so that you can produce those things and moreover in such a way that it might stick, so that it captures the audience so to speak. (Daniella, 2)

A storyteller. I actually believe in elaboration in general. When you place things in contexts and into stories, people simply remember it better. (Bridget, 2)

Engaging and activating pupils

If the focus in relation to the previous theme is on knowledge transmission, the focus here shifts towards a focus on the pupil. Still, the teacher is very much in control of classroom activity as she attempts to i) *interact with and activate pupils*, ii) *motivate and engage pupils* and to iii) *adapt her teaching to suit the pupils*.

i) Interacting with and activating pupils

The teachers express they want to interact with the pupils and involve them in classroom activities. The teachers strive to invite the pupils to contribute and take part in classroom communication. Still, the teacher very much controls the activities in the classroom. This is illustrated in Mary's description below, where the teacher teaches and goes through new material and the pupils are activated by doing different kinds of assigned exercises that are then checked by the teacher.

There are many different ways of working that can be suitable for employing in the classroom or at home. I am of the opinion that the short amount of time the teacher and the pupils spend together should focus on ways of working that cannot be done at home or that are impossible to check if they have been done at home. In other words, I prefer communication, oral tasks, the teacher's explanations and independent work (e.g. grammar exercises) that you go through together and explain afterwards. At home, reading or completing exercises are suitable working modes and reading comprehension can then be checked with the help of exercises. (Mary, 1)

In my opinion good language teaching includes interaction./.../ it is extremely important that the pupils themselves get to speak and that the teacher is not just standing there talking away. (Janet,1)

... as a part of them but still separate. Not that I am just a part of the group and we together somehow... but rather that I have a clearly defined role, as a teacher. In that way I am more of a teacher than a mentor, if you want to separate those tasks. But to...involve the whole group, because it is so easy as a teacher to place yourself in front of the class and just stay there and talk away and you don't see any response but still you keep at it because this is what you had planned to do. (Bridget, 2)

ii) Motivating and engaging pupils

Besides activating and involving the pupils, the teachers express they want to motivate and engage the pupils. Whereas the teachers in connection to the sub-theme *Imparting knowledge*, voiced an intention of wanting to convey information in an interesting and effective way, the primary focus here is placed on the pupils, rather than on the content to be conveyed. The teachers express they want to get or make the pupils motivated, they want to give them motivation as well as sustain their interest in and motivation for language learning or for the subject.

Keeping the pupils motivated and interested is something I consider important when it comes to language teaching. (Helen, 1)

I generally believe in motivation as a teaching method. I would like to show the pupils how and in what situations you need proper language skills. This might motivate even bilingual speakers to study, to become successful users of an important language, for which they are already well equipped. (Linda, 1)

A... teacher who can... motivate and inspire, I would say.... Who is able to vary the working methods. Because being able to work in different ways may have a motivating effect on pupils. (Melissa, 2)

When it comes to motivating pupils, a continuum of perceptions can be noted depending on how the teachers view the role of the learner. This is an example of how the themes connected to the *Academic orientation* partly overlap. On the one end, we have views where motivating involves arousing the interest of the pupils so that they will pay attention or listen to the teacher, as illustrated in Tina's comment below. Towards the other end, we have views where the teacher strives to arrange teaching in such an inspiring way that the pupils will feel motivated to take on learning on their own. The second view is illustrated in Heather's comment below.

Especially when it comes to [the subject] Finnish, I think you really have to keep at it in order to...keep and get pupils' attention. And to get them to pay attention and be interested and so on... so, yes, I actually think it is rather demanding... being a language teacher. (Tina, 2)

When it comes to the teacher's work, I want to mention motivation. In my view, making the pupils motivated and getting them to see the use of studying is part of the teacher's job. This is because I think learning is far more effective if one is motivated and interested. (Heather, 1)

iii) Adapting one's teaching to suit the pupils

The teachers recognise that pupils are different, they have different learning preferences, different needs and interests and different proficiency levels. Consequently, the teachers want to adapt and vary their teaching methods and approaches, as well as their way of communicating with or instructing pupils, in order to meet the pupils' varying interests and needs.

In my opinion, you should always adapt your teaching to the pupils. The pupil's level of ability must always be considered. When meeting a new group, the teacher must not forget to initially check the pupils' prior knowledge. When the teacher knows what the pupils already know or what they do not know, it is easier to teach on an appropriate level and to go through the material at a pace that suits the whole class. (Astrid, 1)

In my opinion, good language teaching is about meeting the needs of different personalities, and this is probably difficult to achieve. When all pupils in a class feel that they get something out of the instruction, you might be justified in thinking that you teach well. (Sandra, 1)

[It is about] being able to use different working methods, being able to teach in different ways so that every pupil can pick up something from what you are going through. (Amanda, 2)

Supporting pupils' learning process⁸²

The third sub-theme connected to the *Academic orientation to teaching* focuses on promoting and supporting pupils' learning processes. Here the learner is the active party and the teacher's role is that of providing prerequisites for learning by i) *providing guidance and support*, ii) *providing tools for further learning*, iii) *providing meaningful activities*, iv) *attending to the learning environment*, v) *influencing pupils' attitudes*, and v) *empowering pupils*. The teacher's actions are not seen to directly bring about learning but rather as indirect acts that are intended to promote learning and support the pupils in their learning process.

i) Providing guidance and support

When it comes to *providing guidance and support*, the participants highlight that the teacher needs to point the pupils in the right direction and help them along that path. This may involve different measures from challenging the pupils to guiding, facilitating and supporting their efforts.

The teacher needs to have an understanding and the ability to provide the pupil with what she/he needs in order to learn. To challenge the pupils when this is needed but also to facilitate and support when things get difficult and tricky. (Tina, 1)

⁸² This sub-theme consists of activities often associated with the concept *scaffolding*. The term scaffolding was first used in an article by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) but the work of Vygotsky (1978) and his concept *the Zone of Proximal Development* has heavily impacted on how the concept is viewed today. Scaffolding can be described as a learner-centered strategy, whereby the teacher (in this case) attempts to enhance and enable development or learning in general, or the accomplishment of a specific task, by providing necessary support structures. The support can be both emotional and cognitive. The learner is thus gradually steered towards self-sufficiency and as the learner progresses, support and assistance is gradually removed, in order to eventually allow the learner to function independently (cf. Dennen, 2004). This description fits well with the views connected to this sub-theme and I considered using scaffolding as an overall heading. Still, the current heading, *Supporting pupils' learning process*, was seen to better capture the quality that makes this sub-theme different from the previous two sub-themes. Thus, the first sub-theme focuses on knowledge transmission, the second on the engagement of pupils, and the third on pupils' learning processes.

[A] facilitator, somebody who stirs and leads, a 'mover and shaker'. A person who strives to arouse the pupils' own interest, so that they feel motivated to acquire the knowledge themselves. /.../ Kind of in a Dewey-like fashion, considering that the pupils are expected to acquire the knowledge themselves and the teacher is only there to provide guidance. (Bridget, 2)

Trying to help them [the pupils] on their way... (Mary, 2)

Support can also be of the emotional kind. The teachers talk about boosting pupils' self-confidence and helping them get rid of emotional boundaries that may impede learning.

When the pupils practise speaking the foreign language, I think that it is important that the teacher does not correct every error or mistake the pupils make. Instead, the pupils should be encouraged to dare to use the language. If every mistake they make is corrected, there is an imminent risk of the pupils' losing both the courage and motivation to speak the language. (Melissa, 1)

[My role is to] try to build up their self-confidence when it comes to the subject in question. (Linda, 2)

When it comes to the tenth graders⁸³ and the subject Finnish, I try to emphasise the importance of daring to use the language. Often those who attend the tenth grade can have very poor knowledge of Finnish and that is why I want to encourage them to use it. (Amanda, 3)

ii) Providing tools for further learning

Another aspect involves providing tools and models for learning. This can involve teaching the pupils specific strategies for further language learning but it can also involve providing tools for learning in general.

To provide frameworks and working methods that can be of use in other subjects as well. (Bridget, 1)

To try to show them methods and ways in which they can learn (Linda, 2)

To try to convey to them how they themselves can engage with the language when they are not in school, if they become interested. What kind of music is there, what kind of movies and what can you use on the Internet and... Provide them with different resources so they themselves can develop their knowledge or

⁸³ Pupils, who have fallen behind in school and want to raise their grades can opt to attend a voluntary tenth grade of basic education.

develop an interest alongside their studies or the school. A new pen pal is for instance something you can have in high school, if opportunities for school twinning are provided. (Helen, 3)

iii) Providing meaningful activities

The teacher's role can also be that of providing relevant and meaningful activities and experiences that promote learning.

To lower the threshold for using the language in real life, when they, during the discussions in school, have experiences of making mistakes from which they have learnt that there is nothing wrong with making mistakes and that you do not have to speak perfectly in order to dare to express yourself. (Heather, 1)

You have to try to find, try to offer different possibilities and different options for learning these things (Linda, 2)

There I think that education to a large extent fails, because you do not have sensible things for young people or children to do. Meaningful activities, something that actually leads to them learning something. (Bridget, 2)

iv) Attending to the learning environment

Attending to the learning environment involves creating a safe and supportive working atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Further statements that concern classroom atmosphere can be found in connection to the *Social orientation* and the sub-theme *Nurturing Interaction* (p.156) but the statements here specifically connect classroom atmosphere and learning.

To actually be able to get... or bring about such an atmosphere in the classroom that ... improves everybody's learning (Christine, 2)

But also to create such a working environment where everyone can work in a way that suits him or her the best. (Amanda, 2)

Some pupils are extremely afraid of making mistakes. They are indeed. They become inhibited because they think that everyone will laugh if they say something wrong. Then your task is to try to bring about a relaxed situation and to say that 'I also make mistakes as a teacher, and there is nothing wrong with that. You just have to keep talking, otherwise you won't learn. That is very important.' (Daniella, 3)

v) Influencing pupils' attitudes

This aspect involves instilling a way of thinking that enhances learning. As illustrated in Linda's comment, it may also be a question of changing pupils' existing negative attitudes that may otherwise impede learning.

I would like them to realise how important it is to study from the start, since it makes it so much easier to keep up in the long run. (Linda, 1)

To get the pupils to realise that there are always things to learn, even if the subject feels easy and simple and that even the most boring subject can involve something worthwhile and interesting. That is what my teacher made me realise and I for that I am extremely grateful. (Tina, 1)

But my role when I look at my school and my subject is to try and create a positive image of Finnish culture and to make them realise that you don't have to know it [the language] perfectly, you really don't. I am actually trying to get rid of the hatred. I don't want them to hate Finnish and if one class graduates without hating Finnish, then I am very happy. Because there are so many that have an extremely negative attitude towards it and don't want to learn, even if they know they have to learn and that they won't be able to manage without it in the south of Finland. But they just hate Finnish. And they openly declare that they don't like Finnish. Of course you're free to think what you like, but to somehow change that. (Linda, 3)

vi) Empowering pupils

The final aspect connected to this theme, *empowering pupils*, involves taking a step back as a teacher and allowing the pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. This aspect is only found in phases 2 and 3. In the case of Christine, the realisation that she did not have to stand on her head to involve unwilling pupils during lessons, came as quite a relief. She found she could turn over some responsibility to the pupils as well.

To try to be kind of not the main character up there that everyone is looking at but to have the pupils do the work and myself as a leader. (Mary, 2)

Everyone needs to be given space to develop themselves. (Bridget, 2)

If they don't learn, I can't make them, they have to do it themselves. I can meet them half-way, of course, but they have to revise at home and use their brains a little and think –what does the teacher mean, why is it like this /.../ and to leave some of the responsibility to the pupils. It is actually their task to try to learn and to try their best. (Christine, 3)

Academic orientation: summary

In connection to the *Academic Orientation*, three distinct views of teaching and the teacher's role in connection to teaching can be discerned. The first view focuses on knowledge transmission where the teacher has the role of a subject expert who largely controls what and how pupils learn, whereas the pupils' role is to listen and learn what is being taught. This view can thus be seen to reflect a material view of teaching (cf. Pettersen, 2008; see p. 40 in this work). The second view focuses on the pupil rather than the subject. It is emphasised that in order to learn, pupils must be activated and motivated and it is the teacher's task to make them so. Furthermore, the measures taken need to be adapted to suit the varying needs of the pupils. This view largely coincides with what Steinberg (2004) terms motivational pedagogy. The third view focuses on pupils' learning processes as well as their prerequisites for learning and can thus be seen to reflect a formal view of learning (cf. Pettersen, 2008). More responsibility is now placed on the learner and the teacher's role is to help pupils learn by providing them with tools for learning, allowing them to assume responsibility for their own learning and by creating meaningful opportunities for learning. Furthermore, this view also recognises the emotional aspects of learning and the teacher's role is thus to create safe and supportive conditions for learning, to boost pupils' confidence in their abilities and to help eliminate possible emotional obstacles for learning.

Teaching: Social orientation

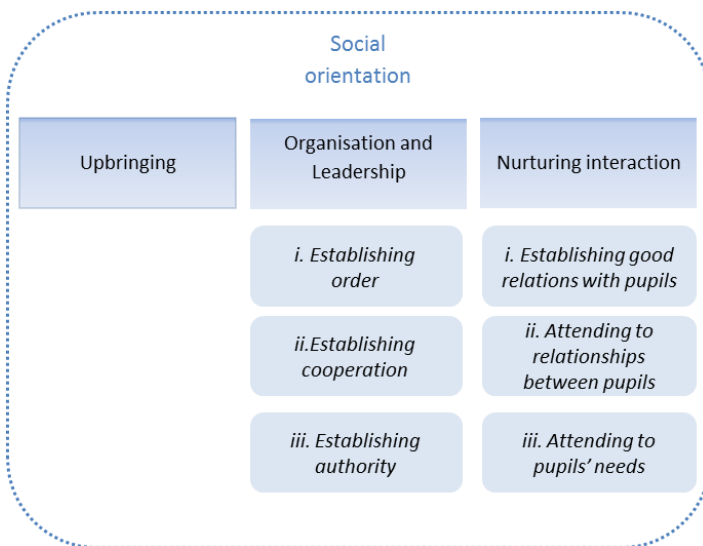


Figure 11. The social orientation to teaching.

Upbringing

Upbringing is the first of three sub-themes connected to the *Social orientation to teaching*. The sub-theme highlights the teacher's role as an educator⁸⁴ and the social development of the pupils is in particular focus. The teachers want to bring up responsible and capable members of society, which in their view includes teaching the pupils the rules, values and norms of society as well as how to behave, work with and be around people in a socially acceptable way.

It is important to stress that the teacher should also educate the youth. School should be able to provide them with an idea of what is right and wrong in society, on a social and on other levels as well. Since school is such a place where pupils actually encounter other people, it is important that they already here become aware of how to behave and what is appropriate in the company of others. This is a very important competence later on in life, since virtually everyone will, to some extent, need to work side by side with others. (Simone, 1)

To discuss with the pupils and to try to shape them into such members of society who are able to wait and... work with others and who understand different cultures and so on. That is a task that is becoming increasingly important. (Mary, 2)

Well, [that the pupils learn] the shared responsibility of working in groups or waiting for their turn, to keep things civil so to speak. (Christine, 3)

In connection to *Upbringing*, the participants specifically mention their function as role models for the pupils; role models that by their own example show the pupils how to behave and be around people in a socially acceptable way.

The most important role of the teacher is to remember that you are so much more than a teacher, you are also an educator and a role model and you should behave accordingly. (Helen, 1)

You need to be a good, grown-up role model. Especially when you are a young teacher, pupils might look at you in a different way and not see you as an old-fashioned lady or something. I really try to stay polite and calm towards them, even if they were to swear in my face. That has actually happened. But you always have to relate to them in a professional, mature and grown-up way. (Melissa, 3)

They [teachers] need to exemplify good behaviour in general. (Susan, 3)

⁸⁴ *fostrare* in Swedish

The participants see their role as an educator as an important one, especially when teaching younger pupils. As illustrated in the comments by Denice and Tina below, upbringing is seen as a complement or even as a necessary prerequisite for teaching and learning in the classroom. The only directly opposing view here is voiced by Melissa, who initially feels that upbringing was not something she, as a teacher, should need to concern herself with.

I actually think a little of both. Essentially teaching is important, but if you don't... you have to deal with the educational part, otherwise some pupils are not in a position where they can benefit from teaching. So they go hand in hand, at least in comprehensive school. Upper secondary is another matter. (Denice, 2)

I think that there is an increasing need for the school and the teacher in particular to be an educator... for the pupils. And sometimes you come across instances where teachers do not take their role seriously and then I feel that, especially in high school, it does not work. The pupils need someone who enforces rules and keeps track of them at that age, I think. So upbringing is important. (Tina, 2)

As a language teacher, I consider it most important that I teach the language in the right way or that they learn the language and the culture and so on. I do not consider it my duty to start raising them or anything. But of course there are certain... I think you should keep to certain "comfort-rules" in the classroom. But I still think that a parent... or I don't think you should... parents and teachers are not one and the same, they have different tasks. (Melissa, 2)

In phases 2 and 3, upbringing is further highlighted as the participants express that in some cases, teachers need to compensate for poor home conditions.

Well, hopefully it is also a kind of place where some pupils... you don't know what kind of home conditions they have /.../ for example if ethics, morale and religion are never discussed at home, they get it at school in any case, so that they form a healthy conscience. Sometimes it feels as if some pupils just stand there and say 'I don't have a bad conscience, everything I do is right.' Then you have to talk to them and really put them straight, try to get them to form a conscience. I have seen that work, even in a short amount of time. In any case, when they see me, they think that 'now we have a bad conscience regarding that issue' or something. If not for anybody else, then for the teachers at least. They need to learn to take responsibility for what they do and say 'yes, okay, I hit him, it was probably my fault'. Maybe that will help them sometime in the future, in some way. (Daniella, 3)

Upbringing mostly, I think a lot of them are pretty bad mannered, or they don't know. It is not that they want to be troublesome and mean and high on sugar,

but if there is nobody there who cooks for them and they get money for McDonalds instead... and nobody who listens or helps and nobody who tells them how to do things, then they can't know. Then they need to get it from other social surroundings, like school. (Helen, 2)

Still, the teachers firmly express that ideally, the responsibility for upbringing should lie both with the parents and the teachers at school. Some point out that there should be cooperation between the two parties but they also express that the main responsibility should be with the parents.

Both home and school educate the child and that is why cooperation between home and school is so essential. Still, the main responsibility lies with the parents. (Astrid, 1)

Parents need to take responsibility for upbringing but there needs to be cooperation between educators. For example in problematic cases, both parties need to be there for the pupil. (Nancy, 2)

Upbringing and... but at the same time I think it has gone a little too far, that parents place too much emphasis on upbringing in school rather than at home. I think the situation has become worse...it is the parents' task rather than the task of the school. (Amanda, 3)

Organisation and leadership

The next sub-theme, *Organisation and leadership*, refers to those aspects of a teacher's job that concern managing and directing a group of pupils. Three aspects have been identified, i) *establishing order*, ii) *establishing cooperation* and iii) *establishing authority*.

i) Establishing order

The aspect *establishing order* concerns the employment of actions and strategies with the purpose of regulating pupil conduct and discipline. The aim is to contain or control the pupils and to make sure that common rules are being followed and that order is maintained. The teacher's role is to supervise, act as a role model, set boundaries and rules, and take corrective actions when boundaries are overstepped.

To see to it that lessons proceed relatively smoothly, to maintain order in the classroom. (Janet, 1)

To maintain order in the classroom and to show them how to behave and things like that. (Melissa, 3)

Well, then I have tried to make simple rules about how I like us to work during my lessons. And when they know that this is how we do it, it is easier to enforce the rules. And it is much easier when I know that this is what I have decided and this is what has been presented to them. If they have left their book in the locker, they mustn't go and get it. They have to go during the break and not run to fetch it every lesson. (Amanda, 3)

Then you have to correct the pupils' behaviour /.../ 'don't sit tilting your chair', 'nose forward', 'take out your note book, please', 'open your note book, please', 'look up page 32'. (Linda, 2)

In most cases, these actions are connected to the classroom context and could then be described as classroom management (cf. Doyle, 1986, p. 397) but as Linda and Christine point out below, order needs to be maintained outside the classroom as well.

In the corridors you have to be a pair of eyes watching and making sure that nobody is brutally bullied or gets hurt or does something that is prohibited, goes outside the school grounds. (Linda, 2)

As a teacher, my task is also to make sure that nobody runs in the corridors and that nobody bullies or acts aggressively towards anybody else. (Christine, 3)

ii) Establishing cooperation

The aspect, *establishing cooperation*, focuses on the teacher's managerial function in a classroom. When the previous aspect focuses on maintaining order, the focus here is more on getting the class to work *with* you and to establish pupils' cooperation and willingness to go along with and participate in the programme of action (cf. Doyle 1986, p. 397). The teacher has the role of a leader who directs the pupils and makes sure things progress in a smooth and efficient manner.

Give room for the opinions of others, but still being in control / .../ a teacher has to be like a talk show host or a discussion leader (Daniella, 1)

Even if you are not always the one talking, you still have to make sure everything comes along nicely. (Christine, 3)

You kind of have to be a leader and get them to... that is, you have to lead and make sure everyone is a part of the activity. (Daniella, 3)

As the participants emphasise their role as leaders, they point out that it is important to take the pupils and their perspective into consideration, to lead in a flexible manner adapted to the pupils and the situation, and to lead fairly.

The teacher has to listen to the pupils and not be a dictator, who thinks she knows everything. Instead, she should, together with the pupils, strive to obtain a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom, where everyone feels included. (Nancy, 1)

Traditionally, it is the teacher who makes decisions and manages the classroom but if need be, the teacher also has to be able to put herself in the pupil's shoes. The teacher needs to be firm and consistent but at the same time be able to motivate and encourage. (Astrid, 1)

To lead them in a good way so that you are not unfair or anything. (Daniella, 3)

iii) Establishing authority

The third aspect connected to *Organisation and Leadership* is *establishing authority*.

The teachers recognise that getting pupils to respect and recognise you as a leader is not something that automatically comes with the territory. The teachers express that it is up to them to work towards establishing authority.

The issue of authority. How to get a class to listen to me and what I have to say. (Christine, 1)

It can be pretty intense, they are not as well brought up and obedient as they used to be. Authority does not come with the territory, so you have to establish it yourself. (Helen, 2)

You have to be consistent about the rules and you might have to be a little stricter in the beginning before you can turn a blind eye to things. But you can't be too strict either. Of course, you have to be flexible too, but you need to be consistent and treat the pupils the same. Pupils who are really creating a disturbance have to be taken aside, out of the classroom, I think. They mustn't be allowed to disturb the whole lesson. You simply have to be firm and just wait them out, even if they refuse to get up or something. You have to be firm and wait, even if it takes a long time. Because the rest of the school year... well, in the long run, you are probably better off waiting them out until they stand up and walk out of the classroom or whatever it is you want them to do. (Melissa, 3)

The teachers clearly recognise that their own behaviour and how they relate to and treat their pupils will effect whether they succeed in their attempts to

establish authority. Several teachers describe establishing and maintaining authority as a balancing act between closeness (being a friend) and distance (being an authority).

At the same time it is equally important to be able to keep the authority and the respect of the class. You mustn't become the pupils' friend. I have experienced this a few times during my years as a pupil. The teacher really tries to be well-liked and funny and he or she might very well succeed in that. But the quality of instruction diminishes and soon it is of no use to anyone. (Susan, 1)

When you are a young teacher you have to seek respect... some seem to think you are almost their buddy and some think you are an authority of some sort. (Linda, 2)

I still think the teacher should be more of an authority for the pupils rather than a friend. /.../ you have to be able to maintain authority. The teacher doesn't necessarily have to be a friend and it doesn't always have to be fun in the classroom ... but you need to have authority and to set boundaries and have rules and... (Tina, 2)

Nurturing interaction

The third sub-theme connected to the *Social orientation*, *Nurturing interaction*, focuses on what could be described as the caring and affective aspects of teaching. The role of the teacher is very close to that of a parent or a grown-up who cares for the children, strives to establish and maintain good relationships with and between the children, wants to support them in their struggles and meet their different needs. Three aspects have been identified: i) *establishing and maintaining good relations with pupils*, ii) *attending to relationships between pupils* and iii) *attending to pupils' needs*.

i) Establishing and maintaining good relations with pupils

The participants recognise that establishing and maintaining good relations to your pupils is something a teacher has to work on and put an effort into. This can involve building up trust and closeness (Christine and Linda) or finding appropriate ways to approach, connect to and interact with the pupils (Nancy and Bridget).

I think it is important that you create a bond with your class, that they feel they can trust you, that they dare to make mistakes, dare to make a fool of themselves. (Christine, 1)

When I think of a traditional language teacher, I remember how they corrected you, even in interactions outside the classroom. I don't do that because I like to

keep the spontaneity. For me the contact is important, I want them to feel safe and dare take the leap. I don't want to correct them in every situation. When we are doing grammar, I correct them but not otherwise. (Linda, 2)

To kind of be on the same wavelength as the pupils so that you know how they think at that age and that you are able to handle them in the right way. (Nancy, 2)

Being a teacher is more or less about living together with the youngsters that for some reason or other come to be in your class and so you are meant to be with them. You can't do much else but be with them. It is when you try to control them too much that... (Bridget, 2)

Establishing and maintaining good relations with your pupils is clearly seen as an essential part of the teacher's job. First of all, good teacher-pupil relations are seen as an important prerequisite that affect other aspects of the job. Here Denice expresses that in order to be able to teach the pupils, you need to know how to relate to them. Secondly, it becomes particularly evident in phase 3 that there is a clear link between the teachers' sense of job satisfaction and the quality of their relationship with their pupils. The teachers express that it is important for them to feel that they connect with their pupils, that they are important to them and that they can make a difference in the pupils' lives. This is illustrated in Susan's comment below.

In the great scheme of things, perhaps teaching is what is most important, but in order for it to work, you also need functioning relationships with your pupils. (Denice, 1)

Then I think that the interaction with pupils is very important, that you get it to work. Because if that doesn't work, then you have constant problems every time they are in your classroom. If there is a problem, you really have to try to discuss it with them. I think that is what it is all about. In order to be comfortable and happy, I think it is important that you get that to work. (Nancy, 2)

And the job itself is really rewarding. /.../ even if you have to give a lot of yourself, you also get a lot back. It is the interaction with the people, with the pupils, with the youngsters. I like being with young people, that's why I like it. Surely, there are those who do not consider the teacher's job to be that all that rewarding. (Susan, 3)

ii) Attending to relationships between pupils

As Nancy very insightfully points out in phase 1, a teacher not only needs to attend to the teacher-pupil relationship but she also needs to take the interaction *between* pupils into consideration. Still, the second aspect, *attending to relationships between pupils*, is not afforded nearly as much attention as the previous aspect. Apart from Nancy's more general comment, the other statements connected to this aspect concern preventing or dealing with conflicts between pupils.

On top of that, the teacher has to be sensitive towards pupils and mustn't forget the important interaction between teacher and pupils but they also have to be attentive to the interaction between pupils. (Nancy, 1)

Dealing with bullying and other problems outside the classroom. (Helen, 1)

Bullying and similar things must be prevented so that it doesn't occur so much, and such work goes on all the time. (Nancy, 2)

That is to a large extent what the day-to-day work in the school is all about; there are certain pupils who can't have recess together or some classes that do not get along, and what are you to do about that. (Christine, 3)

iii) Attending to pupils' needs

The third aspect, *attending to pupils' needs*, highlights the fact that pupils have basic needs, as human beings, that the teacher needs to recognise and try to meet. First of all, the participants recognise that pupils need to be seen, listened to and recognised for who they are. The teacher thus needs to take an interest in and pay attention to all her pupils, see them as individuals with different needs and take the time to be there for them.

To notice pupils as individuals and take their special needs into consideration. (Janet, 1)

That you take the time to see them, pay attention to them, and listen... or learn to listen and take note of what they are saying ... that you simply give them time... because I think you will benefit from that... at a later stage. (Christine, 2)

To see what the individual pupil needs, every single pupil. You don't have time for that every lesson, but still that you would be able to provide each pupil with whatever they need at the time. That could be anything from encouragement to discipline, or quite simply that you pay attention to them. (Amanda, 3)

Secondly, it is expressed that a teacher should attend to the pupils' well-being and offer them comfort, security and stability. The teachers express genuine concern for the pupils' emotional well-being and they feel that the pupils should be able to come to their teachers for support and they want to be there for them in times of need. This can involve attending and reacting to how the pupils are feeling and doing both in and out of class, being a dependable and secure adult to whom the pupils can turn for support and creating a pleasant, safe and comforting classroom environment for all pupils.

Especially for younger pupils, the teacher is also a role model, a grown-up person that they trust will take care of everything that may happen. The mental side is perhaps more important than the physical, because it forms a basis for everything else. (Hilda, 1)

That you really try to see your pupils and try to notice if they have any problems that you might discuss later. That you react to pupils' behaviour and try to see how they are doing. There is a lot of talk these days that pupils aren't feeling all that well, so to try and see and react to that. (Mary, 2)

To be another grown-up beside the parent... pupils talk to their parents about quite different things compared to what they talk to us teachers about. So to try and be some kind of support for them. (Amanda, 3)

That you create such an atmosphere in the classroom that the pupils feel safe, that they get to be different but that everyone is still welcome. (Christine, 2)

Thirdly, the teachers want to offer their pupils personal guidance and encouragement. This involves seeing the potential in each individual, encouraging them and guiding them on, as well as providing them with the necessary self-confidence, tools, knowledge and information for their lives ahead.

You have to believe in them beyond their apparent qualities. Everyone has hidden talents. Always. (Bridget, 1)

Those kids in high school have so much going on. They have their hands full being themselves and living their lives and finding their place. And that is what we have to support, as well as trying to help them find themselves. (Linda, 2)

To try to encourage them, I think that's very important, to try to encourage all the different pupils... to do good things, of course /.../ and to encourage talent. I think that is really important. Pupils' talents, I mean. So that they don't go through life thinking 'well, I couldn't do anything, I wasn't good at anything in school'. (Daniella, 2)

It is about providing knowledge so that they get by in the future but also to “fill their backpacks” for life ahead... not just the subject and knowledge of that but also other things such as how to manage in life and how to move on from high school. (Amanda, 3)

Social Orientation: summary

In connection to the *Social orientation to teaching*, we can conclude that the teachers are not only concerned about the academic aspects of teaching but they also see that they, together with the parents of the pupils, have an important role in the social upbringing of the pupils. Furthermore, relations to pupils are clearly seen as a pivotal aspect of the job. For one thing, relations to pupils are considered a prerequisite for handling other parts of the job but the quality of the relations also affect the teachers' sense of job satisfaction. From the descriptions we can note that teachers' relations to pupils are complex. On the one hand, the participants express that they strive to establish and maintain close relations to their pupils and to support them, care for them and meet their needs as developing human beings. On the other hand, a certain distance has to be established and preserved, in order to enable the teacher to maintain order, establish cooperation and regulate pupils' conduct.

5.2.2 Handling out of class work

The second theme concerns *Handling out of class work* and as the name implies, it involves duties and tasks that generally take place outside the classroom. Here three sub-themes have been identified: *Attending to tasks connected to teaching*, *Attending to duties as a staff member* and *Collegial interaction*.

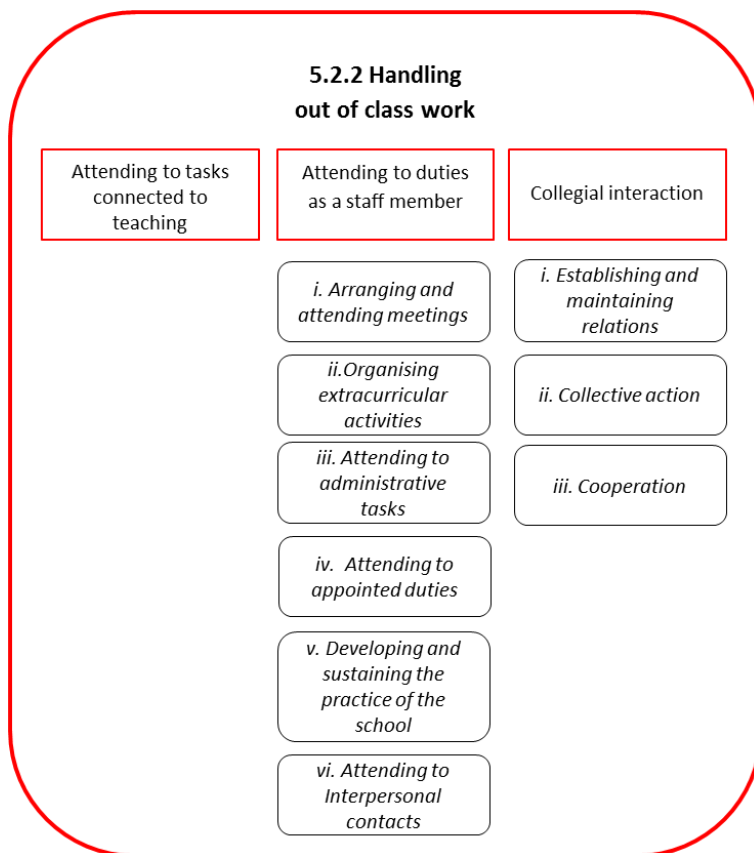


Figure 12. Tasks and functions of the teacher in relation to Handling out of class work.

Attending to tasks connected to teaching

The sub-theme, *Attending to tasks connected to teaching*, involves activities and tasks that precede or follow as a result of classroom activities. Most of the statements concern the planning of and preparation for lessons and courses and include activities such as structuring your lessons, looking for and choosing material to use in your teaching, designing and making your own teaching material, and photocopying. Over half of the student teachers in phase 1 recognise planning as an integral part of the teacher’s job.

An essential prerequisite for good lessons is, of course, good planning.
(Christine, 1)

Since I don't have any experience of the teacher's job, it is difficult to say what is included. Lots of planning and teaching, of course. Like they say in Finnish, 'hyvin suunniteltu on puoliksi tehty' [well planned is half done]. (Sandra, 1)

A teacher also has to do a lot of work connected to planning: planning lessons, courses and the whole school year. The teacher also has to go through and analyse, work out and sort out material that is to be taught. /.../ It is certainly important to at least have a clear principle that you follow here. It is also good to have a rough estimate of the time it takes to teach a particular issue, in other words, to be able to deal with time. I therefore think that the most important thing, when it comes to the teacher's work, is to plan and sort out and narrow down the material. (Daniella, 1)

The focus on planning as part of the teacher's job culminates in phase 2, where all teachers mention this particular aspect. Lesson planning is an integral part of teaching preparation and thus they have all had personal experience of this particular aspect of the job at this point. Many teachers specifically stress that they consider planning an important part of the job but they also point out that they consider it labour- intensive, complex and time-consuming.

Earlier, before teacher education, I would have said that for the most part, the work is about standing in front of the class and teaching. But I've changed my mind here. The way things are today, I think that the greatest effort should, note the word I'm using, should be put into planning, as a matter of fact. What happens during the lesson isn't that big of a deal, provided you actually have meaningful things for them to do. (Bridget, 2)

I would stress the importance of lesson planning. I don't think we had any idea of how much time it takes to plan a lesson, especially when you are an inexperienced teacher. (Melissa, 2)

The difference between what I wrote then and now is that now I'm actually aware of the vast amount of time it takes to plan a sixty-minute-lesson. /.../ But, of course, what is most time-consuming is making your own exercises. /.../ And all those small bits that have to fit together to form a coherent whole /.../ very time-consuming and a lot to think about... but at the same time, it's a lot of fun. (Christine, 2)

In phase 3, planning is still predominantly viewed as a time-consuming part of the job, by those who mention it (4/9). The exception here is Linda, who after initially being stressed about having to plan her lessons on her own, now finds herself enjoying this part of the job. As illustrated in Amanda's comment below, the other

teachers all share a common belief that with time and experience, planning will take up less of their time.

Especially during the first year, lesson planning demanded a lot of work. (Melissa, 3)

Now I'm underway and I can savour the fact that I know everything in order to teach it. Now I can concentrate on planning for variety and making it enjoyable for the pupils and for myself too, since with a variety of tasks, I have more options and it doesn't have to be the same. (Linda, 3)

I personally still think that this work is horribly overwhelming or that there is a lot to think about and plan and things like that. But I'm sure it will get better with time and compared to the first year, I think it is less overwhelming now that I have some idea of what to do in all classes. (Amanda, 3)

Apart from planning, the teachers also mention other tasks connected to teaching. These include student assessment and related activities of correcting and grading tests, essays and homework. Tasks connected to assessment come up in all three phases but receive significantly less attention compared to planning, as it is only mentioned by four teachers in phase 1, three in phase 2 and four in phase 3. In phase 2, Linda and Tina express that teachers need to have a system for keeping track of events, deadlines, pupils and material. Linda, Nancy, Heather (phase 2) and Daniella (phase 3) are concerned with how to successfully integrate and assess the needs of students with special needs and immigrants (only Nancy) into their classes. Finally, Melissa (phase 2 and 3), Daniella and Christine (phase 3) also mention that a teacher needs to know her classroom and master classroom technique and equipment.

Assessment is a part of the teacher's tasks (Heather, 1)

Besides teaching, lesson preparation and correcting homework, tests and essays are a part of the teaching profession. (Melissa, 1)

Keeping track of different courses and groups and classes and material and things like that. (Tina, 2)

Those integrations. When I went to school, there were so called 'help-classes', and pupils with problems went to a separate class, but now it is no longer like that and there is a huge difference. /.../ and then the immigrants. They have appeared now and they were not there before, so that has become a challenge for the teachers, in a completely new way, to get it all to work. (Nancy, 2)

All the various tools you use while teaching are important to master.
(Christine, 3)

Attending to duties as a staff member

The second sub-theme, *Attending to duties as a staff member*, is a broad theme that includes professional tasks that are not directly concerned with the instruction of pupils. The sub-theme includes six aspects: i) *arranging and attending meetings*, ii) *organising extracurricular activities*, iii) *administrative tasks*, iv) *appointed duties* v) *developing and sustaining the practice of the school* and vi) *interpersonal contacts*.

i) Arranging and attending meetings

As a teacher, you have to attend different kinds of meetings. Here the teachers mention staff meetings of different kinds but also parent-teacher meetings. Notably, attending meetings is not a task that the teachers mention in phase 1.

Then there are lots of teacher staff meetings, and parent-teacher meetings in the evenings (Linda, 2)

You have meetings (Mary, 2)

Then there are quite a lot of meetings and stuff like that... Teacher staff meetings, for instance in connection to assessment, discussions that need to be held, but also lots of other meetings such as IEP⁸⁵ meetings and pupil welfare meetings that you sometimes have to be involved in. (Linda, 3)

ii) Organising extracurricular activities

The aspect *organising extracurricular activities* involves organising different kinds of educational activities that are not part of the usual coursework at school. This includes activities such as planning for and organising trips, excursions, school festivities, theme days and other project work. The activities may be arranged internally, within the individual schools, but as Christine's comment reflects, cooperation with other schools may also be involved.

⁸⁵ Since 2010, an amendment to the Finnish National Curriculum stipulates that all pupils are entitled to individual support for learning, growth and school attendance. In cases where intensified or special support is needed, an *individual education plan* (IEP) is drawn up. This is usually done in multi-professional teams including e.g. teachers, pupil welfare, special education teachers and parents. The implementation of the IEP is regularly monitored and assessed. For more information see e.g. http://www.oph.fi/english/education_system/support_for_pupils_and_students

Language excursions and preparations for these. (Bridget, 1)

You arrange excursions somewhere or you arrange theme days or this and that. (Denice, 2)

Then there are a lot of arrangements of different kinds of functions, Christmas parties and so on. But it is often shared, in our school at least, so that you have your own areas of responsibility. But sometimes these things pile up, so that your areas of responsibility come all at once. (Linda, 3)

Keeping contact with the other schools /.../ trips and excursions are a lot of fun but it sure takes a lot of time /.../ being the coordinator for a project... /.../ as a coordinator you are the intermediary that makes sure everyone knows what is going on (Christine, 3)

Judging from the way the teachers talk about organising extracurricular activities and considering that relatively few teachers mention this aspect of the job (phase 1: 2 teachers, phase 2: 3 teachers, phase 3: 2 teachers), it becomes clear that it is not seen as a central or even essential part of the job. The teachers seem to have very ambivalent feelings about this aspect of the job. On the one hand, it is described as a fun and worthwhile task to be involved but, on the other hand, they see it as yet another task you have to do and something that tends to take up a fair amount of your time.

Many schools have theme days and excursions and I think ... well, I think many language teachers probably get involved in excursions, especially if they go abroad, because most class- or language teachers I know, have a big interest in travelling and seeing countries and they would gladly arrange this for their pupils. To have a goal, like now we've learnt this much, so now we can go to Berlin and everyone can order something in German and get that sense of fulfilment that 'boy, am I good since I managed to reach our goal'. I think a thing like that can also be difficult to plan and set aside time for and finance. And it takes up a vast amount of time beside teaching the subjects. (Helen, 2)

At the same time, there are quite a lot of tasks. It is not just about teaching, that is almost a side issue, since there are so many other things to...theme days to plan and... all these extra things that are great fun but take so much time. (Christine, 3)

iii) Attending to administrative tasks

Another aspect is *attending to administrative tasks*. Here the teachers mention different kinds of documentation and record keeping activities, finding substitute teachers and arranging national language proficiency tests.

You can have a lot of paperwork, too. For example, where I teach at the moment, we have to do it ourselves. We have no one to do the boring paperwork, so if someone drops out of a course, you have to write a statement and directions for them and all that is part of the job, too. (Mary, 2)

Then we have the WILMA⁸⁶ system in our school, so I need to always remember to send home pupils' results in tests and exams, such grades every now and then. (Melissa, 3)

To find substitute teachers (Christine, 3)

But if I get to continue on this job that I have now, I don't think I will have a boring career in [School X], if it continues. Since we not only have immigrant education but we also survey their needs, so we do interviews. Then there are these YKI⁸⁷ systems, the language exams (Mary, 3)

iv) Attending to appointed duties

When it comes to appointed duties, having the position of a form tutor seems to be something the teachers find important but they also recognise that it can be very time-consuming. Other appointed duties that the teachers mention are custodial duties in the school dining hall and during recess.

Form teachers and their role of mediating between the parents and the child and the school, that is really important. (Linda, 2)

Being a form teacher, at least in high school. It takes so much time. Well, okay, you put as much time and energy into it as you like, but when you are doing it for the first time, and especially since I have quite a few [pupils] with IEPs and all kinds of reading and writing disabilities and hearing impairment, so that adds up to a lot. That actually surprised me a lot. How much work that actually involved. (Linda, 3)

⁸⁶ WILMA is a computer software programme used for documentation of pupils' grades, absence etc. and for communication between home and school

⁸⁷ The National Certificate of Language Proficiency (YKI) is a language proficiency test that assesses language skills in practical situations.(www.oph.fi)

There are lots of custodial duties /.../ and the dining hall is quite another story, and there you have to supervise. (Linda, 2)

All this about keeping pupils in check during recess, having recess duty. That is a part of the job. (Melissa, 3)

v) Developing and sustaining the practice of the school

The teachers recognise that they have a role in the school organisation and their statements reflect that they feel that they, as teachers, need to take part in creating, developing and running a common practice within their school. Apart from a statement by Mary in phase 1 (included below), this particular aspect is only found in phases 2 and 3. In phase 3, Helen expresses frustration about not being able to fully take part in and influence how things are done at her school. For her, this is an important element of the teacher's job and essential for her work satisfaction.

To master the course system and the different phases of the school year. (Mary,1)

To create a good environment, a good school. (Amanda, 2)

The teacher has a big role in the school community as well, as a staff member... that you take responsibility and do your part there... there are a lot of things included in the teacher's work besides what goes on in the classroom. (Melissa, 2)

I don't like it when I can't exert an influence. When you've only had short-term positions, you are not really sufficiently integrated and then it is difficult to influence bigger things and issues in the school, and I kind of need that /.../ that is also something I've experienced stress over, when I think that there are certain things that need to be changed and then there is nothing you can do, if you don't have such a position among the colleagues or a permanent position or just their confidence, for that matter. If I am to continue working in a school, I would like to have more administrative duties. Not since administration in itself attracts me but I need to have a job where I can influence somebody's situation. (Helen, 3)

In order to be able to take part in sustaining and developing the practice of the school, you need to have an understanding of this practice. For a new teacher, it may be difficult to fully grasp and uncover the largely covert structures that regulate the school practice. In phase 3, Tina and Christine point out that, as new teachers, this was an aspect of the job with which they struggled.

You develop a certain routine and you get an idea of what it is all about... you get kind of an overall picture of it all. As a new teacher, you don't really know what a school year will look like, what you do in autumn and what you focus on more in the spring and all that. (Tina, 2)

When you are new to a school, just knowing a simple thing such as where the school ground is, can be a big deal. And where the material is kept... and during recess, who should be outside, during which recess periods is it compulsory for pupils to go out, the food...all these things. (Christine, 3)

vi) Interpersonal contacts

The final aspect connected to a teacher's duties as a staff member is *interpersonal contacts*. Predominantly this aspect includes parental contacts but Helen also brings up contacts with the school nurse and even contact with other relevant authorities outside school.

To keep up the contact between the home and the school is another task that the teacher has. (Janet, 1)

Then you have to be in contact with the parents and /.../ the school nurse and one and the other /.../ the parent-teacher association, contacts with the surrounding society, since there are many authorities that work together with the school. (Helen, 2)

Then you need to be able to meet parents in the right way. (Melissa, 2)

Contacts with parents can also be positive, if you have a well-functioning class. And just as negative if you have a class that you don't get along with or if the parents are negative towards the school or you as a person. That hasn't happened to me. I have only met the parents two or three times but it has worked really well. (Christine, 3)

Collegial interaction

The third sub-theme connected to *Handling out of class work*, *Collegial interaction*, concerns relating to and interacting with colleagues. Three different approaches to *Collegial interaction* have been identified and these form the three aspects linked to this sub-theme: i) *establishing and maintaining relations*, ii) *collective action* and iii) *cooperation*.

i) Establishing and maintaining relations

The first aspect focuses on establishing and maintaining positive and well-functioning internal relations with your colleagues and can be seen as a prerequisite for the other two aspects that are more outward-oriented. The quality of internal relations is highlighted and there is no clear division between personal and professional relations as the teachers express they want friendship, support, understanding, kinship, a sense of belonging and being part of a team.

If you help others then most likely you'll get help in return at some point, so it is important that everyone gets on well with one another and is able to work together with others. It's not always so that all personalities get on well together but you can always cooperate in any case. This is important, since quite possibly you might have to do something together with this or that one and then you'd better be on good terms with them and have friendly relations. /.../ they are important, because we all need one another and sometimes someone else may be of help and sometimes you may be in a position to help others. So that's important... for achieving good results. (Mary, 2)

That is something I need in any case. Some kind of relation with people who are in a similar situation, with like-minded people. (Linda, 3)

When I worked in other schools /.../ there was no sense of community or everyone was not together in one big group. From what I could see, there were small groups instead of a closely united staffroom, as you often find in big schools.[In our school] everyone talks to everyone else all the time and we all take coffee breaks together. /.../ we all know what's up with everybody, so to speak, and have a good time. (Mary, 3)

As can be noted in Mary's statement above, this aspect stresses the importance of inclusive collegial relations at the workplace. Along with Mary, other teachers also note the negative effects of staff room balkanization⁸⁸ on teamwork and teambuilding among a group of colleagues.

There you could really see the work that has to be put in among a group of colleagues /.../ or that you do not only work with your colleagues. Because you see that in working life too. That a group of English teachers, and maybe some

⁸⁸ Hargreaves's (1998) term *balkanization* refers to a phenomenon where teachers are neither isolated nor form a united group, but rather form separate, relatively stable, isolated subgroups e.g. based on subjects taught, age, status etc. (p. 224)

other language teachers, sit in a room and work together and then you have the Swedish teachers in a separate room and if there is more than one history teacher they are in another room and then the scientists... and I think that is just so sad. The protection of preserves among colleagues is just so bad. Soon enough you'll have a situation like 'this is our subject and it's important that we get to have our lessons and this is what we do and we really don't want to include anything else because there are already two or three of us who have to share the same... clientele or the same material'. That is just so sad, in my opinion. (Bridget, 2)

Well, the place where I worked earlier /.../ people were somewhat... grouped. I'm sure that happens more or less automatically with the subjects and you have your subject groups but even so... I would have wished for more, somehow... it wasn't quite as I had imagined it would be in a school. It was as if you were only together with those who had the same subject. Even during leisure time, they did things together but the teaching-staff as a whole didn't really ... keep together. (Susan, 3)

ii) Collective action

With the second aspect, *collective action*, the focus shifts from interaction to "joint action in pursuit of a common goal" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, online version). The participants recognise that as individual teachers they are also representatives of a collective group of teachers. They stress the importance of keeping a united front, in the sense of having common rules and principles that everyone should adhere to and strive to uphold. Frustration is expressed when individual members of staff are unwilling to participate or pull their own weight.

Well, above all, I think it is really important that the teaching-staff has jointly laid down the common principles and that everyone also keeps to these. Even if every teacher is an individual and everyone tries to get the pupils to follow [the rules] in their own way, the goal still needs to be the same... (Christine, 2)

I think every teacher also needs to... keep to what has been agreed upon among the staff. /.../ I don't think the teaching staff is sufficiently united. /.../ When I think of when I went to school... The teaching staff was somehow divided. Even if something had been agreed upon, and as pupils we also knew that the teacher was supposed to do this or that, there were still teachers who went 'well, we won't do it like this now, instead...'. They kind of did it their own way, but there I think the teaching staff should stick together and kind of ... keep to what has been agreed upon. (Tina, 2)

There are many [teachers] who just come to school and leave at the end of the day, they don't contribute to anything else in the corridors. They don't ask

pupils to take off their hats, they don't ask them to take out their chewing gum. And... if they see the pupils drinking soft drinks, which is prohibited, they choose to turn a blind eye and that makes it really difficult for those of us who are bothered by the pupils' not following the rules and who really want them to do that. When you are kind of all alone against... when people don't pull together or act consistently. (Christine, 3)

iii) Cooperation

The third aspect, *cooperation*, focuses on different ways of collaborating and working together with one or more colleagues on a common task. A broad definition of the term collaboration has been applied, as the approach includes reciprocal activities such as helping and receiving help from colleagues alongside more direct reference to teamwork and collaboration.

Cooperate with other subjects and teachers for more versatile teaching (Bridget,1)

In general, I think that it is a very important part of being a teacher, to cooperate with other teachers. (Denice, 2)

My dream for the future is still to make sure that there is some kind of overall help that teachers can get from one another, like mutual [help]. (Bridget, 2)

We have subject teams, so we sit together with the other language teachers and co-plan. (Linda, 3)

Cooperation is a part of collegial work that relatively few teachers mention (Bridget, Denice and Mary in phases 1-2; Bridget, Linda and Helen in phase 3). Bridget is the only one who mentions this aspect of the job throughout all three phases. However, her comments in reference to cooperation tend to be rather critical as she would like to see more collaboration among colleagues, both among language teachers but also between teachers of different subjects.

I think a lot has gone wrong on a collegial level /.../ it is very lonesome work. Unfortunately so! I would much rather have some kind of team work and that people would actually work together on different things. (Bridget, 2)

I actually thought I would see more teams of teachers working together. For instance, language teachers working together. But also more activity across [subject] borders. But it is still the same old /.../ territoriality in a sense. (Bridget, 3)

Handling out of class work: summary

Planning and lesson preparation are the most commonly recognised among the *Tasks connected teaching*. The teachers consider planning an important part of their job but point out that for the inexperienced (student) teacher it is a labour-intensive and time-consuming task.

When it comes to *Duties as a staff member*, we can note that there is some ambivalence among the teachers concerning these tasks. On the one hand, some of these tasks are considered important and integral to the teacher's professional role on the school arena (e.g. the role of *appointed duties* or *developing and sustaining the practice of the school*) and the teachers express that these tasks can provide the teacher with necessary variation and challenge. On the other hand, other tasks (e.g. *administrative tasks* and *extracurricular activities*) have a more peripheral status. That is, even if they are seen to fall within the scope of the job and they may take up a fair amount of the teacher's time, they are not placed high on the participants' list of priorities. Furthermore, since many of these tasks may be differently perceived and regulated in different school contexts, it is an aspect of the job that can be difficult to grasp for a new teacher.

The teachers' views of *Collegial interaction* highlight the role of internal relations among the teaching staff. Inclusive collegial relations are considered important prerequisites for cooperation but they are also seen to have the potential of meeting emotional needs such as needs for support, friendship and belonging. Even if a broad definition of the term cooperation was applied, this aspect of the job was not widely recognised among the teachers. From the teachers' accounts, we can deduce that prerequisites for cooperation vary widely between different schools as some schools have set structures for cooperation whereas others do not. Since the teachers generally seem to have positive attitudes towards cooperation, contextual restraints can be a possible explanation as to why it is not widely recognised.

5.2.3 Managing the job

The theme *Managing the job* includes aspects of the teacher's job that are internal and thus invisible to the outside observer. These aspects occupy a space on the borderland between the personal and the professional life of the teacher and involve stories about frustration, stress, and inner battles but also stories about constructive ways of handling and looking at the profession, the teacher's role, and oneself.

The theme includes three sub-themes: *Handling the work situation*, *Building a teacher identity* and *Competency building*.

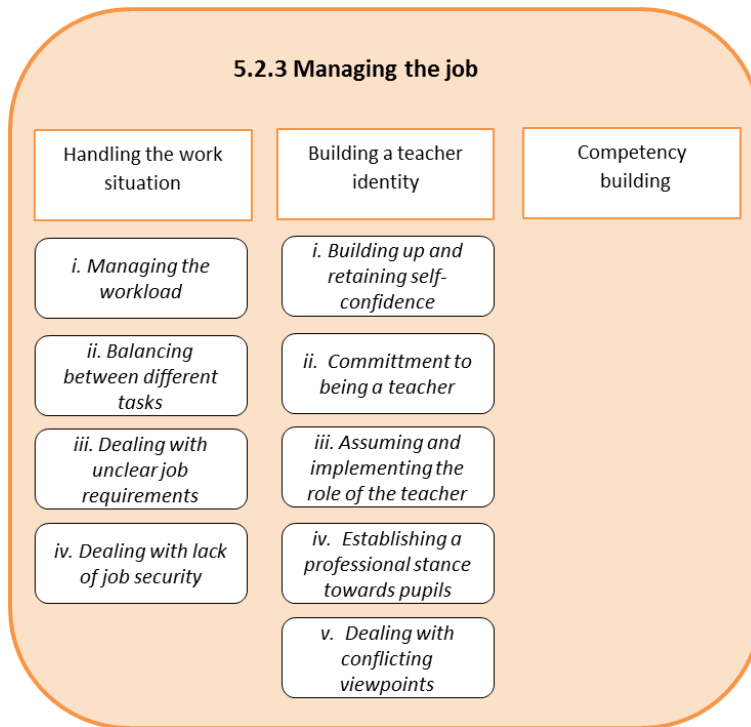


Figure 13. Tasks and functions of the teacher in relation to Managing the job.

Handling the work situation

The sub-theme *Handling the work situation* involves dealing with issues that follow in the wake of handling the day-to-day tasks of a teacher. Due to the complex, many-faceted, comprehensive and vague nature of the profession, the teacher has to find ways of i) *managing the workload*, ii) *balancing between different tasks* and iii) *dealing with unclear job requirements*. The fourth aspect, iv) *dealing with lack of job security*, stands out from the other aspects as it is not specifically connected to the nature of the job as such, even if it involves dealing with a specific issue connected to the job situation.

i) Managing the workload

The teacher’s job involves a broad variety of tasks that the teacher has to manage. On top of this, the participants express that many tasks are very time-consuming, partly

due to the fact that the tasks are very comprehensive and partly due to personal factors such as inexperience and high demands on oneself. Dealing with the demands brought on by having to handle a great amount of different and often time-consuming tasks is one way in which the aspect *managing the workload* manifests itself. This is illustrated in Tina's statement below, where she explains that she struggles with late night teaching preparations in combination with managing various other tasks connected to teaching. Helen explains that the job more or less consumes her and that she can never completely let go of it. She recognises that to some extent, her preoccupation with the job is due to the fact that she, as a new teacher, is concerned about wanting to do a good job.

I get so frustrated when people say 'oh, but being a teacher, that is actually pretty easy work. You just have to be at the school between eight and two and then when they [the pupils] are free, you're free and you have the summers off and it is so easy'. And then you sit there at twelve o'clock at night, trying to prepare for the next day and there is still correction work to be done...it sure is time-consuming/.../ keeping track of all the different groups and classes and material and things like that /.../there are so many different things, so it's definitely demanding. It takes a particular kind of person to be able to deal with it, I think. (Tina, 2)

You work twenty-four hours a day. At least I find it hard to... I don't know whether it is a kind of 'beginners' syndrome' that you take everything so seriously and want to do everything as well as possible, but it feels as if all you do is work. You not only take the work with you when you go home but you never let it go. It's there until the end of the school year. You think of your pupils and your responsibilities for education and for your subject and all that. You never let go. At least I never let it go and that is perhaps a negative aspect of the job /.../ Sometimes I think about what I'm going to do during a lesson and what exercises would be good and I don't stop until I've got it or I've taught the lesson. Or you think of someone you think might be a victim of bullying and then you try to think of different things you could do, in order to make it a little less difficult for that person to be in your classroom and for the others to notice without your having to spell it out. /.../ It's constantly on-going. Even if it is not of immediate urgency, there is always something on your mind like 'how could I do this' or 'what could I do then' or... 'I really need to correct those tests', 'oh, I've forgotten to correct those tests' or... these kinds of things that are always there. (Helen, 3)

The teachers also mention that the workload is affected by an intense working pace, which is another factor that has to be dealt with.

You feel constantly pressed for time. (Mary, 1)

You constantly have to check the time: 'oh no, I only have three minutes to take a breather and then I'm on again'. People don't understand that if you have an eight-hour working day, that is from eight to four with only ten-minute breaks in between, it is not the same as eight hours in an office. Answering the phone and writing emails can also be stressful, but if you work as a teacher for eight hours, it is like attending a meeting for eight hours straight. Even if you are not the one doing the talking, it is up to you to make sure everything goes smoothly. (Christine, 3)

The teachers recognise that it is up to them to find ways of dealing with the workload. Mary talks extensively on this subject in phase 3 and has clear strategies for dealing with this aspect of the job already in phase 2. In her opinion, dealing with the workload is a matter of delimitation, of limiting the time you invest in your work by setting boundaries between work and free time but also of setting personal boundaries and having realistic demands on yourself. Similar strategies are employed by Christine, who also recognises that you have to prioritise and focus on one thing at a time.

At least you need to set limits. Even if you can have long working days and a lot of responsibility, you need to remember not to take it personally if there are problems and simply keep within limits. It may happen from time to time that you take essays with you home, but you can also think of it like this: 'Okay, I get paid for eight hours, and if I don't finish even if I work during the breaks, tomorrow is a new day. I'll continue then. You have to take care so that you don't sacrifice yourself too much. (Mary, 2)

Now I'm more relaxed or I know that the work comes along nicely as long as I do my best, so no worries. /.../ I think I will do well at this job because I'm not the burn-out type in that way. Even if I just said that I was stressed out throughout university, I don't do that anymore. I have a sensible view of how much you can give of yourself and what is normal and where to draw the limits. So I think I will make it in this job for a long time or throughout the career. (Mary, 3)

You can always put together pieces from different sources and you don't have to realise all projects in one year, but it can take ten years. You just don't have to... It is not worth it to invest too much time or have too many balls in the air at one time. Instead, you should spread it out more, for instance by working intensively with one class. /.../ and everything else will have to go more or less automatically, because there just isn't time to devote yourself fully to all courses and all classes. You just have to choose. (Christine, 3)

ii) Balancing between different tasks

Handling the work situation also involves finding a suitable balance between the various tasks included in the job and it is not always easy to prioritise. As Helen describes it in phase 2, it is a matter of “*fitting all the pieces of the puzzle together*”. As illustrated in the statements below, it can involve finding a suitable balance between teaching and other duties but also between different teaching tasks such as classroom management and the teaching of academic content.

It is not just about having a lesson plan that you go through and that's it. It happens that I only get half way, just because there are so many other things to deal with during a lesson. (Susan, 3)

My role as a teacher is to find a balance between all that somehow. The main thing is that you teach but there are a lot of other things as well. (Linda, 3)

I think that ninety per cent of the work is about teaching, but this period it has been thirty per cent teaching and seventy per cent everything else. Contacts with parents and this trip [I'm arranging]. (Christine, 3)

iii) Dealing with unclear job requirements

The third aspect connected to *Handling the work situation* involves dealing with unclear job requirements. As we saw in connection to the previous theme, the teacher's job is comprehensive and complex but in addition, it is also in many ways vague. Due to the vague nature of the teaching profession, the teachers find it hard to determine which tasks are included in the job and which are not (Linda), and what specifically is required of them in different situations (Bridget, Christine). This leaves them in a stressful situation, where they are not sure about what to do and indeed, if anything can be done.

Sometimes it feels as if you are required to work extensively and everything can simply be added /.../ That's something I sometimes experience as a bad thing... that it is not that clear what is included. There are a lot of things besides teaching that are a part of the job but sometimes you just don't know whether you should go along with everything or if you could, at some point, just say no. (Linda, 3)

I get the feeling that as a teacher you get thrown into empty nothingness and you are just supposed to handle it. You are supposed to be able to make decisions and as a new teacher at least, you wonder if you are doing the right thing. (Bridget, 3)

At the same time, I get stressed out when I don't know what it is that needs to be done. There are a lot of loose ends in my head and I don't know who is supposed to do what or what it is specifically that needs to be done. When I know that, I can start writing into my calendar that by this time I need to have this test done, and by this time I have to have the handout ready for this pupil and by that time the parent-teacher meeting has to be done. Then I can start planning, no worries, but I don't like when everything is fuzzy and you have no idea what's going on. (Christine, 3)

Furthermore, the teacher's job can also be characterised as infinite, seeing that it is a kind of job where you are never finished, in the sense that you can always do a better job, be more thorough, and invest more of yourself. As illustrated in Christine's comment, the teachers find it hard to know where to draw the line for personal investment. What is to be viewed as good work or even good enough work? In order to manage this aspect of the job, Tina and Christine later point out that you need to learn how to set personal boundaries and set realistic demands for yourself.

You do the best you can and that's all you can do. It is really difficult when you don't know where to draw the line. It's such a fine line. (Christine, 3)

In order to enjoy your work, you have to set boundaries for yourself, too. /.../ so that you don't put too much pressure on yourself because /.../ no one will tell you when to stop. It's up to you to know when it is enough and when you have to stop and tell yourself that 'this is fine, enough of this, I've done pretty well already'. (Tina, 2)

I can well understand those who get burnout in this profession, if they don't set [boundaries]... That is so important. That is actually a negative aspect of this job, that you can literally work yourself to death. Nobody tells you that you're finished, 'now this lesson is fine, so stop planning'. If you don't set those limits yourself, which was really difficult for me last year, then you'll soon end up against a wall. (Christine, 3)

iv) Dealing with lack of job security

The final aspect connected to *Handling the work situation* is *dealing with lack of job security*. Only two teachers, Mary and Susan, express that not having the security of a permanent position was an issue for them. Together with most of the other participants, these two teachers have permanent positions by phase 3. Still, lack of job security does not seem to be an issue for everyone, as the three teachers that do not have permanent positions, do not mention this aspect of the job. Perhaps Christine is on to something when she comments that " *today's world is no longer like*

that, you do not have just one job from start to finish. People may become bored, they change their minds, people move more than what they used to, or people are more mobile and flexible” (Christine, 3). Still, for Mary and Susan, not having a secure position at the schools where they were working was unsettling. Below they express that as they no longer have to worry about their job situation, they now have more time to focus on other aspects of the job instead.

Getting a secure position would be great. It just drains you of energy when you constantly have to think about what you will be doing next month. The result is much better, if you get to concentrate on the work itself and not on when it continues, whether or not it continues, and for how long you will have this job. (Mary, 2)

When I talked about this post I had as a substitute teacher earlier, then this is somehow different. I don't know, but I get more out of it myself too, when I know it is a secure position and I don't have to quit after a month and it is not just temporary. (Susan, 3)

Building a teacher identity

The sub-theme *Building a teacher identity* involves aspects connected to being and evolving as a professional teacher and the teacher's developing sense of self as a teacher (cf. Mayer, 1999; Kagan, 1992b). The sub-theme includes the following aspects: i) *building up and retaining self-confidence*, ii) *commitment to being a teacher*, iii) *assuming and implementing the role of the teacher*, iv) *establishing a professional stance towards pupils* and v) *dealing with conflicting viewpoints*.

i) Building up and retaining self-confidence

When it comes to the aspect *building up and retaining self-confidence*, the teachers stress the importance of believing in yourself and in your knowledge and abilities. In many ways, self-confidence is seen as the backbone of being a teacher, as it affects your teaching and your relations with your pupils but also your ability to cope and develop as a teacher.

Here we're dealing with the teacher's self-esteem, self-confidence, own interest and own competency. I recall the time when I myself was in school and attended language lessons. Regrettably often, the teachers didn't manage to arouse our interests or establish order in the classroom. This often happened with teachers who weren't entirely comfortable with their subject and unsure of their knowledge. (Susan, 1)

It is important that a good teacher believes in herself. Because in today's world, I think you have to convey a certain ... degree of self-confidence to the pupils. (Helen, 2)

Some kind of confidence in yourself. Because if you don't have self-confidence, I actually don't think you will want to continue as a teacher./.../ But daring to change the approach, daring to approach them in a new way and being brave and being yourself in a sense. To be the Pippi Longstocking of education. (Bridget, 3)

Being self-confident also involves being accepting of yourself and your possible limitations. In other words, being realistic about yourself, about what you know and are able to do.

You don't need to know everything but it is important that you dare to say: 'I don't know but I can check'. (Hilda, 1)

As a teacher you are not omnipotent and you really cannot know everything either./.../ I somehow wished that I, with the help of my education, would have had everything there, ready to hand out on a silver platter, like 'this is the strong inflection of adjectives'. But you also realise that you don't know all those things. Some kind of humbleness before the fact that language is a big concept and that you, as a non-native speaker, cannot know everything. (Bridget, 2)

You also need to have that attitude that even if you sometimes think your education falls short, you still know a lot more than they [the pupils] do. And they have no idea what you don't know. You have to make it appear in the best possible way. (Christine, 3)

ii) Commitment to being a teacher

When it comes to the second aspect, *commitment to being a teacher*, the teachers stress the importance of being committed to your work. Commitment is characterised by a positive attitude and a strong desire to be a teacher, to teach and to be with pupils.

The person should have a positive attitude towards education and teaching. The person also needs to like the subject or subjects she will be teaching. A teacher also has to like working with children and young people. (Melissa, 1)

I think it is important that you really want to work with children and people of that age and that you are not just focused on teaching and working with that particular subject but that you want to work with the whole package. /.../ If you

think all that other stuff is a waste of time and totally incompatible and difficult and boring, I don't think you can be a really good teacher. (Linda, 2)

You really need to be committed to being a teacher... I think there are many teachers for whom, it's just a... or it is a job, but you really have to try to make the best of every day and not just go to work as if it is just a job that you do and then go home. You really have to try your best, every day. (Susan, 2)

The participants see commitment as a necessary prerequisite for being what they consider a good teacher but also for coping with the demands of the job. From Susan's comment above, we can deduce that for her, being a teacher is more than just a job. In line with this, two other teachers liken commitment to a calling.

You need a certain kind of calling, you need to want to work with people of the age that you are working with and [want to work] with that particular subject. (Linda, 2)

You need to want to do it. ... Now that I think of my own school days... everyone working as a teacher perhaps shouldn't be working as a teacher... you kind of need a certain calling for it, in order to be able to ... and have the energy to work with it. (Tina, 2)

The aspect *commitment* is only found in phases 1 and 2, which gives rise to the question as to why it is not mentioned by the newly qualified teachers in phase 3. There may be several reasons for this but in light of the analysis as a whole, two tentative explanations stand out. First of all, as the teachers were free to choose which aspects of the job to focus on, it is clear that by phase 3 other aspects of the job were more salient. Secondly, we see an increasing concern in phase 3 with aspects connected to *Handling the work situation*. Here the teachers recognise that their own ambitions and level of commitment are at least partly responsible for the problems they face in this respect. Having had to deal with the negative effects of commitment, could refrain the teachers from mentioning this particular aspect of the job. The explanation that by phase 3 the teachers see commitment as counterproductive finds support in the comments by Christine and Bridget below.

Teachers very easily make martyrs of themselves. They work day and night and stay at the school until nine o'clock at night and then they go home and perhaps eat a carton of yogurt and then they go to bed. Then they're back at it the next day. It just isn't worth it. (Christine, 3)

You need to be careful when people start saying that teacherhood is a calling and that it is their only passion in life and the only thing they want to do. When it

becomes too fanatical/.../ I somehow feel that that kind of person doesn't make a really good teacher. (Bridget, 3)

I'm the kind of teacher who does a little too much work. Too much correction work, too detailed and too comprehensive. /.../ as a teacher I felt like 'okay, I create too much work for myself. (Bridget, 3)

iii) Assuming and implementing the role of the teacher

A central aspect when it comes to *Building a teacher identity* is *assuming and implementing the role of the teacher*. This is another aspect of the job with which the teachers struggle. First of all, the participants recognise that being a teacher means that you have to take on and implement the role of a teacher. The comments by Daniella, Mary and Christine illustrate different approaches to assuming the role of the teacher. Daniella explains that in order to be a teacher she had to take on a role that did not come naturally to her, being decisive was not in her nature. In other words, in assuming the role of the teacher, she had to become something that she was not. Mary, on her part, finds it essential that the role you assume as a teacher is in line with who you are as a person, so that you can be authentic in that role. The dialectical tensions involved in finding and implementing the role of a teacher is evident in Christine's statements, where she explains how she struggled with finding a suitable balance between whom she is as a person and who she felt she needed to be as a teacher.

I don't really want to decide over other people, but you just have to take on such a role (Daniella, 2)

And you need to be authentic in that role. Otherwise it probably won't work, if you try to be somebody you're not. So maybe this role or this profession is not for everybody. (Mary, 2)

It was extremely difficult for me to find myself as a teacher last autumn. I am usually a rather easy-going and happy person, but to be that person in an unruly class just didn't work, because with everything being so laid-back, they just didn't have any respect for me. Then I decided to become, maybe not strict but very firm during lessons. I didn't like that either, because it wasn't nice to just walk in and immediately kind of throw your books on the desk to make them quieten down. (Christine, 3)

There are a lot of teachers in the staff room and you hear and pick up a little here and a little there and then you think 'oh no, I really need to be like that', 'oh no, can I do that, too'. In the end, it just becomes overwhelming, deciding who you are, who you should be, and who you want to be. (Christine, 3)

Secondly, whereas the above statements concern different ways of striving to merge “me as a person” with “me as a teacher”, the participants also express a difficulty with distancing themselves from their teacher role. This may be particularly difficult in a social profession such as teaching, where you are constantly in the public eye, as illustrated in Mary’s and Melissa’s comments. Bridget struggles with finding a way of separating herself as a person from herself as a teacher. She explains that if you identify too closely with your role as teacher, you may end up being consumed by it.

It is a full-time job in the sense that you always have the attitude that ‘I am a teacher’. Everywhere you go and every time you leave home you see pupils. So you need to remember, if you meet somebody and behave badly that people notice /.../ you are kind of always... a captive in your role. (Mary, 2)

Now that I am a teacher, I’ve noticed how exposed you are in this profession and that you always have people’s eyes on you. Especially in a small town, you don’t have the luxury of anonymity. (Melissa, 3)

[In] the teaching profession, I think it is difficult to separate between me and the role of the teacher. It easily becomes your life style somehow. I have somehow bought the whole concept of being a teacher twenty-four hours a day. And now I’ve started to realise /.../ that you’re not a teacher twenty-four hours a day, you are a person...who teaches. I a sense there is some sort of a dividing line there /.../ I can see it, but I have not yet stepped over to the “right side” of it. (Bridget, 3)

Thirdly, the teacher’s role is never static and Amanda recognises that being a teacher involves assuming different roles to suit different circumstances.

The teaching profession includes other things as well. A good teacher is a role model, an educator, a friend and an authority for her pupils. It is all about choosing the right role to suit the situation. (Amanda, 1)

Finally, *assuming and implementing the role of a teacher* is not just about identifying a teaching role that suits you. As the following statements illustrate, transforming your ideal role into actual practice is not always an easy task.

That is a part of it but I don’t particularly like that part of me as a teacher. I mean that you can just stand there talking away, or that you are a little too fond of your own voice. That is a part I would like to somehow steer away from and find a way of balancing up. (Bridget, 3)

I want to see the person. Everybody has his or her own needs and everybody needs support in different ways... but it is hard. I have tried, but it is really hard

and it takes a lot of time, since you first have to get to know the pupils... and very easily you let it go to a point where you just see them as a grey mass. When you're teaching your last lesson after a long day... you really have to make an effort to see each one there. It has actually been more demanding than I had thought it would be. (Susan, 3)

iv) Establishing a professional stance towards pupils

The next aspect, *establishing a professional stance towards pupils*, concerns dealing with the emotional effects of social interactions with pupils. The importance of being able to separate between person and role is highlighted. From the teachers' stories it is clear that being a teacher is very emotional work, especially when it comes to dealing with pupils. As Tina expresses, you can very easily become emotionally involved with your pupils. If you are not careful, their problems soon become your problems. Another area of difficulty is dealing with pupils' negative reactions (Mary) or lack of reactions (Christine).

If you happen to have ...classes that don't get on that well, it really takes a toll on you. It's a very demanding job in that way and it isn't always easy. As a teacher you easily get dragged into things when you have your own pupils and get to know them and where they come from... and possibly what... issues they bring with them when they come to school. (Tina, 2)

You can't be a teacher if you always take everything to heart, for instance if you react really strongly to negative opinions or negative glances. In that sense you have to be strong and cold and not let yourself be bothered about it/.../ you have to be able to deal with such things. (Mary, 3)

Sometimes you feel as if you are working too hard, nobody thanks you for it. At least not the pupils. That irritates me sometimes that they don't understand how much time you've put into something. (Christine, 3)

Even if the teachers report that they have struggled with this aspect of the work, they have all, by phase 3, identified how to handle emotionally loaded encounters with pupils in a more professional manner. For instance, by not reacting personally or emotionally or as Daniella puts it by becoming "*thick-skinned*" or by accepting the fact that you cannot please everyone at all times.

Well, you don't react as strongly anymore, so to speak. In some ways you learn to become a little thick-skinned or learn to ... stand up for yourself. (Daniella, 3)

It's just that if you think that everyone will like you, or hate you or whatever you think, you also have to understand that most people don't care who they have as

a teacher. There will always be those who don't like you and those who do. You cannot take professional matters personally. You have to remember that you are a teacher, what did you yourself think of teachers? Keep a little distance. You should never be too personal as a teacher, even if you have to be yourself. There is no need to share your private life with the pupils. It is really none of their business, I think. (Helen, 3)

v) Dealing with conflicting viewpoints

Finally, the aspect *dealing with conflicting viewpoints* concerns the quandary of trying to meet and mediate between conflicting beliefs, practices and regulations within the school community or within society at large. One example concerns handling beliefs and expectations held by pupils, their parents or colleagues that are in conflict with your own. Bridget finds it difficult to meet pupils' expectations of what teaching should involve. Her view of knowledge and of the teacher's role in the learning process is diametrically different from that of the pupils. In Daniella's case the conflict of interest concerns meeting parents' expectations of extended individual support for their child when you, as a teacher, have a room full of pupils, who need your attention. Helen, in turn, felt that her priorities were different from those of her colleagues and the larger school community.

Pupils regard themselves as customers of a sort and think that they have the right to demand different things /.../ I actually think young people today demand something of you as a teacher that most teachers truly cannot give them. /.../ you can see that the pupils often want that. They want nice material presented in a clear way and you cannot be boring. I mean, that is some kind of an unwritten rule today, if you are boring you lose, and that's it! Then you've lost the pupils /.../ people want those frames. Before... let's say thirty years ago, we used to have very strict frames in the sense that 'this is what you should know, these words should be repeated, this is the language you should'... that was how it was done. /.../ and then you were tested. /.../ But today you're required to provide a much bigger and wider picture /.../ now the deal is that pupils are to take with them a certain concept, so in terms of knowledge there has been a paradigmatic shift of sorts. (Bridget, 2)

As a teacher you become rather exposed, I've noticed. Many teachers become... or parents blame them when [their child] is doing poorly in school. Like 'you teachers, get your act together' and they expect that 'my child needs to get your help constantly, all the time'. And then you have twenty or so other [pupils] in the class sitting there ... (Daniella, 3)

Maybe a little surprised at how low the standard is and how unimportant the actual subject is for many, I feel. Even for other teachers with the same subject or colleagues or principals...if there wasn't that much progression in terms of the subject, it wasn't that big of a deal and instead more effort than I had expected, was put into upbringing. (Helen, 3)

Conflict of interests may also arise in connection to different regulations that control school practice. Bridget feels caught in a trap. She teaches English at an advanced level and resources are difficult to come by. Since education should be free of charge, she cannot make her students buy the necessary books. This leaves her in a situation, where she feels compelled to copy exercises from books, which, in turn, makes her guilty of plagiarism. She feels that whatever she decides to do, she will end up breaking one regulation or another.

When it comes to teaching resources, I sometimes feel that I get caught in the 'plagiarism trap'. I don't like that. I don't like that there are no resources for teachers. /../ As if you could create your own material in academic English! Excuse me, you just don't. /.../ Instead you buy Cambridge Academic Vocabulary in Use or The Oxford Guide to whatever.... And then you take exercises from there and copy them and hand them out and they do them. But that is plagiarism! I don't have the right to do that as a teacher. Instead I would need to force them to buy an entire book and I don't want to do that either. And I don't even have the right to do that, since education should be free of charge. (Bridget, 3)

Experiences of different school practices become a part of a teacher's repertoire. Sometimes these practices may be at odds with one another and deciding which road to take is not easy for the new teacher. This inner conflict is illustrated in Christine's and Bridget's statements below. Christine compares her current practice with how she herself was taught during school. She feels that her pupils are getting sensible practice but when she considers the regular testing experienced during her own schooling, she is not sure whether she should continue with what she is doing or change her practice. Bridget, in turn, likes to experiment and try new approaches in her teaching. Here she relates an episode when more traditional language teaching tasks came on the agenda and she felt her attitude and behaviour change. She started questioning whether the alternative methods had actually been useful. Can learning be fun or does it have to involve hard work? Should she strive to get measureable results or can she trust that the pupils will learn anyway?

And then the issue of exams and tests. Of course it is not stipulated how many exams or tests you should have, but from time to time it hits me, 'oh no, I haven't even checked if they know this in a very long time'. At the same time, we

practice all the time and do exercises in the books, so in some ways I think I'm too caught up in how it was when I went to school. Then it was all about exams and tests and the mean score on those tests became your grade. (Christine, 3)

We had worked a lot outside and now we were to go inside and do listening comprehension, reading comprehension and essay writing... and then I became strict. I kind of felt how I as a teacher in some ways just, 'mmp'. I went into my shell somehow and established that this was it...now we need to get serious /.../ and I felt myself somehow die inside. All of a sudden I was this 'old school' teacher who just focused on one thing and I somehow became the teacher I didn't want to become. I mean the frightened teacher, the teacher who thinks that if we don't do enough concrete things, it won't show in their results. And what will come out of my 'spicing up' the language lessons earlier? I was hit by pangs of conscience: had I led them on the wrong track somehow? /.../ in a way, that was me acknowledging that learning has to be hard work and difficult. /.../ and this was totally unnecessary, I could have been happy and open but all of a sudden I was like, 'mmp'. And I also started talking to them in Swedish, I noticed, by which I kind of signaled that I didn't trust their knowledge. Then and there I realised that now the time has come when it is no longer about the joy of learning but instead it is a question of [the pupils'] having to learn something in order for any of this to count. Or we need measurable results from this. Pretty bad. (Bridget, 3)

Competency building

Competency building includes statements where the teachers express that a part of their job is to develop as a teacher. In the previous section on teacher learning (chapter 5.1), the teachers recognise several different ways of learning on the job. This theme then, only includes statements where learning and development are seen as specific tasks included in the teacher's job. For the most part, competency building is viewed as self-development and something that the teacher is responsible for herself.

The teacher has to be interested in continuously getting more knowledge about everything and [needs to] know the latest news when it comes to the subject. /.../ the knowledge base comes from education but the rest depends on how active you are. (Hilda, 1)

I hope that I, as a future [language] teacher, will .../.../I mean, society and languages are in constant change, so you need to stay on board, and take in new things. (Tina, 2)

You can develop yourself all the time and I think that is necessary. It doesn't matter how long you have worked as a teacher or how old you are, but I don't think you can keep on using the same methods for twenty or thirty years, because everything keeps changing. I don't think pupils are the same today compared to some thirty years ago. The whole school system has changed for that matter. So I think you need to be able to continuously develop yourself. (Susan, 3)

The above statements also reflect a view that being a teacher should involve a constant strive to develop and learn new things. Bridget keeps returning to the subject of competency building in phase 3. In line with the others, she stresses the importance of self-development and sees it as an essential part of being a teacher. However, she also recognises that since competency building is largely up to the individual teacher, there is an inherent danger that a teacher may, for some reason or other, choose not to pursue the path of development.

In my opinion, your task as a teacher is to be creative with the knowledge you are expected to convey. But as a teacher you can easily stop being creative. In other words, you can be creative for one to two years of your teaching career and after that you can just rest on your laurels. That's really not where I want to end up. (Bridget, 3)

As language teachers, the participants specifically stress the need to keep up-to-date and in close contact with the language they are teaching and the countries where that language is spoken.

A language teacher needs to keep up-to-date with different cultures and their language variations. (Bridget, 1)

And then you need to... keep abreast with what's happening in the countries where the language is spoken. /.../ to keep in contact with all that... I think that's pretty important, as a language teacher in any case. (Denice, 2)

Specific for language teachers is that we always keep up to date with the English and the German languages and that we keep an eye on what is going on in all the different English-speaking countries. (Melissa, 3)

Denice and Christine represent a small group of teachers who mention participating in courses and organised professional development opportunities, as part of the teacher's tasks. On top of this, Christine's view stands out somewhat in this respect, as she is the only one who expresses that competency building is not just a part of the teacher's responsibilities, but it is also a right and the employer also has responsibilities when it comes to providing CPD.

For example this KELPO thing, suddenly you basically have to be a special education teacher and be able to assess pupils /.../ many don't even have the knowledge or experience for doing such a thing. The idea is good, but we need to get more training. (Christine, 3)

That is a big problem, for example in primary school, loads of money have been put into ensuring that every or every second classroom has one [a Smartboard], but then there is no cable connecting the computer and the Smartboard. Or the teachers haven't received training in how to use it and many don't even know how to turn it on. So, with all due deference to technology, but it has to be accompanied by training. (Christine, 3)

Managing the job: summary

In sum, we can note that the theme *Managing the job* focuses on the internal and mostly covert aspects of the teacher's job. More specifically, in connection to the sub-theme *Handling the work situation*, we can note that the vague, complex, intense and comprehensive nature of the job, in combination with personal factors such as inexperience and high demands on oneself, means that for the new teacher, a part of the job is about dealing with the workload, coming to terms with what the job actually involves and trying to find a suitable balance between the different tasks and between professional and personal life.

Furthermore, in connection to the sub-theme *Building a teacher identity*, two characteristics of the job become highlighted. First of all, being a teacher is highly emotional work and the teachers stress the importance of being committed to your work and building up and retaining self-confidence. Their descriptions show that the work can involve inner struggles of trying to merge who you are as a person with your role as a teacher, at the same time as you have to distance yourself from the role and learn to deal with issues in a more professional, rather than personal, manner.

Secondly, the broad scope and inter-connected nature of the teacher's job is highlighted. This is especially evident in connection to the aspect, *dealing with conflicting viewpoints*, where we can note that as the teachers are dealing with issues on a micro level, in the classroom, they are, in fact, dealing with issues that have a much bigger scope, since beliefs, practices and regulations within the school community or within society largely affect the conditions in the classroom.

Finally, *Competency building* is for the most part viewed as self-development and relatively few teachers connect CPD courses to the teacher's tasks. Instead, they consider it their own responsibility to develop themselves as teachers but also to maintain their subject expertise.

5.3 Patterns of change

Having described the various views of the teachers regarding the two phenomena under study, I will now continue by addressing the third research question. The concern here is with how the views evolve from one phase to another. What commonalities and discrepancies characterise each phase and what differences can be discerned between the three phases?

The following chapters, 5.3.1 and 5.3.2, thus deal with patterns of change on a group level (see pp. 75-76 above) and the analysis is based on the data of the nine core teachers that took part in all three phases. In cases where I could note discrepancies between the views of the core teachers and those outside the core group, I have inserted a footnote with a comment. The presentation is structured around the different phases. Chapter 5.3.1 that deals with the evolving cognitions of teacher learning, further separates the cognitions regarding learning in TE and the workplace, respectively. Summaries of the main changes of the views regarding each phenomenon are provided.

In the subsequent two chapters, 5.3.3 and 5.3.4, two teacher narratives are presented (see pp. 76-78 above). Melissa's and Christine's stories foremost illustrate the perspective of the individual teacher. The situated nature of narratives places the views in a larger context and thus provides insight into the role of the context but also into possible connections between the views of the profession and the views of teacher learning. In this way, the individual narratives provide examples of and serve to contextualise the findings reported on a collective level. The two teachers were chosen because their stories were considered illustrative of both commonalities and individual discrepancies. In many ways, the stories complement each other, partly since Melissa has no previous experience of teaching before TE, whereas Christine has some previous experience.

For purposes of clarity, the narratives are also structured around the three phases. The views of teacher learning are separated from the views of the profession by separate headings that indicate the main focus of the views regarding the two phenomena, in relation to each phase. Since the narratives are interpretations in their own right (cf. chapter 4.3.2), they are not further scrutinised in connection to this chapter. However, in chapter 6, where the results are summed up and discussed, the two narratives serve as illustrative examples.

5.3.1 Evolving cognitions of teacher learning

Cognitions of learning in teacher education

Phase 1: First-hand classroom experience and tips and ideas from experts

In phase 1, *Mediated experience* and *Experiential learning* are the two forms of learning the student teachers most readily associate with learning in teacher education and at this stage no one refers to all forms of learning (i.e. the four main themes identified in the analysis).

Aspects connected to *Experiential learning* are mentioned by seven out of nine teachers and their views are evenly spread between the *Experience-* and the *Action orientation*. Thus some teachers want authentic experiences, some want experience in order to become used to the work, some want to observe other teachers teaching, whereas some want practical experience of teaching. For the most part, the teachers want experiences of being and teaching in a classroom rather than experiences outside the classroom.

When it comes to *Mediated experience*, the student teachers express that they want ideas, tips, advice and information about the teacher's job from people with expert knowledge and/or experience of teaching. The views often have a normative character in that the teachers express they want to be informed about how something is or should be done, implying that there is a right way and a wrong way of doing things and that this standard is determined by external authorities, in this case the experienced teachers and teacher educators. Only one teacher, Mary, specifically mentions learning from written sources.

Mary⁸⁹ is also the only core teacher to mention learning through *Interaction* in this phase. She has previous experience of teaching and wants TE to provide opportunities for discussions, especially during post teaching conferences, where she hopes and expects that everyone will be involved in discussing, improving and evaluating the lessons.

The role of *Self-development* is recognised by four core teachers in phase 1. Their views are concentrated around the first two of the five sub-themes connected to this learning opportunity, that is *Recognising ownership of the learning process* and *Managing the learning process*. The student teachers recognise the importance of

⁸⁹ One of the other teachers, Nancy, also mentions discussions in phase 1.

being willing and open towards learning new things and towards developing oneself as a teacher.

Phase 2: Practical action and cognition: practical content for application in practice

In phase 2, *Experiential learning* and *Mediated experience* continue to get the most focus. Still, even though more teachers mention these two learning opportunities, their relative importance decreases, as the other two themes receive more attention.

When it comes to *Experiential learning*, the teachers now place more emphasis on the *Action orientation* compared to the *Experience orientation*. In their view, being allowed to try things out for themselves in either a simulated or a real context enhances learning, as it allows them to notice, remember and understand things better.

In relation to *Mediated experience*, we can note that lectures and supervision can play an important role in teacher learning, providing that the student teachers can connect and see the relevance of the theoretical or theory-generating elements in their education. In terms of lectures, the student teachers prefer content that has practical significance for their work as teachers, in other words practical, concrete content that they can apply in their day-to-day work. To some extent, the student teachers still want their supervisors to function as evaluators of their performance but the importance of concrete, specific feedback and step-by-step guidance is also highlighted. Learning from written sources is not mentioned by anyone.

By phase 2, the teachers afford more attention to aspects connected to *Self-development* and 20% of the statements by eight teachers are attributed to this theme. The teachers' views mainly focus on aspects connected to *Managing the learning process* and *Transfer*. The teachers recognise that teacher learning involves reflection on experiences as well as on the learning process and that a change of approach and/or attitude may sometimes be necessary in order to develop. At the same time, the teachers recognise that the short duration of and intensive pace in teacher education is not always conducive to these developmental needs. When it comes to transfer, the teachers are concerned about connecting the domains of theory and practice. Transfer between these domains is seen to involve both cognition and action, as the teachers recognise that they need to be able to perceive the connection themselves and then be able to apply this knowledge into practice. Two of the teachers felt that transfer was possible between these two contexts,

whereas two teachers experienced difficulties, both in terms of perceiving the connection but also in terms of transforming knowledge into action.

In phase 2, *Interaction* continues to receive relatively little attention, as it is only recognised by three teachers⁹⁰. Still, two of the teachers (Mary and Helen) feel very strongly about this form of learning and they focus specifically on the role of discussions. They appreciate this form of learning as it provides them with different perspectives and they prefer being actively involved in negotiating new knowledge rather getting it presented from above (Helen) or tackling it on their own (Mary).

Phase 3: Authentic experience, practice, support and confirmatory feedback

In phase 3, when the teachers look back on their experiences in TE, the role of *Experiential learning* and *Mediated experience* is still highlighted. However, at this point, *Mediated experience* is afforded the most focus. In reference to lectures, the teachers' views have not changed much as they still prefer practical, concrete content that can be applied in practice. Getting external evaluation of your performance is still considered a necessary part of teacher learning but at the same time, the teachers point out that too much and too detailed negative feedback may hamper development and that there must be a balance between critical and confirmatory feedback. Mary is once more the only one to mention learning from written sources. She recalls a book that was read during TE and she appreciated that it had a practical approach and gave her concrete ideas and tips for how to organise classroom teaching.

When it comes to *Experiential learning*, a tension between the *Experience orientation* and the *Action orientation* can be noted. On the one hand, the teachers feel that the practice lessons did not provide them with authentic experiences that they feel would have helped them deal with the realities of being a teacher. Above all, they feel that they lacked experiences of more difficult pupils and of handling other aspects of the job, besides teaching and planning. On the other hand, they appreciate the opportunities of 'learning by doing', both in connection to lectures (simulated practice) and practice lessons, even if these were not in all respects authentic. As one teacher points out, not having to deal with all aspects of the complex job at a time, made it easier for a beginner to cope with the whole situation and allowed her to focus on learning how to teach.

⁹⁰ Nancy, who only took part in the first two phases, also shows a preference for this form of learning

In phase 3, *Interaction* is recognised by four out of nine teachers. As in the previous phase, the teachers appreciate opportunities for discussion during lectures. We could note in connection to *Mediated experience* that the teachers voiced views about the importance of being positively confirmed by the supervising teachers. A similar focus on emotional well-being during the learning process can be noted here, and one teacher expresses how she appreciated having the support of a supervisor who followed and shared her developmental process. A similar view is voiced by another teacher, who felt a tutor or mentor could have been appointed to cater for the social and emotional needs of the student teachers.

*Self-development*⁹¹ is not afforded a great deal of attention in relation to TE in phase 3. Only four teachers briefly refer to it and the comments are in line with what has previously been expressed in phase 2.

Evolving cognitions of learning in TE: summary

In sum, we can conclude that views in connection to learning in TE evolve from being more transmission-oriented in phase 1, towards becoming slightly more constructivist-oriented in the latter phases. Even if a technical approach is evident throughout, as the teachers stress the importance of practical, concrete content that can be applied in practice, the role of reflection and other learning processes connected to self-development are more prominent by phase 2 and gradually more teachers recognise the role of interaction and discussions. The role of experience is highlighted throughout and the teachers stress the need for authentic experiences as well as opportunities for applying theory into practice and learning by doing. By phase 3, the teachers become more critical in their views and personal and emotional aspects of teacher learning are highlighted.

91 One could interpret the result as an indication that the teachers no longer consider *Self-development* an important part of learning in TE. However, a couple of indicators suggest that we need to be careful about drawing such a conclusion. First of all, the lack of reference to this form of learning is partly the result of a too specific interview question. In asking the teachers to reflect on teacher education, on what they found useful, what they did not find useful and what they felt was missing, I might have steered some of them away from considering their own role in the process. Secondly, the views that *are* expressed, in no way indicate a change of perspective between this phase and the previous one.

Cognitions of learning at the workplace

Phase 1: Doing the job and accumulating experience

In phase 1, the student teachers have rather vague ideas about what teacher learning outside teacher education might involve and two of them have not specified what this process might involve. To a large extent, the student teachers connect workplace learning with processes associated with *Experiential learning*. Thus the student teachers expect they will learn through own personal experience of being a teacher and they recognise that learning to become a teacher is a process that takes a long time and that expertise will develop eventually with accumulated experience and by doing the job.

Learning processes connected to *Mediated experience* and *Interaction* are not recognised as having an important role in learning at the workplace. In connection to *Mediated experience*, one teacher mentions that confirmatory feedback from pupils can be a source for development but she is the only one to mention aspects connected to this form of learning. None of the core teachers mention aspects connected to *Interaction* at this point⁹².

To some extent, the teachers also recognise that learning at the workplace involves *Self-development*⁹³, in that they express that the teacher has to be prepared to develop herself and keep up-to-date.

Phase 2: Doing the job and taking charge of own development

By phase 2, *Experiential learning* and *Self-development* are seen as the primary learning processes connected to workplace learning. When it comes to *Experiential learning*, there is an even spread between the *Experience* and the *Action orientation*. Some teachers recognise both processes, whereas others focus on one or the other. On the one hand, accumulated experiences of the job over time are considered important. On the other hand, more teachers (compared to the previous phase) recognise that by doing the job, you notice what works or not and learning is described as a trial and error-like process.

⁹² One of the other teachers, Denice, mentions cooperating with colleagues and learning from them.

⁹³ In connection to *Self-development*, two teachers outside the core group recognise aspects connected to the sub-theme *Self-evaluation* that are not mentioned by the core teachers. They point out that the teacher has to reflect on her actions and have a critical approach towards her own work.

In connection to *Self-development*, the teachers now show a stronger awareness of the fact that the process of development is not something that necessarily happens of its own accord. They recognise that it takes deliberate effort and activity on the part of the teacher, who has to have a mind set on development and learning. At this point, transfer as a form of learning is also recognised by two teachers. These two teachers have, by the time of the interview, had experience of teaching outside teacher education and they refer to their own recent experiences of learning at the workplace. Especially significant is that one of them connects and applies theory learnt in TE to the practice context, as she uses theory to become aware of specific areas of interest and then to analyse and reflect on her own practice.

Still, very little attention is afforded the themes *Interaction* and *Mediated experience*. *Interaction* is recognised by two teachers who feel that teachers can develop by discussing with others. One of them considers teacher learning a joint responsibility of the organisation and its members and feels that there is a need for pedagogical discussions among staff. *Mediated experience*, then, is also recognised by two teachers. One of them sees books as a useful source and the other feels that pupils can provide the teacher with useful tips.

Phase 3: Experience and self-development along with advice, instructions and support from experts and peers

In phase 3, there is a more even spread among the themes. *Experiential learning* and *Self-development* still get the most attention but their relative importance decreases as *Interaction* and *Mediated experience* are afforded more attention.

When it comes to *Experiential learning*, much attention is afforded learning from *Accumulating experience*, which is a form of learning connected to the *Experience orientation*. The statements connected to this sub-theme suggest that teacher learning is an indistinct process that is difficult to pinpoint. Learning and growth are seen to ensue with time and as a result of a combination of (contrasting) experiences. In phase 3, observations are brought up as a form of learning at the workplace. The teachers mainly refer to classroom observations that they think can provide perspectives on their own teaching but observations are also seen to offer opportunities for studying teacher-pupil relationships and for getting to know the pupils better. The *Action orientation* is also considered an integral part of learning at the workplace and thus doing the job, seeing the results of your actions and reflecting on these experiences are forms of learning that are highlighted.

Compared to the previous phases, where *Mediated experience* has been afforded minimal attention in connection to workplace learning, a vast increase in attention can be noted at this point. One reason for this is connected to the fact that the teachers are new at work. The teachers feel they need to adapt to the school culture, which involves having to decipher the sometimes unstated regulations and norms that guide the organisation. In this situation, the teachers look to their more experienced colleagues for advice, information and instructions. With more experience of the work, the teachers now point out the role of courses and different kinds of in-service training. On the one hand, CPD courses are seen to function as a source of inspiration that furthers your development and stops you from stagnation. On the other hand, they are seen as prerequisites for meeting the demands of an ever-changing context.

The heightened focus on learning through *Interaction* can also be connected to the teachers' being new at work. The new teachers have to face problems that they may not have met before and the new context seems to make them unsure of their own abilities. Thus, they turn to more experienced colleagues, to pupils, or to other occupational groups, such as the school welfare officer or a work counsellor, for help and support. The importance of belonging to and having a sense of community is also highlighted and the teachers feel they want to share their experiences with other new teachers, with their colleagues and with their fellow subject teachers. Two of the teachers, Mary and Bridget, express views that stand out from the others. In their minds, learning to become a teacher is not just an individual endeavour that can be supported by others. Instead, they express that teacher learning can be a shared pursuit among colleagues, a reciprocal process where everybody's learning is enhanced, not just their own.

In connection to *Self-development*, three things can be noted. In line with what was noted in the previous phase, the teachers continue to emphasise that the teacher has to take responsibility for her own development and the importance and necessity of keeping up-to-date and developing is stressed. Secondly, the role of reflection in teacher learning is highlighted. The teachers' accounts include examples of how their development has been furthered through reflection on their learning process, reflection on themselves and their role, and reflection-on-action. In some cases, a deliberate, self-directed process of learning is accounted for. Thirdly, the intricate role of transfer in teacher learning comes into focus, as the accounts include examples of both positive, negative and zero transfer. From the perspective of teacher education, it is interesting to note that there is positive transfer between TE and the workplace. The positive transfer sometimes takes the form of delayed transfer, where the teachers, at a point when they have had more experience of the

job, recognise and/or understand the relevance of something that they had previously encountered during TE. The negative transfer here concerns transfer between teacher education and the school context. One of the teachers found it hard to let go of a way of working that was introduced and actively practised during teacher education, even though she realised that it was not a sustainable way of working in the school context. Finally, there was also an example of zero transfer, where the new teacher struggled so hard with trying to adapt to the practices of the school context that she overlooked the possibility of using the knowledge and skills she had acquired in teacher education.

Evolving cognitions of learning at the workplace: summary

In sum, the teachers' views concerning learning at the workplace become more diversified and complex with time. In phases 1 and 2, teacher learning is foremost seen as an individual endeavour and if the phrase 'It is up to me' characterises the views in phase 1, phase 2 can be summed up by the phrase 'It is *definitely* up to me'. By phase 3, the teachers still stress that they will learn through experience, by doing the job and reflecting on their experiences but they want to be supported in that process. Here the phrase, 'I will do it but tell me, support me and be there with me', can be used to illustrate the views.

5.3.2 Evolving cognitions of the teaching profession

Phase 1: In the classroom

In phase 1, a strong focus on those aspects of the teacher's job that take place in the classroom can be noted and thus a large majority of the statements concern either *the Academic* or *Social orientations to teaching*.

The Academic orientation to teaching is afforded the most focus in this phase and 53% of all the statements in phase 1 can be connected to this orientation. Three common views repeatedly surface in the student teachers' narratives. A strong focus on *Conveying knowledge* can be noted and the teacher's command of and interest in the subject is considered important. Motivation is another common denominator and the student teachers consider it their task to get the pupils motivated and interested in the subject and in learning the subject. Finally, the student teachers point out that pupils are different in terms of aptitude and that they learn in different ways and thus it is considered important that teachers understand the pupils and use different approaches and methods in their teaching.

The social orientation covers 24% of the statements and is acknowledged by eight out of nine teachers. Overall, *Nurturing interaction* is afforded the most attention and the student teachers clearly feel that relations to pupils are an important part of the job and they want to connect with the pupils and meet their varying needs. *Upbringing* is not afforded that much attention, apart from the fact that several teachers (5/9) stress that the teacher should function as a role model for the pupils. The teachers also recognise that they have a role as a leader and figure of authority in the classroom.

The remaining two themes are not afforded nearly as much attention as the previous two, as 14% of the statements concern *Out of class work* and 9% *Managing the job*. When it comes to *Out of class work*, *Tasks connected to teaching* receive the most attention. In line with this, planning is an activity that the teachers readily connect with the job and assessment is also mentioned. Then again, only two student teachers mention *Duties as a staff member* and similarly *Collegial interactions* only receive attention by the same two student teachers. Parental contacts are not referred to by any of the core teachers in this phase⁹⁴.

Even if *Managing the job* is the theme that gets the least overall attention in phase 1, aspects connected to *Building a teacher identity* are still recognised by six out of nine teachers. Here the teachers stress the importance of having self-confidence and being committed to teaching and working with pupils.

Phase 2: In the classroom and beyond

In phase 2, *Teaching* and in particular *the Academic orientation* is still afforded the most attention. However, at this point, relatively fewer statements concern this orientation and the difference to the other tasks is narrowing, as these are given more attention.

In connection to *the Academic orientation*, similar views as in the previous phase continue to be expressed. However, a heightened awareness of didactic aspects of teaching and concerns about pupils' learning can be noted.

A heightened awareness of aspects connected to *the Social orientation to teaching* can be noted, with 30 % of the statements connecting to this orientation. Social aspects of teaching are now mentioned by all the teachers. Aspects connected to *Nurturing interaction* are still most prominent and the teachers talk extensively

⁹⁴ Astrid and Janet, who are not part of the group of core teachers, do, however, mention parental contacts in phase 1.

about the importance of being there with and for the pupils, of showing an interest in them and of supporting them. *Upbringing* gets more attention now compared to the previous phase. Apart from Bridget, who does not mention this aspect, and Melissa, who does not consider upbringing her task as a language teacher, the teachers now consider upbringing an integrated but also important part of their job.

20% of the statements now concern *Out of class activities*. A heightened awareness of the role of planning can be noted and this aspect is now mentioned by all teachers and described as an important but time-consuming part of the job. Other *Tasks connected to teaching* are also mentioned, such as integrating pupils with special needs, knowing how to use classroom equipment and keeping up a personal system for keeping track of classes and deadlines. The teacher's *Duties as a staff member* are now mentioned by six out of nine teachers and they are much more aware of their role on the broader school arena. The teachers mention their role in maintaining and developing school as an organisation, various kinds of administrative and custodial duties and the role of the form tutor. Now, parental contacts are also mentioned, as well as contacts with other stakeholders (school nurse, the surrounding society etc.). *Collegial interaction* is also referred to by six of the teachers. Especially the importance of well-functioning, positive internal relations among colleagues is stressed but views connected to *collective action* and *cooperation* are also voiced.

The theme *Managing the job* is afforded 17 % of the statements in phase 2 and is noted by eight teachers. It is clear that by the end of TE, the teachers have a greater awareness of what the job of the teacher entails. Consequently, a heightened concern about being able to handle the teacher's job can be noticed. Issues concerning the workload are brought up by six teachers and concerns are voiced about how to handle the many responsibilities and heavy workload connected with the job. *Building a teacher identity* continues to be the sub-theme to get the most attention within this theme. Issues connected to self-confidence are continuously evident but views are also expressed regarding assuming and implementing the role of the teacher as well as separating between personal and professional life. Three of the teachers now point out the need to develop a professional stance towards pupils.

Phase 3: Relations, internal aspects and societal interaction

By phase 3, when all teachers have had personal experience of the job, they naturally have a broader view of what the job entails and thus all themes are covered by all teachers. Compared to the previous phases, *Teaching* as a whole is now afforded less attention, as 44% of the statements now concern this theme. Interestingly enough, at

this point, *the Academic orientation* is afforded the least attention of all themes (15%), whereas 29% of the statements are connected to *the Social orientation*.

Even if the teachers are more concerned about other aspects of the job besides teaching, we can conclude that the views in connection to *Teaching* remain fairly stable. A closer study of the individual profiles⁹⁵ regarding this aspect across the different phases revealed that for the individual teacher the same views tend to surface across time, albeit in slightly modified form⁹⁶. However, by phase 3, more and more teachers recognise a connection between *the Academic* and *the Social orientation to teaching*, in the sense that they note how one is dependent on the other and not just separate parts of the teacher's job. For some teachers, this connection is clearly addressed from the start, for instance Susan points out in phase 1 that when a teacher does not have the authority and the respect of a class, the quality of teaching drops. In phase 2, six out of nine teachers recognise this link and by phase 3, all the teachers mention it.

As mentioned above, the shift from *Academic* to *Social orientations to teaching* continues and for eight out of nine teachers in phase 3 *the Social orientation* is afforded more focus than *the Academic*. Aspects connected to *Organisation and leadership* turn out to be a major concern for some of the new teachers and they seem not to have expected the extent of impact of unruly or uncooperative pupils and classes. With experience, the teachers get widening perspectives of their role in terms of *Upbringing*. For one thing, they recognise that upbringing takes up a fair amount of the teacher's time and attention in the classroom. Secondly, even if they recognise that the sole responsibility of upbringing cannot be placed on the teacher, they understand that they are in a key position from the perspective of society, especially in cases where the pupils are not provided necessary guidance and support from home. Just like in the previous two phases, the sub-theme *Nurturing interaction* is afforded the most focus here as well. Establishing and maintaining functioning relations to pupils and attending to their emotional well-being continues to be seen as an important part of the job. The teachers like when they feel needed, when they connect with the pupils and when they feel they get the pupils' appreciation and approval.

⁹⁵ See chapter 4.3.2, p. 76

⁹⁶ In connection to the *Academic orientation to teaching*, the same focus is retained by six out of nine teachers. For most teachers either *Conveying information* or *Engaging pupils*, or both, are in focus. Bridget is the only one for whom *Supporting pupils* is in focus throughout. No common pattern of change could be discerned among those four who showed a change in focus.

In phase 3, 22% of the statements concern *Out of class work*. *Tasks connected to teaching* do not get as much attention as in the previous phase and for the most part, the teachers seem to have been prepared for or at least made aware of these aspects of the job during TE. Thus, planning is afforded less attention in this stage compared to the previous phase. It is still considered a time-consuming part of the job, but those into their second or third year of teaching note that with time and experience planning becomes less overwhelming. Then again, *Duties as a staff member* are seen to require a great amount of time. These tasks seem to accumulate easily and for the most part, they are seen as something that has to be done rather than something that is essential or worthwhile. With increased experience of the job, there seems to be an increased awareness of and importance assigned to *Collegial interaction* and by phase 3, this aspect is mentioned by all teachers. *Internal relations*, in particular, are seen as a prerequisite for functioning as a teacher. Thus, the support of colleagues is considered important as well as getting along with colleagues, on a personal *and* professional level. The importance of staff keeping together and working towards the same goal is also stressed.

Aspects of the job connected to *Managing the job* receive the most attention in phase 3 and 34% of the statements can be connected to this theme. In keeping with the previous phases, *Building a teacher identity* is considered an integral part of being a teacher. With more work experience, even more emphasis is afforded this particular aspect of the job, which is now noted by all teachers. From the teachers' accounts, it becomes clear that building a teacher identity is a complex process where 'me-as-a person' has to be integrated but also separated from 'me-as-a-professional'. In this sense, it can be seen as an intrapersonal process but it is also an external and interpersonal process, as it involves implementing and developing your role, influenced by the sometimes conflicting viewpoints of pupils, colleagues and other stakeholders, as well as by the affordances or restrictions connected to the environment. Apart from the highly emotional work of *Building a teacher identity*, the teachers also focus on aspects connected to *Handling the work situation*, which receive almost as much attention as aspects connected to identity development. The teachers especially struggle with *managing the workload, dealing with unclear job requirements* and finding a suitable *balance between different tasks*.

Evolving cognitions of the teaching profession: summary

Thus, in phase 1, the student teachers are mostly concerned with those aspects of the job that take place in the classroom and in relation to the pupils, whereas less attention is afforded to tasks that can be connected to a wider school arena. A

central part of the job is conveying knowledge to pupils, motivating them and meeting their varying needs. Relationships to pupils are foregrounded, whereas collegial and parental interactions receive little attention.

By phase 2, the teachers open up a window to the school arena and other duties besides classroom teaching. Relational aspects get more attention. In connection to pupils, more teachers recognise that teaching the subject is just one part of the job and that upbringing is an integral part of the package. Even more importance is afforded to establishing and maintaining close relationships with pupils but the teachers also start to recognise that part of their role also involves the ability to distance oneself from the pupils and develop a professional stance towards them. Relations to colleagues get more attention now than in the previous phase and the teachers are increasingly preoccupied with the internal aspects of the job.

By phase 3, the teachers have a broader and more interconnected view of the profession. For one thing, they note that social and academic aspects of teaching are interdependent and furthermore they show an increased awareness of their role as actors on the societal arena, as they recognise that they, through their job, can affect society but also that their job is affected by societal constraints and affordances. Even more attention is now afforded the internal aspects of the job, reflected as an increased focus on aspects connected to *Building a teacher identity* and *Handling the work situation*.

To sum up the teachers' evolving views regarding the teaching profession, two general trends can be noted. First of all, we can conclude that different aspects of the job are salient during different phases. The only aspect in constant focus is establishing and maintaining positive relations to pupils, connecting with them, catering for their varying needs and looking out for their best interests. Obviously then, relations are considered an integral part of the teacher's job. Apart from this, we can note that in phase 1, the teachers are mostly concerned with those aspects of the job that take place in the classroom and particular focus is afforded to the *Academic orientation to teaching*. By phase 2, the teachers open up a window to the school arena and other duties besides classroom teaching. Preparations for teaching are seen to require a fair amount of time and attention is also afforded to administrative and custodial duties of different kind. During this phase, we can also note that relations to colleagues, parents and other stakeholders are afforded increased attention. In phase 3, the importance of collegial relations is highlighted and internal aspects of the job receive a fair amount of attention. We can also note an increased awareness of the teacher's role on the societal arena.

Secondly, a shift can be noted towards a more even spread of views across the different themes. A more holistic view of the teacher's job is evident by phase 3, as the teachers increasingly recognise how different aspects of the job are interrelated.

5.3.3 Melissa's narrative

Background

In phase 1, Melissa has no previous experience of working as a teacher. She has been thinking of becoming a teacher ever since upper secondary school but keeps her options open at this point. Educational studies can come in handy in other people-related occupations as well, she reasons. At the time of the interview in phase 2, Melissa has just finished her teacher education studies and after a short summer vacation, she will start her new job in the autumn. She has been offered a job as a language teacher where she will ambulate between three different schools at different levels, teaching pupils between the ages of 11 and 18. One year later when I meet her for the final interview, she has just finished her first year of working as a teacher.

Phase 1

Teaching and being with pupils

In phase 1, Melissa finds it difficult to describe the teacher's job because, as she explains, she has never worked as a teacher. Although she recognises that the teacher's job includes a number of tasks connected to teaching, such as planning and correction work, she strongly connects the teacher's job with being in the classroom and instructing a group of pupils. In her view, the central task of the teacher is to impart knowledge and she thus stresses the importance of having a good command of and positive attitude towards the subject and towards teaching the subject. Melissa considers motivation an integral part of language learning and something the teacher can also work towards enhancing.

Melissa feels that good relations to pupils are important and she expresses that a teacher must genuinely like working with children and young people. She clearly has a very positive view of pupils and apart from her wishes to teach them, she is also concerned with their well-being. She especially stresses aspects connected to *Nurturing Interaction* and the importance of establishing "good contact" with the pupils and attending to their varying needs, for instance by being supportive, encouraging and understanding. Then again, upbringing is not something she is

particularly concerned about at this point and she simply states that in her opinion, parents should carry most of the responsibility here.

Learning by doing

Although Melissa feels that she has learnt a lot “theoretically” from the pedagogical courses she has previously attended, she recognises that she still has much to learn and she now particularly looks forward to the practicum and getting practical experience. She hopes to learn what she refers to as the practical aspects of the job, by teaching her own lessons and explains that you learn by making mistakes. She recognises that teacher learning goes beyond teacher education and points out that some things may not be learnt until you have actually worked a couple of years as a teacher.

Phase 2

In the classroom and beyond

By phase 2, it is evident that Melissa’s view of the job has broadened and become more detailed and complex. For one thing, she mentions how she has now realised the importance of planning and this is, in fact, the first task she mentions when describing the teacher’s job. As an inexperienced teacher, she finds planning very time-consuming. She has come to realise that often the available textbooks are inadequate and the teacher has to search for complementary resources or even create her own teaching material.

Secondly, Melissa points out that the teacher’s job involves many other tasks apart from those that take place in the classroom. She specifically mentions the tasks of being a form teacher and parental contacts and on a more general note, she says that the teacher also has responsibilities within the school community, as a member of staff.

Melissa still feels that the most important task of the teacher is to impart knowledge. She is very much concerned about pupils’ learning at this point and returns to the issue several times. She clearly feels that pupils’ learning rests heavily on the teacher’s shoulders. The teacher’s role is to “equip the pupils with the necessary knowledge” and in order to do so, the teacher needs to adapt her teaching to suit the pupils, vary her approach and strive to teach in an interesting and motivating way. She has also come to realise the importance of pedagogical competences, alongside subject knowledge. Having a broad knowledge base is of no use, unless you know how to teach it so that pupils will learn, she explains.

Melissa's story, in this phase, is permeated by her sense of commitment. Just like in phase 1, she continues to emphasise the importance of being committed to teaching and having willingness and motivation for teaching pupils. In addition to this, she now keeps returning to the issue of responsibility. She considers it important that the teacher carries responsibility within the school community but above all, the teacher has responsibilities when it comes to pupils and their learning.

Relational and social aspects of the job are also emphasised and Melissa points out that the teacher needs social skills, in order to interact with pupils in the classroom as well as in interactions with colleagues and parents. She feels that during teacher education, she has learnt how to interact with pupils in the classroom and she points out that a teacher needs to be sensitive to pupils' needs, make them feel safe and noticed and strive to get to know each one, individually.

She is aware that there is much talk about the role of upbringing in schools but she still does not consider it her task, as a teacher. However, she does see a point of keeping to what she refers to as "comfort rules", that is rules that encourage positive relations and well-being in the classroom, but the rest is up to the parents.

Practical experience, more experience... and self-development

At the time of the interview, Melissa has just finished the teacher education programme and due to the intense pace of the last five months, she says that her head is still spinning. She feels it was a great deal to take in at one time and now she needs time to reflect and process things on her own. She recognises that 'knowing how' is not the same as 'knowing how to' as she talks of "all this theory" that she now has to try to put into practice.

In line with her views in the previous phase, she found the practical experiences of teaching most rewarding. She singles out a period towards the end of her teaching practice, during which she taught the same class for a sequence of lessons, as being especially significant. She found that teaching the same pupils for an extended period of time allowed her to see her own development more clearly, as she could see improvement in herself from one lesson to the next.

Melissa explains that before teacher education, she would not have had the courage to go into teaching, as she did not know what to do in a classroom and what the job of a teacher actually entails. She now feels that teacher education has provided her with the necessary tools to start working as a teacher, but recognises that she still needs experience. "I believe a great deal is learnt from experience as well", she concludes.

Phase 3

The multifaceted, interconnected work of the teacher

Melissa starts her story by stating that she has been through quite an ordeal in the past year. She explains that the pupils' negative attitudes towards schoolwork and lack of respect for grown-ups and teachers came as somewhat of a shock to her. The pupils really put her to the test, she says. She thinks this was partly due to her young age and to the fact that she was newcomer. She explains that the pupils seemed to sense and react to the feelings of insecurity she experienced in the beginning.

Her experiences bring about a strong focus on relations to pupils and classroom management. During the interview, she keeps returning to these matters and talks extensively about them. She reasons that at least for her, as a new teacher, relations to pupils have been a fundamental part of the job and she has come to understand that functioning relations are a prerequisite for teaching and learning in the classroom. Furthermore, relations to pupils are also important for her sense of job satisfaction and she mentions how she enjoys getting to know the pupils and having a bit of a laugh together with them. She also mentions the joy of following their progress.

By now, Melissa's view of upbringing has dramatically changed. She says that her experiences in the past year have made her realise that teachers have to take responsibility for pupils' upbringing. Not all pupils seem to have rules at home, she says. Thus, she has broadened her view in this respect and expresses that it is not just a matter of providing pupils with subject knowledge; you also have to function as a role model and teach the pupils to become responsible members of society.

Melissa has also had to put much effort into building a teacher identity. She recognises that her problems lie as much with herself as with the pupils and she realises that adjustments have to be made in her attitude and approach towards pupils. It has thus been an emotionally difficult year, where she has struggled with building up her self-confidence and developing a professional stance towards pupils.

Melissa's description of the teacher's job is now more focused on other aspects of the job, besides teaching. She mentions tasks such as parental contacts, being a form teacher, administrative work and looking after pupils during recess but also tasks connected to teaching, such as planning, preparation, correction work and grading. She recognises that these tasks are all very time-consuming and work that pupils and parents do not really see. She sighs and says that pupils do not seem to appreciate all the effort she puts into planning and lesson preparations. On the positive side, she

recognises the importance of having colleagues that you can talk to and even meet up with informally, outside the school context.

Self-development with the help of experience, practical tips and some theory

Looking back on teacher education, Melissa now wishes that teacher education had provided her with more practical tips, especially regarding situations that you face as a new teacher, such as having to deal with unruly classes and establishing pupils' respect. Teacher education taught her how to plan lessons, she says, but she felt at a loss regarding disciplinary issues.

Melissa looks for concrete, practical tips but also support that will help her deal with the pupils. She felt she could turn to her more experienced colleagues for tips and advice. Apart from this informal help, there was no guidance or mentoring, she says, and she is disappointed that the principal did not forewarn and inform her about the state of things. Eventually, she got hold of a book that she felt gave her plenty of hands on tips about classroom management. Having read the book, she recalls and connects to advice given to her during teacher education. Melissa now recollects specific advice given to her by a supervisor and recalls that there had been much talk about the importance of aims during teacher education. At this point, she understood and could see the relevance for herself. "The clearer I am about what I expect of the pupils and the more concrete my aims are, the more respect they will have for me as a teacher", she concludes.

Apart from getting practical tips, Melissa also recognises the role of experience in her learning process. She says that her experiences in the past year has taught her so much and made her develop a thicker skin. After criticising teacher education for not providing her with the necessary tools for dealing with difficult pupils, she reflects that maybe this is something that you learn from experience. In order to deal with relational issues, you have to get to know the pupils; you need to be able to read their minds, in order to know what you can reasonably expect from them.

Melissa is determined to improve and sets up goals for her own development. She thinks that her problems in the classroom are due to her own lack of self-confidence and recognises she needs to become more of a leader in the classroom. She says there are a number of things she will change in the autumn, when she returns to school. She will start afresh now that she knows how important it is to show the pupils that she is in control. If she manages to do this, she thinks she will probably continue her career as a teacher.

5.3.4 Christine's narrative

Background

In phase 1, Christine already has some experience of the teacher's job, since she, during the previous year, has worked as a substitute teacher in schools ranging from primary up to upper secondary level. In Christine's family, there are many teachers and the profession has always been an option for her. She explains that she would like to have a job where she can combine languages and working with people and concludes that this description seems to fit rather well with the teacher's job. At the time of the interview in phase 2, Christine has recently finished her teacher education studies and in phase 3, two years after the previous interview, she has just started her second year as a teacher. She has a permanent position at a school where she mainly teaches pupils between the ages of 13-18.

Phase 1

Teaching, encouraging and inspiring pupils based on functioning relations

Already in phase 1, Christine has a clear view of what the teacher's job involves, what she considers important and how relational and academic aspects of teaching are integrated. As a future subject teacher, Christine feels that one of her most important tasks is to convey knowledge, convey her subject to the pupils and awaken their interest in the subject. She has a passion for languages and looks forward to having the opportunity to induce the same passion in the pupils, much in the same way her favourite teacher used to do. She recognises the importance of creating a bond to the class, so that the pupils feel they can trust her and feel safe to speak, without being afraid of making mistakes. At the same time, she points out that the teacher has to keep her distance and not become friends with the pupils, or they may lose respect. You can be personal but not private, she says.

She considers that a subject teacher foremost needs a good command of her subject but in order to be able to convey your knowledge so that others will learn, knowledge of pedagogy and didactics is also necessary. On top of this, Christine continues, comes the question of authority, how to get the pupils to listen to what you have to say.

In this phase, Christine focuses on aspects of the job that take place in the classroom but she also points out that planning is a central and important part of the job and a prerequisite for good teaching.

Authentic experiences and self-development

Christine expresses that she looks forward to teacher education, where she hopes to get authentic experiences of the job, “behind-the-scenes” so to speak. She thinks these experiences will open up new aspects of the profession to her. On top of this, she largely describes teacher learning in terms of self-development. She expects teacher education to involve hard work on her part, considers it important to be open towards new ideas and perspectives and hopes for feedback that will allow her to see herself from a new perspective, so that she can develop and improve her performance. She also considers teacher education to be an opportunity where she can really show what she is made of.

Phase 2

Responsibility, commitment and devotion

In phase 2, when Christine attempts to describe the teacher’s work, the first word that comes to her mind is complex. She explains that for one thing, the teacher has responsibilities in many areas; in the classroom with regards to pupils but also on the school and societal arenas, e.g. organising school festivities and cooperating with parents. Furthermore, these responsibilities are, by no means, confined within regular working hours but involve you 24 hours a day, every day of the week.

Planning, both long-term and short-term, is mentioned as an important aspect. She has come to understand that planning is a very complex activity that can be very time-consuming. Interactions with pupils are still considered important and she points out that the teacher needs to take the time to establish and maintain good relations with each class and each pupil, since this will affect classroom work. She also points out that the teacher is responsible for creating a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to learning. This is described as a classroom where pupils feel safe and welcomed, where the teacher really listens to the pupils and is sensitive to their individual needs.

Christine’s view of teaching remains fairly similar to the views she expressed in the previous phase. Her view of teaching is clearly inspired by the language teacher she also referred to in phase 1. The teacher has a pivotal role of conveying the subject in an engaging and inspiring way, through sharing experiences and having a personal touch. Christine feels that when a teacher succeeds in motivating the pupils, they will take responsibility for their own learning and learning will more or less ensue automatically. In order to achieve this, Christine stresses that a teacher needs

commitment. It is not enough to simply activate and include all pupils, you need to be driven by a desire to really want to engage and motivate all pupils.

Upbringing is another part of the job she mentions and in her mind upbringing should take place in the school as well as at home, preferably in cooperation. She considers it important that a united front is kept among the staff and that all teachers contribute to upholding the common rules, both in and out of class.

Experience, feedback and support

When it comes to teacher education, Christine singles out two learning opportunities in particular. The first thing that comes to mind is the feedback she received from her supervisor. She describes this feedback as being direct and unembellished, which was hard to take at first and in order to benefit from it she had to learn to filter the feedback and to focus on the most central issues. Still, she appreciates that the feedback was concrete, to the point and future-directed so that focus was placed on one or two things that she could then concentrate on during the following lesson. Secondly, Christine mentions her fellow students. She appreciates that the student teachers could share material and ideas with one another but also the fellowship that the group provided. You did not have to feel alone, she says.

Furthermore, she also voices appreciation for the opportunities for authentic and practical experiences. During teaching practice, she especially appreciated opportunities to work in the same class for a longer period of time, as it allowed her to immerse herself and see the results of her efforts more clearly. Having to plan lessons herself, heightened her awareness of what planning can actually involve and how time-consuming it can be.

When it comes to teacher learning on a more general level, Christine points out that for her, there is no ultimate way of being and becoming a teacher. You have to be true to yourself; everyone has to find his or her own way of being a teacher and of achieving that goal.

Phase 3

The teacher's job- a balancing act

Christine has very ambivalent feelings about the teacher's job at the moment, which becomes evident in how she describes the job. On the one hand, she values her job and the variation and freedom it provides. She considers teachers to have a high

status in society. On the other hand, the heavy workload, intense working pace and diffuse job requirements make the job very stressful.

In terms of teaching, Christine's views remain fairly stable throughout. In phase 3 she repeatedly stresses that she feels this to be her most important task as a teacher. Foremost, she sees that her role as a teacher is to teach and convey her subject to the pupils. She considers it important to engage and motivate pupils but here a slight shift can be noted, as she recognises that part of the responsibility has to be placed on the pupils. As a teacher, she can meet the pupils half way, but they have to be active on their part and try to do their best, otherwise they will not learn, she explains.

On top of the more academic focus on teaching, social aspects are also stressed. The job is not just about teaching, she recognises, it is also about upbringing and educating pupils into becoming well-behaved, responsible and self-sufficient members of society. She exemplifies that her task is to make sure school rules are followed, for instance that nobody runs in the corridors or bullies or acts aggressively towards other pupils. She stresses the need for cooperation with parents, as she feels they carry the main responsibility in this respect. Furthermore, she recognises that unless the teacher is able to establish and maintain order in the classroom and create a positive working atmosphere, teaching will not be possible. She also considers it important that a teacher is able to relate to pupils and attend to their varying needs, for instance, by providing guidance, support, attention, or understanding.

A broad range of tasks connected to out-of-class work is mentioned and she also emphasises that in her mind, the teacher's job includes a vast amount of tasks. To give a few examples, she mentions tasks such as parental contacts, being a form teacher, taking part in CPD courses, organising extra-curricular activities such as theme days or school-trips. When it comes to collegial relations, Christine stresses aspects connected to *collective action*, which means that she considers it important that all teachers do their part and work towards upholding the school rules.

Above all, Christine places a fair amount of attention in this phase on aspects of the job connected to *Managing the job*. Equal attention is afforded *Handling the work situation* and *Building a teacher identity*. Christine is clearly frustrated with the fact that other tasks, besides teaching, take up so much of her time and energy. She returns to this issue several times and at one point she says that in her mind, ninety per cent of the job is about teaching but at the moment she spends thirty per cent of her time on teaching and seventy per cent on other tasks. Even if she recognises that the heavy workload may be partly connected to her being new at work, she also

recognises that the teacher's job in itself includes a large amount of tasks and on top of this, new tasks are continuously added as a result of educational reforms or advances in technology.

Thus, Christine recognises that it is essential to develop strategies for managing the job. As a teacher, you have to be able to strike a balance between different tasks, know how to pace your work and focus on one thing at a time and learn to set limits for your work. As Christine explains, a negative aspect of the job is that you can virtually work until you drop dead. Nobody tells you when you are finished or that this lesson is okay now, you can stop planning. Unless you yourself set those limits, you will soon come up against a wall.

During the first year as a teacher, a big part of the job included finding her role as a teacher and establishing a professional stance towards pupils. She felt she could not be her usual, easy-going self in the classroom, because then the pupils lost respect for her. When she became more strict and decisive, she herself became uncomfortable and worried that the pupils would not like her. On top of this, she had high demands on herself and struggled hard with trying to implement her ideal of engaging *all* pupils during lessons. Again, she initially took pupils reactions, and disinterest in this case, very personally. She eventually learnt to distance herself and react in a more professional manner. Being a teacher is highly emotional work, she concludes. Relations to pupils can be a source of energy but when relations do not work, they drain you of energy.

Christine also struggles with trying to deal with conflicting viewpoints. For one thing, she feels that so much emphasis is placed on applying and using various forms of technical equipment, just for the sake of it, and she thinks too little emphasis is afforded to teaching the actual subject. She recalls how her favourite teacher used to engage her pupils with her stories. Even if only blackboard and chalk were used, "we sure did learn", Christine says. Furthermore, Christine thinks that language teaching is not what she had expected. She wants to work with languages but she thinks that the matriculation exam brings about too much focus on proficiency and grammatical correctness, at the expense of communication and daring to use the language. In real life situations, proficiency is not that much of an issue, she says. These dilemmas contribute to making her unsure of whether or not she wants to stay in the profession.

Authentic experiences, sharing and support

The first thing Christine mentions when it comes to learning in teacher education, is observing the lessons of fellow students. She thinks that this form of learning gave her new perspectives on herself and her teaching and considers it a useful way of learning at the workplace as well. Overall, her view of teacher education is more critical at this point. For one thing, she feels that the working pace was so intense, which meant that even if written reflective tasks were included in the coursework, there was no time for real reflection. Christine is also concerned with the authenticity and transferability of tasks they were asked to do during TE. The practice lessons are actually very few, Christine reasons, twenty lessons is what you have each week, as a teacher. Furthermore, she is critical of the strong focus on didactic aspects of lesson planning and that every detail had to be carefully considered. That is not how it is in real life, she says and explains that as an NQT, she had a hard time adapting the approach she had internalised during TE, even when the procedure turned out to be far too time-consuming. In terms of the lectures, she would sometimes have preferred a more practical approach. She feels that had they been given an opportunity to simulate how to handle situations such as parental contacts, dealing with bullying or other situations where pupils do not get along, she would have known better how to deal with these common situations in a teacher's day-to-day work.

When Christine considers her own development after teacher education, she finds it difficult to pinpoint any specific events that would have contributed. Instead, she feels she has developed as a result of an accumulation of experiences and she expresses that “the whole year was a learning experience in itself”.

Still, in this phase, Christine makes a fair amount of references to forms of learning connected to *Interaction*. In her struggles to develop a teacher identity, she needed both professional and emotional support. An important lifeline for Christine during the most difficult times, was discussions with close relatives who were also experienced teachers. They provided her with much needed emotional support and guidance. Similarly, the support and appreciation of a particular group of pupils helped boost her self-confidence. In general, she feels that discussions with other teachers have helped her develop and she particularly mentions informal discussions with former fellow-students that provide new perspectives on her own experiences. She considers contacts with other NQTs important and looks forward to a formally arranged meeting of NQTs she is about to attend and the opportunities this will bring for sharing experiences.

Christine would have appreciated having a formally appointed mentor at her school. Even if her colleagues welcomed and helped her, she feels it would have been good to have a mentor to turn to when things were tough. She also thinks the mentor could have provided help when it comes to practical issues concerning the school culture. Being new at a school, there are many things you just do not know, she explains, such as which areas are included in the school ground, where is the material kept, are pupils required to go outside during breaks and so on.

Christine is one of the few teachers who mention CPD-courses. She considers courses a useful way of becoming informed and learning about new reforms and advances within the field of teaching. She considers it her right to get access to expert help in these situations.

6 Discussion

This study aims to contribute to the understanding of the process of becoming a teacher by describing teachers' views of teacher learning and the teaching profession and how these views evolve during the transitional period from teacher education to work. The broader intent is to further the understanding of how to support and promote teachers' professional development during the early stages of professional learning. In the previous chapter, I have presented the results of the analysis and in this section, I summarise the main findings and discuss them in light of the theoretical framework and in relation to previous studies. The discussion is seasoned with illustrative examples drawn from the narratives of Melissa and Christine.

I will start by discussing the findings that specifically relate to the teachers' views of the teaching profession (RQ2), as these provide a backdrop against which the teachers' views of teacher learning (RQ1) can be mirrored. Reflecting the longitudinal nature of the study, the main focus in the discussion will be on describing how the views evolve during early professional learning. In keeping with the overarching aim, implications will also be drawn for how teachers' professional development can be supported.

6.1 Different aspects of the job are salient at different times

The results in relation to the teachers' views of the teaching profession show that during the early stages of professional learning different aspects of the job are in focus at different times. The change in focus is illustrated in Figure 14 below.

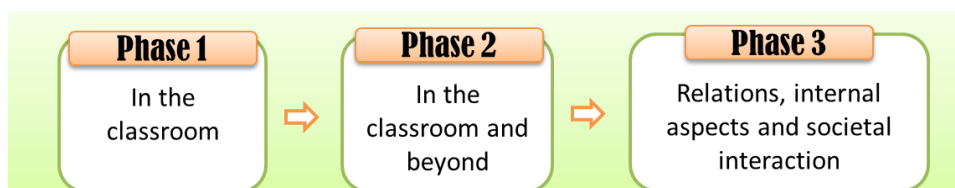


Figure 14. Evolving cognitions of the teaching profession.

In phase 1, at the beginning of teacher education, it is the teacher's work in the classroom that receives the most attention. Thus, teaching and in particular the pedagogical practice of mediating between content and pupil are in focus. Apart from the aforementioned focus on the *Academic orientation to teaching*, relations to

pupils are also seen as a central part of the job. Much in line with results from previous studies, the importance of establishing and maintaining close relations to pupils and being attentive to their needs is stressed (cf. Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Ethell & McMeniman, 2002; Paulin, 2008).

By phase 2, at a point when teacher education has been completed, the most focus is still afforded the classroom arena and the academic aspects of teaching but increasingly more attention is afforded to aspects connected to the broader school arena, beyond the immediate classroom setting. Thus, *Tasks connected to teaching* get more attention and planning and lesson preparation in particular are widely recognised. Furthermore, a heightened awareness of the teacher's role in the school organisation can be noted and over half the participants now mention duties connected to their role as staff members including, for example, developing and sustaining the practice of the school, administrative and custodial duties and parental contacts.

In phase 3, when the teachers have started working, the focus shifts drastically and the most focus is now afforded the internal aspects of the job. The results indicate that for the new teacher a central part of the job is related to development and learning. Thus, in relation to the sub-theme *Building a teacher identity*, the teachers struggle with developing self-confidence, implementing the role of the teacher, dealing with conflicting viewpoints and separating between personal and professional life. On top of this, the comprehensive, multifaceted and vague nature of the job also has the new teacher struggling with managing an extensive workload, prioritising between different tasks and dealing with uncertainty. This focus on the internal, developmental and largely problematic aspects of the job essentially mirrors the findings of previous studies into NQTs' experiences of their job (cf. e.g. Aspfors, 2012; Avalos & Aylwin, 2007; Blomberg, 2008; Paulin, 2007).

Relational aspects of the job are also highlighted in phase 3. When it comes to relations to pupils, the initial focus of establishing and maintaining close and supportive relations to pupils is still noticeable but the teachers become increasingly aware of the effects of that relationship and of the fact that a balance has to be struck between closeness and distance. As Melissa's story illustrates, establishing authority in relation to pupils and maintaining discipline in the classroom can be major concerns for the new teacher. More emphasis is gradually also afforded to collegial relations. By phase 3, this is an aspect of the job that is recognised by all teachers, compared to three out of twenty in phase 1 and eight out of twelve in phase 2. Both professional but also more informal relations to colleagues are highlighted, as the teachers look to colleagues for support, cooperation and even friendship, much in

line with the findings of Anderberg (2008). As illustrated in Melissa's story, relations to colleagues can be important when it comes to counterbalancing the more negative and stressful aspects of the job.

Finally, in phase 3, the teachers not only connect their job to the classroom and school arenas but increased emphasis is placed on their role on the societal arena. On the one hand, the teachers recognise that their work is affected by prevalent views in society and, on the other hand, they feel that they, through their work, can contribute to society. This is evident in Melissa's story, where she, by phase 3, expresses that her role as a teacher also involves educating the pupils so that they become responsible members of society.

Thus we can note that whereas the student teacher focuses on more on overt aspects of the job connected to teaching and the classroom, the newly qualified teacher places greater focus on covert aspects, i.e. aspects that are not directly observable, such as relations and internal aspects of the job. During this initial and transitional developmental phase, it seems that the (student) teachers tend to focus the most on those aspects of the job of which they have had experience but also on those aspects that for reason or other are problematic or concern them at the time. Melissa, for instance, has never worked as a teacher in phase 1 and expresses that this makes it difficult for her to determine what is included in the job. Still, as a pupil she has had experience of teaching and teacher-pupil relations and much like the other participants, these are the aspects she identifies as most salient. In phase two, teaching and relations to pupils are still in focus, possibly reflecting the fact that practical experiences during TE are largely classroom focused. Furthermore, as illustrated in Melissa's and Christine's stories, the role of planning is particularly stressed during phase 2, when the teachers, through personal experience, have come to realise how important but also time-consuming and complex this task is. By this time, the teachers have also been introduced to the teacher's job on the school arena, even if many of these aspects have only been dealt with during lectures. By phase 3, with experience of the impact of unruly classes, the teachers focus more on their role as educators, compared to their role as mediators of academic content, which has been the main focus in previous phases. A vast increase in focus on aspects connected with *Managing the job* reflects the teacher's experiences of the multi-faceted and complex job of the teacher.

The study can thus be seen to support the theory that particular concerns tend to be in focus at different developmental phases (cf. Fuller & Bown, 1975; Kagan, 1992b). However, the views were not found to evolve from the inside out as reported by Fuller and Bown (1975), instead the findings are more in keeping with those of

Conway and Clark (2003), who reported a simultaneous outward and inward movement. In other words, there is an outward movement as the arenas and scope of the teacher's job widen and an inward movement with heightened concerns about finding one's role as a teacher and building a teacher identity (cf. Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997). This overarching development is, however, to be understood as a general tendency. As the narratives of Melissa and Christine show, there are also individual differences depending on individual preferences, experiences and contextual differences, to name a few examples.

6.2 Broadening views of the teaching profession: towards more interconnected and complex views

Besides the change in *focus* of views described above, the teachers gradually develop broader views of the profession. This general tendency has also been found in studies focusing on student teachers' views of the profession, in the beginning and after TE (see Jönsson, 1998; Virta et al., 2001). When looking at how the views broaden, two distinctive paths can be identified. On the one hand, the views become more *holistic* and *interconnected* and, on the other hand, more *complex* and *diversified*. These paths are intricately connected and can perhaps only be fully separated in theory. I will now outline these two developmental paths in more detail.

The teachers' views of the profession become more *holistic*, in the sense that it is increasingly recognised that the teacher's job involves work on several different arenas and levels, from working with pupils in the classroom, to taking care of responsibilities as a member of staff on the school level and even beyond that, on the societal level. At the same time, a big part of the job is also seen to occur on an internal level, as the teachers focus on building a teacher identity and managing the job. Thus, in phase 3, Melissa, who has previously focused on her role as a mediator of subject knowledge, realises that her duties need to extend to the societal arena and that she, in her role as a teacher, can contribute by functioning as a role model and educating the pupils to become responsible members of society.

The views also become increasingly *interconnected*, as the teachers become aware of how different tasks are linked to one another. This development is illustrated in Melissa's story, where we can see how her views evolve in relation to the teacher's role as an educator. In phases 1 and 2, she is not really concerned about matters relating to classroom management. Even if upbringing is a task that she recognises

from the beginning, she initially sees it as a more peripheral task of which parents should carry most of the responsibility. Instead, she wants to focus on teaching and establishing closeness and positive relations with her pupils. By phase 3, her views dramatically change and now, through personal experience, she realises that she has to change her approach towards pupils, since unless she is able to establish their respect and get control of the classroom, she will not be able to teach. In other words, she has come to realise that classroom management is a prerequisite for teaching and learning in the classroom.

Along the second developmental path, the teachers' views become more *complex* and *diversified*. As the teachers identify more and more aspects of the job and as their views of the different tasks become more differentiated, the complexity of the teacher's job gradually unravels. This greater understanding does not necessarily make it easier for the teachers but may instead create tensions, as it forces teachers to prioritise, to set limits, to reconsider previous beliefs and come to terms with clashing beliefs. A similar view of the profession was identified among a group of newly qualified primary school teachers in a study by Aspfors, Bendtsen and Hansén (2011). The researchers identified four broad views of the profession⁹⁷, of which the so called *tensional-mutable view* was common among the NQTs in the study. This view reflected the tensions involved in dealing with the elusive, ever-changing and multi-faceted job of the teacher.

The development towards more complex and diversified views and the ensuing tensional and emotional turmoil is illustrated in Christine's story. Already in phase 1, Christine has a clear and relatively integrated view of what the teacher's job entails. By phase 2, she describes the teacher's job as complex and refers to the fact that the teacher has many responsibilities in many areas and that these responsibilities are almost unlimited. Still, even if she has a theoretical understanding of what the job entails, she is not able to fully grasp the practical consequences of this, until she has had more extensive experience of the job herself. Christine has high ideals and a strong sense of commitment to her subject, her pupils and her job and this leads to problems when she, as a new teacher, faces a job that she finds limitless, elusive and multi-faceted. Her ideal of engaging all pupils turns out to be difficult, when all pupils do not necessarily want to be engaged. Similarly, when she wants to focus on teaching her subject, which is a clear priority for her, she finds that most of her time is spent on other tasks. The job is clearly not what she had expected and the tensions she experiences can be described as a

⁹⁷ The four views of the teaching profession included a *normative-technical view*, a *personal-dynamic view*, a *relational-emotional view* and a *tensional-mutable view*. The first two views were more common among STs, whereas the latter two were common among NQTs.

combination of *role conflict*, *role ambiguity* and *role overload* (cf. Biddle, 1997; Van Sell, Brief & Schuler, 1981). She experiences role conflict, when she finds it hard to combine expectations of using ICT in the classroom with her ideals of wanting to focus on engaging her pupils' interest in the subject, role ambiguity, when she realises that she has no means of knowing when she is doing a good enough job and that her job is essentially limitless, and role overload, when she experiences that her working day is full of tasks on to which new tasks seem to be continuously added. Christine has to devote a fair amount of time, emotion and effort into coming to terms with these tensions. As Kennedy (1997) points out, conflicting beliefs of this kind impedes a person's ability to deal with work and in Christine's case they contribute to making her unsure of whether she wants to stay in the profession.

As Christine's case illustrates, the two developmental paths can be integrated or connected. Along the first path a greater understanding is achieved through establishing a greater unity and coherence between different elements (in this case between how the different tasks and roles of the teacher are viewed), whereas along the second path, a deeper understanding of the different elements brings about a more complex view, where different elements can be at odds with one another. Since the second path may lead to experiences of tension and inner conflict that need to be resolved, it is important that the characteristic features of these views be recognised, so that adequate support may be provided.

When it comes to how the views of the teaching profession evolve, parallels can be noted with Berliner's (1988, 1995) theory of the development of expertise. The theory stipulates that novices are concerned with trying to identify and discriminate elements that govern practice. Based on how the views evolve along the two paths, it seems that this preoccupation not only applies in a strict sense to "learning to teach" and the practice context but also to how novices gradually develop their views of the teaching profession.

In sum, then, the teachers' views of the profession during the early transitional stages of professional development reflect that different concerns and needs surface at different times, as the teachers' views of the job gradually become more complex. It becomes evident that teachers need continued support even after teacher education, to help them deal with a new set of concerns brought about by more experience of working life. Furthermore, an awareness of the common, general tendencies described above can be an important means of ensuring relevance when designing larger scale educational and support programmes for groups of (prospective) teachers, as these tendencies anticipate possible areas of interest and concern at different developmental phases.

6.3 A broad variety of learning opportunities is recognised in relation to teacher learning: idiosyncratic preferences and understandings

Moving over to the results in connection to teacher learning, it can be concluded that on a group level, a broad variety of learning opportunities are identified. Even if the teachers were free to decide what opportunities to mention, the scope of opportunities recognised is largely similar to that identified in other studies that have investigated teachers' beliefs about how they learn. For instance, in a study investigating both pre-service and practising teachers' beliefs about the source of teaching knowledge, Buehl and Fives (2009) identified six themes: formal education, formalized bodies of knowledge (e.g. books, the Internet, research articles), observational learning, collaboration with others, enactive experiences (i.e. learning by doing) and self-reflection. Grosemans et al. (2015), who focused on primary school teachers' informal learning activities, identified learning activities relating to four categories: reflecting, learning from others without interaction (including observation and what I have termed mediated experience), experimenting (learning by doing) and collaboration. Even if the identified learning activities are organised in slightly different manners across studies, the overall scope is still similar, including elements of experiential learning, mediated experience, interaction and self-development.

The results also show that individuals have different preferences in terms of how they want to learn. This is especially evident in relation to the role of interaction in teacher education. This form of learning was considered extremely important by some of the teachers, whereas one third of the teachers did not mention this form of learning at all in relation to learning in teacher education. The finding that individuals vary in terms of how much importance they attach to different learning opportunities also finds support in other studies (e.g. Buehl & Fives, 2009; Flores, 2005). This can be seen as one way in which the idiosyncratic nature of teacher learning manifests itself.

Additionally, the findings reveal that learning opportunities may be understood in different ways or may be seen to serve different purposes. An example of this is how *Experiential learning* divides into an experience and an action orientation. From this follows that individuals may prefer learning in a real life setting because they want to experience an authentic environment or because they want to learn through enactment, by doing the job. More specific learning activities, such as discussions, can also be seen to serve different purposes. Consequently, the results show that this

form of learning can be preferred for different reasons, for instance because discussions constitute a social rather than a solitary form of learning or because the learner prefers to negotiate meaning together with peers, rather than having the information mediated through an external expert. Along the same lines and in keeping with the findings of Calderhead and Shorrock (1997), the teachers' views regarding the role of the supervisor or mentor for teacher learning also vary. Commonly, the supervisor is seen as an evaluator and assessor performance. Another common view of the supervisor is that of a coach who directs and guides the learning process. Others again, stress the importance of emotional support along with professional guidance and a fourth view is that of the supervisor as a collaborator and sounding board.

This is to say that even if the collective views, on a group-level, are seen to have a broad scope, the same is not necessarily true on an individual level. Educators thus need to be sensitive to these matters and clearly express their intentions as a means of reducing the risk for misunderstandings and confusion. For instance, a student teacher, who expects the mentor to evaluate her performance might be very confused when the mentor is more concerned with asking questions, as a means of trying to enhance reflection. Furthermore, in order to ensure that available learning opportunities are fully made use of, educators could include opportunities for exploring and sharing the collective wisdom and knowledge of the group and in that way broaden the individual students' views. In any case, it is also important that a variety of approaches be used within TE, in order to satisfy the various preferences of the student teachers but also as a means of broadening their repertoire.

6.4 Views relating to learning in teacher education

Figure 15 below provides a general overview of the teachers' views regarding learning in teacher education. The three boxes illustrate the three phases. In relation to each phase, the learning opportunities that are afforded the most attention are specified in the upper-hand section of the box. In the lower section, a short description of the views of the respective phases are provided.

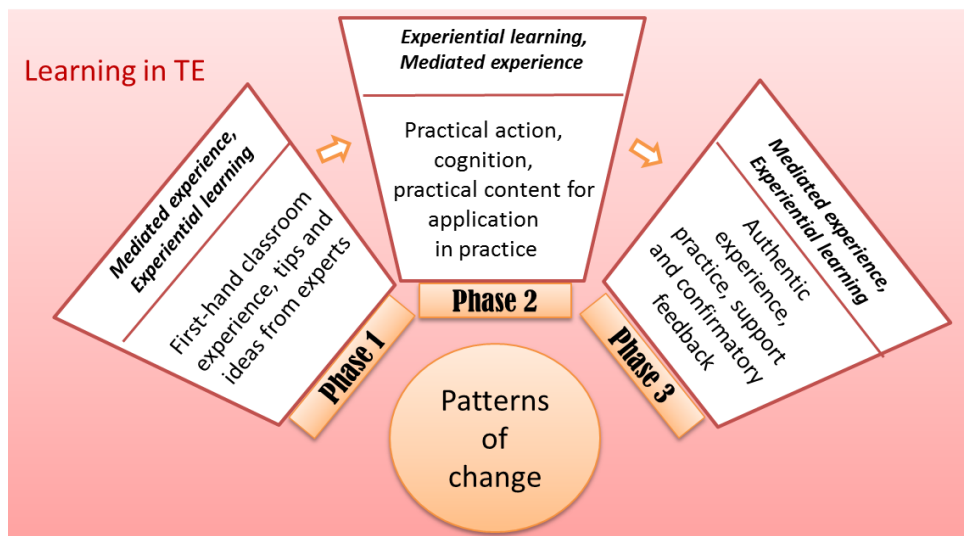


Figure 15. Evolving cognitions of learning in teacher education.

6.4.1 From narrow towards more diversified, interconnected and complex views of learning in TE

Even if the teachers have a relatively clear idea from the start of how they want to learn in teacher education, their views are initially more narrow and in phase 1, none of the teachers refer to all four of the overarching themes or learning opportunities. Instead, the focus is initially largely placed on forms of learning connected to *Mediated experience* and *Experiential learning*, as the teachers express they want first-hand classroom experience and tips and ideas from experts (see Figure 15). By phase 2, the views start to become more diversified but also increasingly interconnected. Instead of just focusing on getting experience, the teachers now attach more importance to the link between action and cognition. Thus, the role of reflection is recognised in connection to learning from experience and the teachers also express that in order to connect between the domains of theory and practice, both opportunities for reflection as well as opportunities for practical application are necessary.

With growing experience, the teachers gradually recognise that learning in TE is perhaps more complex than what they had originally thought. In phase 2, Melissa is one of the teachers who find it hard to transfer theoretical knowledge into practice and she recognises that even if one has a theoretical understanding, it does not necessarily mean that one can apply it to and use it in a practical context. Another

indication of greater complexity is reflected in the tension related to *Experiential learning* in phase 3. The teachers express that TE should provide experiences of authentic practice but at the same time it is recognised that an inexperienced teacher may have troubles dealing with the complexity and all the intricate aspects of the job, at same time. This tension highlights an inherent problem relating to initial teacher education, namely that TE needs to meet both the immediate but also the more long-term needs of prospective teachers (cf. Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997, p. 196). For a student teacher, it may be necessary to be allowed to focus on a few issues at a time, otherwise the experience can be too confusing and overwhelming (see e.g. Daniella's comment on p. 108). However, only a few months later, when you are qualified and start working as a teacher, you are immediately faced with a situation where you need to be able to handle every aspect of the job, all at once.

6.4.2 A narrow focus partly remains- practical elements and solitary forms of learning are emphasised

Despite the development towards more diversified and complex views described above, views of teacher learning in relation to TE remain relatively narrow. Throughout, most focus is afforded learning opportunities connected to *Experiential learning* and *Mediated experience* (see Figure 15), reflecting a strong focus on the practical elements of the education. For one thing, the role of practice teaching is highly valued and the teachers appreciate opportunities to learn from authentic and extended experiences, opportunities to practise and develop skills as well as opportunities to apply theory into practice. Furthermore, the teachers stress the importance of getting practical tips and ideas and in general, they prefer content of a practical and concrete nature that is directly connected to and can be applied in their day-to-day practice. The role of the practical elements in TE will be further elaborated in the following section (6.4.3), but for now, it will suffice to say that this focus largely reflects what I have referred to in the theoretical section as a technical approach to teacher learning. This approach focuses the role of the practicum as a place for developing skills and for using and applying strategies, techniques and procedures learnt, for instance, from methodological courses.

The narrow focus of the teachers' views is also evident in the strong focus on people as mediating sources while the influence of other mediating sources such as the internet, books or journal articles is largely downplayed. Even if the teachers attended a TE programme that included several assignments that required the use of literature of different kinds, these were seemingly not seen to have had a significant

effect on teacher learning, since only one teacher refers specifically to learning from written sources in relation to TE. Interestingly enough, this form of learning is not afforded that much attention in relation to workplace learning either. When considering the few statements that do refer to this form of learning, we can note that books were identified as a mediating source in cases where they were seen to meet a specific need the teacher had at the time and when they provided concrete, practical tips that the teachers felt they could connect with and apply to practical situations in their everyday work. This suggests that more theoretical literature may not be seen to be of direct relevance in situations where more immediate, contextually-situated concerns are in focus. In keeping with these findings, studies comparing the views of novice and experienced teachers have found that novices afford less importance to reading professional literature, compared to their more experienced colleagues (Flores, 2005; Grosemans et al., 2015). Considering that novices are in a position where they are inexperienced and forced to deal with a heavy workload in combination with a shortage of time, it is hardly surprising that they prefer sources of more immediate and practical nature that provide more instant help (cf. Flores, 2005).

Even if there is a slight increase in the attention afforded interactive forms of learning in the latter two phases compared to the case in phase 1, overall relatively little attention by relatively few teachers is afforded this form of learning in relation to TE. Some of the statements relating to *Interaction* focus on the emotional aspects of teacher learning by highlighting the need for support and fellowship while learning to become a teacher, others the role of discussions during lectures, leaving only three statements that focus on the role of collaborative practices in TE. The fact that so little attention is afforded collaborative practices is a matter of concern. In order to be able to understand, keep up with and react to the constant changes characteristic of today's globalised world, teachers cannot work in isolation (cf. Rönnerman & Forsman, 2011). Unless teachers see the benefits of collegial cooperation during TE, there is an imminent danger that this form of learning will not be a part of their repertoire in their future professional development.

The lack of attention and support for collaboration as a form of learning may be partly attributed to individual learning preferences, as was discussed above. However, it is also possible that part of the reason for the lack of attention is due to lack of formal opportunities for cooperation during TE. It is difficult to see the benefits of a form of learning of which you have not had sufficient experience. As it turns out, the teachers who refer to collaboration were all part of a group that for

practical reasons⁹⁸ had more experience of co-teaching and co-planning during TE than the other student teachers. Thus, the fact that collaboration is encouraged in the programme and that structures are created to encourage cooperation, such as, for instance, the supervision of student teachers in small groups, where everyone attends each other's practice lessons and partakes in common discussions afterwards⁹⁹, does not seem to suffice. The short duration of TE, combined with an intense pace does not leave that much room for practices that are not explicitly required. Thus, it seems that if we want to enhance student teachers' opportunities for collaboration and heighten their awareness of this form of learning, specific, shared tasks that require cooperation are a better option.

Furthermore, the results show that after teacher education (by phase 2) there is a heightened awareness of one's own role and one's own possibilities of influencing the teacher learning process among the teachers. This is reflected in a greater focus on forms of learning connected with *Self-development*. However, even if the teachers' views reflect that a development towards greater autonomy has started in that they recognise a need for managing and reflecting on their own learning process, there are still no references to self-directed forms of learning in relation to TE. Considering that the teachers more readily connect self-development with learning at the work place, it is possible that they associate the formal learning environment with more dependent forms of learning, where experts provide the necessary knowledge and oversee and monitor students' development. This could account for the continued, strong focus on forms of learning related to *Mediated experience* in connection to learning in TE. In line with this, Melissa considers that the reality shock she experienced when she started working could have been prevented, had she been provided with more practical tips during TE. Another possibility is that there may not have been sufficient opportunities for self-directed learning during TE to evoke a change in the teachers' perceptions. This point will be further elaborated in the following section (6.4.3).

The strong focus on forms of learning relating to *Mediated experience* and *Experiential learning* at the expense of more interactive and autonomous forms of learning is a matter that needs attention. If teacher education is to prepare teachers for continuous professional development as active participants in a community of practice (Wenger, 2009), it is important that they get sufficient experience of collaborative but also self-directed forms of learning.

⁹⁸ Since there was not enough practice lessons available in relation to the number of student teachers in a particular subject, some of the practice lessons among this group were co-taught, whereas the student teachers who had other subjects taught lessons individually.

⁹⁹ Cf. the interactive processes involved in Schön's (1987) notion of the reflective practicum.

6.4.3 Views highlight the intricate roles of theory and practice¹⁰⁰ in teacher learning

The strong focus on the practical elements of the education reflected in the teachers' views warrants a closer look at their views regarding the role of practice and theory, which was one of the dimensions of teacher learning addressed in the theoretical section (cf. chapter 2.1.2). As I will show, it seems that, on a collective level, the teachers have relatively broad views regarding the role of practice but more narrow views regarding the role of theory.

In keeping with the results of previous studies, the practical elements of the education are very much appreciated by the teachers and practical experiences are seen as an essential key to teacher learning (cf. Buehl & Fives, 2009, p. 397; Chróinín & O'Sullivan, 2014). When the teachers talk about practice in general or practice teaching specifically, five different functions of practice can be identified. These include practice as authentic experience, practice as extended experience, practice as opportunities for active engagement and application of theory, practice as observation and practice as a context for knowledge generation and professional development.

First of all, practice teaching is seen to involve *opportunities to learn from authentic experiences*. On the one hand, the teachers express they want to see what it is like to be in a classroom and to be a teacher. In other words, they want to learn what it *feels* like to be a teacher (cf. Feiman-Nemser, 2008). For this purpose, teaching practice provides an affectively complex learning environment (Kolb, 1984) where STs can grasp and experience events directly, through their senses, as well as through their minds (Kolb, 1984; cf. Jarvis, 2004). On the other hand, the teachers express that authentic experiences help prepare them for the job ahead. Indeed, authentic learning environments are complex (cf. Schön, 1987) as different elements interact in intricate ways and unless you have had first-hand experience of such environments during TE, you may have difficulties dealing with this complexity as an NQT. This is an issue highlighted in Christine's story. In phase 3, she is concerned with the fact that TE did not provide authentic experiences, which meant that even if she had learnt how to plan lessons during TE, she had not learnt to plan for a situation involving twenty lessons a week plus a fair amount of additional tasks.

¹⁰⁰ I use the term *practice* in a broad sense here, referring to opportunities of learning in, through and from practice. Similarly, the term *theory* is used in a broad sense, in reference to various forms of formalised sources of knowledge.

To expand on Bransford et al.'s (2005, see p. 16 in this document) metaphor of teacher learning as 'learning to drive a car', even if you have isolated skills and know how to turn a wheel, shift a gear or step on the brake pedal, it does not mean that you will automatically be able to actually drive a car.

Secondly, the teachers highlight *the role of extended experience*, as they see it as an important means of developing routine and becoming habituated. In other words, the *amount* of experience is seen to be an important element. The literature highlights that there is a significant difference between length of experience and quality of experience (Day & Gu, 2010; Shulman, 2004) and there is always a possibility that student teachers do not necessarily recognise this difference. At the same time, the results show that learning from theory but also learning from experience can be difficult unless you have sufficient experience and a sufficiently comprehensive frame of reference to fall back on. As Bengtsson (1993) points out, the learner needs to be able to "recognize himself and his practice in the theoretical knowledge about it" (p. 6). Furthermore, as Brookfield (1983) points out, an important prerequisite for learning from experiences is that a certain amount of repetition is involved, to allow you to see the contrasts and similarities between situations, which was also an aspect pointed out by the participants.

Thirdly, the teachers appreciate opportunities to practise and develop skills through external active engagement (cf. Kolb, 1984). In some cases, the skills may have been learnt in a theoretical context and through enactment the teachers express that they learn by applying theory into practice, in keeping with what Richards (2010) refers to as *the application of theory*. As Kolb (1984) points out, knowledge development is furthered as you transform what you have grasped or understood into physical action. Along these lines, Christine explains that her awareness of planning was heightened when she had to do it herself in practice. Enactment can also be a means by which the distance between theory and practice can be eliminated (Bengtsson, 1993). This is highlighted in Christine's story in phase 3, where she expresses that she would have liked to learn more about parental contacts during TE. When prompted, she elaborates and explains that just being told about it during lectures was not sufficient and she would have liked opportunities to apply this knowledge in a simulated setting.

Next, the teachers also recognise that the practice context can offer opportunities for observation. Whereas the previous two functions highlight the practice context as a behavioural environment, where knowledge and skills are actively applied, this view recognises that the practice context can also be a perceptual environment, where observation and understanding is in focus (cf. Kolb, 1984). Thus, Christine expresses

appreciation for opportunities to observe others teaching, as she felt that this offered her food for thought and new perspectives on herself and her own teaching.

Apart from the abovementioned functions, the literature also highlights the role of practice when it comes to generating theory from practice (cf. Richards's (2010) concept *theorizing of practice*) and developing as a professional (cf. Kansanen et al., 2000; Jyrhämä, 2006). These two aims are combined in the perspective *learning as inquiry* (see Chapter 2.1.2, p.17), which is an approach strongly grounded in practice (cf. Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) and including activities such as reflection, identifying patterns, employing and connecting various knowledge domains and evaluating and choosing among possible alternatives in order to reach an explanation and/or a plan for action. As the results show, the teachers gradually, by phase 2, become more aware of the role of reflection in teacher learning. This includes reflection on one's own actions to improve performance (cf. *Self-evaluation*) as well as reflection on one's own learning process, with the aim of enhancing one's own learning (cf. *Managing the learning process*). Still, apart from this, very few teachers report a more complex, research- or inquiry-oriented view towards learning in a practice setting. A few examples can be found in connection to the sub-theme *Self-directed learning*, where the teachers report that they deal with problematic aspects of practice by identifying the "problem", by reflecting on options and determining what to do and finally by evaluating and monitoring the progression and the outcome(s) of the process. Still, all of these examples relate to workplace learning, which raises the question as to why these forms of learning are not recognised in connection to teacher education.

There are several possible explanations as to why more autonomous, self-directed learning processes are not associated with learning in TE and specifically with learning in relation to teaching practice. For one thing, more complex learning processes require more time, and it is possible that the short duration of a TE programme is not conducive to these forms of learning. If you only stay in one class for a maximum period of a week or two, there may not be sufficient opportunity to identify problematic repetitive patterns and even less time to develop and implement a plan for dealing with these aspects. Secondly, it is possible that student teachers do not have sufficient experience and/or that they are not developmentally ready to be able to engage in more complex forms of learning during TE. As Berliner (1988, 1995) stipulates, novices may have troubles discriminating between elements in a complex situation, which could make it difficult for them to identify specific aspects in need of development. Still, this should not be an insurmountable obstacle, seeing that supervisors are constantly present to guide the student teachers in this respect. A third explanation, which was also suggested above, is that STs do not associate

such forms of learning with TE, but rely on their supervisors to evaluate their performance and tell them what to develop and in what manner.

Whereas the teachers' collective views regarding the role of practice in teacher learning are relatively broad, their views regarding the role of theory have a much more narrow scope. The results related to the theme *Mediated experience* show that the teachers appreciate theoretical elements that are "concrete" and "practical", in other words, elements that they can connect to and directly apply in their everyday work as teachers. Seeing that the teachers' views of the job before and directly after TE are largely focused on activities connected to the classroom context, it is not surprising that the teachers find methodologically oriented courses useful, since that kind of content matches with their views of the profession.

In accordance with the technical approach, the teachers thus see themselves primarily as knowledge users and they expect TE to provide them with expert knowledge that they can apply in practice. This view of theory is consistent with Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) concept *knowledge-for-practice*. However, the literature also highlights the role of theory as a tool for understanding and analysing practice or as a tool for knowledge generation in accordance with Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) concept *knowledge-of-practice*. According to this view, knowledge is generated when practice contexts are used for "intentional investigation" and formalised bodies of knowledge are used as "generative material for interrogation and interpretation" (p. 250). Mary is thinking along these lines in phase 2¹⁰¹, when she uses a theoretical concept (the inductive approach) to analyse and inform her teaching, but apart from this, very little attention is afforded these latter functions of theory.

Even as the teachers' views of the profession evolve and we see them struggling with coming to terms with the complexity of the job and the tensions resulting from this, they still want more practical tips (Melissa) along with more authentic experiences and opportunities for practical action (Christine). Notably, it is not recognised that theory could provide a tool for understanding and analysing practice. Instead, the teachers prefer input of a more immediate, concrete and functional nature that they can use 'on the spot'. Apparently, immediate needs must be met first and the teachers know that as part of their training (or their job for that matter), they are going to be teaching classes, regardless of whether they feel sufficiently prepared or not. In these cases it is understandable that a 'quick fix' is of more immediate relevance and value compared to more generalised theoretical input that may enhance understanding but cannot be applied as such (cf. Chróinin & O'Sullivan,

¹⁰¹ See p. 132.

2014, p. 457). When Melissa starts working after TE, she was not prepared for having to deal with unruly classes. She considers relations to pupils a fundamental part of her job and functioning relations a prerequisite for teaching and learning. Thus coming to terms with this issue becomes a top priority for her, as it essentially keeps her from doing her job. Urgent needs call for urgent measures and she looks for concrete, practical tips to help her get back on track.

Other studies have indicated that with growing experience the teachers' views towards theory or more formalised bodies of knowledge become more positive (Flores, 2005; Knight, 2015). Even if such a development could not be noted in this study, there are indications that the role of theory may become more important with growing experience. Thus, in phase 3, the teachers report learning opportunities involving delayed transfer. In other words, with more experience, the teachers are able to connect to and apply elements encountered during TE in their current context, even if they had not fully understood or even considered these elements to be relevant at the time. Hence, in her struggles to find better ways of managing unruly classes, Melissa recalls that the role of aims had been stressed during TE. She connects this to her current dilemma and considers that she probably needs to communicate her expectations more clearly to the pupils in order to get their respect, and for this she needs clearly stipulated aims. Similar findings of a so-called *sleeper effect* have also been reported in other studies (Brouwer & Korthagen, 2005; Featherstone, 1993).

Thus, the results indicate that the role of more abstract, generalised and indirect theories is to a large extent unclear for the teachers, as they found it hard to connect these elements and apply them to their work as teachers. In some cases, theory and practice are viewed as equally important but parallel, mutually unrelated forms of learning (cf. Linda 2, TE, p. 131). The results thus highlight a need to constantly attend to how elements of theory and practice are linked in TE and beyond. Zeichner (2010) comes to a similar conclusion, as he identifies the relationship between campus-based (theoretical) elements and school-based experiences as an essential a key factor for making TE programme experiences relevant for student teachers. In addition to this, specific efforts may be needed in order to widen student teachers' awareness of the various functions of theory and practice in teacher learning.

6.5 Views relating to learning at the workplace

6.5.1 From vague towards more diverse and complex views: autonomy versus dependency

In line with the views of learning in connection to teacher education, the teachers' views regarding learning at the workplace evolve and become more diverse and complex with time. However, whereas the expectations of learning in an educational context are relatively specific from the start, the views regarding teacher learning outside the educational context are much more vague and unproblematised. For the most part, teacher learning is seen to occur through experience and the role of extended experience is highlighted as expertise is seen to develop over time as a result of accumulated experience and by doing the job (see Figure 16 below). To some extent, it is also recognised that teacher learning is a matter of self-development, as it is stressed that teachers need to be prepared to develop themselves in order to keep up-to-date.

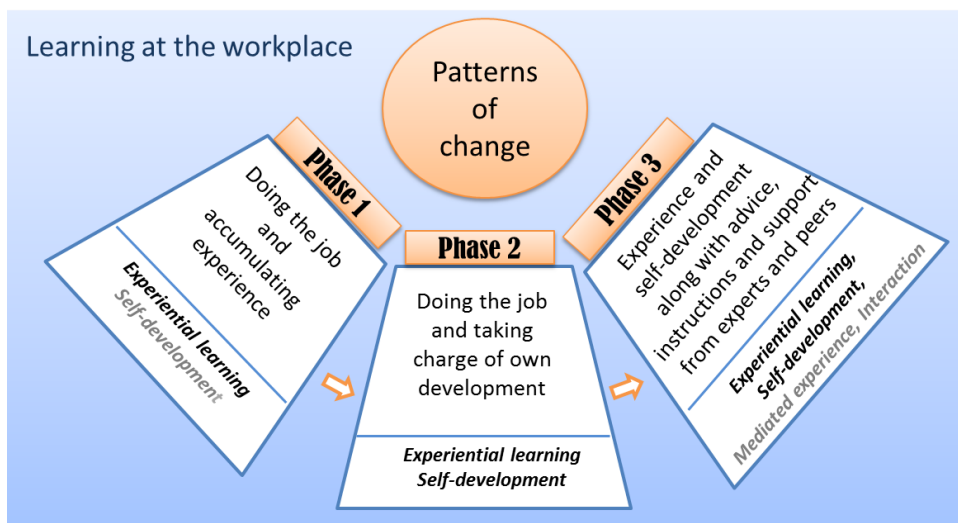


Figure 16. Evolving cognitions of workplace learning.

As Figure 16 illustrates, the most focus throughout all three phases is afforded learning opportunities connected with *Experiential learning* and *Self-development*. In this sense, the result mirrors that of other studies, where teachers largely view teacher learning as an individual endeavour (cf. Flores, 2005; Opfer et al., 2011)

where you learn through experience (cf. Avalos & Aylwin, 2007). Teacher education does not seem to significantly alter the teachers' views in this respect and it is not until phase 3, where a development of more diverse views can be noted.

Alongside the view of teacher learning as an individual endeavour largely grounded in practice, a parallel development of views emerge in phase 3, as learning opportunities connected to *Mediated experience* and *Interaction* come into focus (see Figure 16 above). Faced with new challenges in a new context, the teachers look to colleagues and experts for both professional advice and emotional support (cf. Anderberg, 2008). This parallel development may seem contradictory at first glance. On the one hand, the views reflect that the teachers become more self-directed and autonomous, in accordance with the progression outlined in Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning (cf. Chapter 2.1.3, p. 31) but on the other hand, they become less self-reliant and more other-directed, to some extent reflecting the more dependent, transmission-oriented views expressed in phase 1 in relation to learning in teacher education.

Melissa's story illustrates the development towards greater autonomy and self-directedness. She highlights the role of experiences she has had in her classroom, with her pupils. The problems she encounters, she more or less handles on her own. Thus, when she sees a need for change and development, she reflects on her situation, finds a book with advice she can use and looks back and transfers advice given to her during teacher education to her present situation. At the same time, she also expresses that she would have wanted more support and help from teacher education, from the principal at the school or from a formally appointed mentor, which was not a form of support available in her case. In a sense then, this greater autonomy is not necessarily a matter of choice and we can see how the learning context affects what opportunities that are available. This finding is consistent with the findings reported in other studies involving NQTs and as Flores (2005) and Avalos and Aylwin (2007) point out, when there is no available informal or formal support, the teachers have no other choice but to learn on their own.

Christine's story illustrates the other side of the coin, as her views evolve from being largely focused on self-development in phases 1 and 2, towards a much greater emphasis on social but also mediated forms of learning in phase 3. In phase 3, she thus assigns great importance to informal support and guidance from experienced teachers but also to formal and informal opportunities for sharing experiences with peers. Furthermore, she voices expectations that CPD-courses can provide her with information and necessary knowledge regarding reforms and advances within the field of teaching. She was not appointed a formal mentor but would have appreciated

having a designated person to turn to both for support and guidance but also to help her become socialised into the culture of the school. Christine's problems are not so much focused around the classroom as she is more occupied with concerns relating to *Managing the job*, such as balancing a heavy workload and finding her role as a teacher. She has a hard time coming to terms with what is expected of her and what the job actually involves, and this places her in a position where she becomes more dependent on the help of others. The situation in which she is found is very common among NQTs (cf. Aspfors, Bendtsen & Hansén, 2011; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Grosemans et al., 2015) and as Fullan (1998) points out, dependency is created in conditions when an individual is met with an overload of tasks and unclear and disjointed demands. This description fits well with how Christine depicts her situation in phase 3.

Clearly, colleagues can play an important role in providing both emotional and professional support and guidance for NQTs but at the same time it is somewhat disconcerting that the initial encounters with the workplace seem to make teachers less self-reliant and more other-directed. Very few NQTs express that cooperation with their more experienced colleagues can be beneficial to both parties and that they themselves also have something to contribute in this respect, instead of just placing themselves at the receiving end of collaborative processes. Indeed, NQTs may not be as experienced as their colleagues but instead they may have other qualities that make them valuable members of a learning community. For one thing, their outside perspective may prove valuable input when it comes to identifying latent or covert problems within a working community (cf. Andersson, 2005, p. 53) or they may be able to provide new perspectives and updates regarding the latest research in the field. While support for NQTs is essential, it must be of a kind that is not counterproductive and make them less self-reliant.

Summary

When it comes to the teachers' views of the profession, we could note that different aspects of the job are in focus at different times. From an initial focus on teaching in the classroom, aspects of the job relating to the broader school and societal arenas gradually come into focus along with a greater focus on internal aspects of the job. Thus, the views reflect that a teacher has to be able to function on external as well as internal arenas.

The teachers' views of the profession also evolve from more fragmented and narrow towards increasingly interconnected and tensional views, as the teachers develop and get more experience of the job. The vast increase in attention afforded aspects relating to *Managing the job*, and in particular aspects in relation to *Building a*

teacher identity in phase 3, reflects that being a teacher is an ongoing learning process involving both personal and professional development.

Besides the general tendencies described above, individual views and preferences were also notable. Thus, catering for the evolving, diversified needs and interests of teachers during the early phases of professional learning, necessitates an approach that is both flexible and adaptable.

When it comes to the teachers' views of teacher learning, practical, experiential forms of learning are highlighted throughout all three phases. Whereas practical experiences are seen as an important key to teacher learning, collaborative but also more autonomous forms of learning are afforded less emphasis. Furthermore, the role of theory is largely downplayed and the views regarding the functions of theory relatively narrow. The results thus highlight a need for expanding and broadening (student) teachers' views of teacher learning but also their views regarding the functions of different learning opportunities.

The teachers express somewhat different expectations regarding learning in TE and learning at the workplace. Generally, learning in TE is more associated with mediated learning and learning from experts and especially initially, the views tend to be more transmission-oriented. Then again, learning at the workplace is largely seen as an individual endeavour, until phase 3 where colleagues are seen to have important functions when it comes to providing fellowship as well as emotional and professional support. To some extent, the transmission-oriented views resurface in relation to workplace learning in phase 3 and it seems that in situations when the learning context and/or content is unfamiliar, the teachers tend to become more other-directed, relying on others telling them what to do. The result warrants a need for identifying ways of empowering teachers during the transition from university to school.

7 Conclusions

In the previous chapter, the main findings of the study were discussed. In light of the results of the study, a number of implications were drawn when it comes to promoting and supporting teachers' professional development during the early stages of professional learning. In the first part of this concluding section I will somewhat expand on and concretise the interpretations and conclusions drawn based on the results. In other words, what are the implications of the current study? In the second part of this chapter, I will briefly discuss the methodological approach used and give some suggestions for further research.

7.1 Implications of the study

In accordance with the results, teacher learning can be described as a continuous, evolving process, including a variety of learning activities that can be combined in different ways. Even if the model of teacher learning made up of seven binary pairs presented in the theoretical section (see chapter 2.1.2), can be a useful heuristic for identifying various ways in which teacher learning can be perceived, it does not provide a holistic, integrated picture of the processes involved. If the purpose is to empower prospective teachers and provide them with more control over their learning processes by broadening their perspectives and heightening their awareness of the processes involved (cf. Zeichner & Gore, 1990), a more inclusive model is needed that brings together, rather than separates, different learning opportunities. In keeping with this, Zeichner (2010) rejects the use of binaries such as theory and practice and envisions the creation of so-called *hybrid spaces* or *hybrid practices*, where there is non-hierarchical interplay between academic-, practitioner-, and community-derived sources of knowledge (cf. Zeichner, 2010, p. 92).

Thus, by drawing together and combining the results of the study with salient elements of the theory, a more coherent and dynamic model was constructed (see Figure 17 below). The basic idea of the model is to illustrate a way of looking at professional development as a continuous process, where constituent elements can be drawn together in various ways to enhance learning.

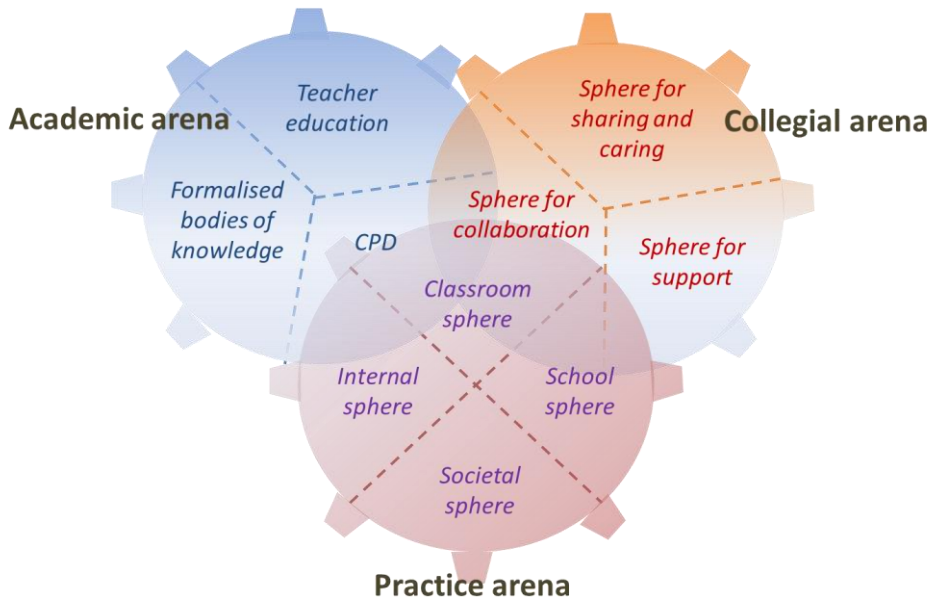


Figure 17. Arenas for professional development.

The model identifies three basic arenas for professional development. The arenas can be understood as contexts where and through which development occurs through the employment of (a combination of) different learning activities. Each arena is further divided into smaller spheres or parts, separated by dotted lines to signify that the division is not carved in stone. In other words, the separate spheres are identifiable analytical entities but since they are essentially interconnected, it may not always be possible or even desirable to separate them in reality. Indeed, as reflected in connection to the sub-theme *Transfer* (see p. 130 ff), learning can involve connecting between and drawing on experiences from different contexts.

The *Practice arena* is placed in the middle to signify its pivotal role in the teacher learning process, as reflected in this study and in the literature at large (see e.g. Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Grossman, Hammerness & McDonald, 2009). On this arena, learning occurs while practising the profession. It consists of a number of external, spheres, including *the classroom*, *the school* and *the societal spheres*, as well as an *internal sphere*, which is not spatially distinguishable, but includes what I have previously identified as the internal aspects of the job (cf. the theme *Managing the*

job in chapter 5.2.3). As the results of the current study show, the classroom is seen as an important sphere for development during the early phases of professional learning. Additionally, for the new teacher, development is very much focused on the internal sphere, as the results reflect that much effort is devoted to building a teacher identity and handling the work situation.

The *Academic arena* includes three spheres. Here I have separated the two formal learning contexts of initial *teacher education* and *CPD* opportunities connected to workplace learning. As the results show, different constraints and affordances are associated with the different learning contexts, but the fact that TE and CPD are both included within the same arena illustrates that teacher learning is a continuous, evolving, long-term process. As the results indicate, the effects of TE is not confounded to a specific time and place but rather issues encountered during TE may inform one's understanding at a much later time (delayed transfer). The third sphere connected to the *Academic arena* is made up of *formalised bodies of knowledge* and here learning occurs through formal or non-formal (intentional) engagement with academic knowledge, for instance in the form of research findings and theoretical models or ideas. Even if formalised bodies of knowledge can be seen to be included in the formal learning contexts of TE and CPD, they are here separated to signify that teachers can engage with formalised bodies of knowledge outside formal learning contexts as well.

On the *Collegial arena*, learning and development occur in interaction with peers and colleagues. To illustrate the different functions of collegial interaction identified in the study, the arena is constituted of three separate parts: a *sphere for sharing and caring*, a *sphere for support* and a *sphere for collaboration*. The *sphere for sharing and caring* focuses on the emotional needs for fellowship and belonging involved in teacher learning. Within the *sphere for support*, the interaction is in the form of professional and personal support and guidance. It is difficult and perhaps even unnecessary and counter-productive to separate between support for professional and personal development as these are so intricately connected. Instead, a useful distinction is made by Janssens and Kelchtermans (1997), who propose a twofold support system for new teachers. *Working support* focuses on the job performance of the beginning teachers and involves support in terms of lesson preparation, collecting materials, becoming familiar with rules and practices in the school etc. *Learning support*, on the other hand, focuses on the cognitive processes involved in being and becoming a teacher, for instance the processes identified in connection to the sub-theme *Building a teacher identity* in this study (chapter 5.2.3, p. 178). Finally, the *sphere for collaboration* focuses on collegial cooperation. Within this sphere,

knowledge is co-constructed in communities of practice for the benefit of all participants.

Different learning activities are not confined to specific learning arenas or spheres but depending on where they are used, they may have different functions. For instance, depending on in which of the collegial spheres we are acting, interaction can have different functions as the teacher can interact with colleagues as means of getting support and help, in order to fill a need for belonging and fellowship, or in order to promote collective learning. Indeed, interaction can be a form of learning on the other two arenas as well. On the *Practice arena*, the teacher interacts with the learning environment and the pupils within that environment. On the *Academic arena*, there may be interaction between the teacher, on the one hand, and supervisors, lecturers or various sources of academic knowledge (e.g. books, journals etc.), on the other hand.

In the model, the three arenas for professional development are placed close to one another so that they partially overlap. Even if learning may occur on only one arena, a combination of different arenas constitutes a more comprehensive and versatile learning opportunity (cf. Kolb's, 1984, experiential learning cycle, p. 22 ff. in this work). Thus, a teacher who learns through trial and error within the confines of her own classroom (in the *classroom sphere*) and by reflecting on those experiences (in the *internal sphere*) only uses learning opportunities connected to the *Practice arena*. However, if the teacher, as illustrated in Melissa's narrative, seeks help from formalised bodies of knowledge and connects to knowledge acquired during TE, the *Academic arena* is also included. Alternatively, as was exemplified in Christine's narrative, the teacher may turn to the *Collegial arena*, when her own efforts on the *Practice arena* fall short. For Christine's particular predicament, the *sphere for support* as well as the *sphere for sharing and caring* were seen to be of particular importance.

Consequently, if our aim is to create and enable versatile and rich learning opportunities, we should consider approaches that fall within the intersections of the model. One example of such an approach is action research informed approaches, which fit right into the intersection at the very centre of the model. In educational settings, action research is often associated with CPD (cf. Papastephanou, 2014; Rönnerman & Forsman, 2011), but it has also been applied within teacher education, for example within the framework of a Nordic master's programme in action research (see e.g. Rönnerman, Salo, Moksnes Furu, Lund, Olin & Jakhelln, 2015). In action research, the practice context is used as a starting point (the *Practice arena*). In order to develop one's practice and expand one's understanding of a particular

phenomenon or problem encountered, relevant research and theory is sought after and applied (the *Academic arena*), new approaches are tested, evaluated and reflected upon in an iterative process in connection to the theory (the *Practice arena* and the *Academic arena*). Additionally, there is often a collaborative dimension (the *Collegial arena*), where learners work together on the same project or function as sounding boards or critical friends (cf. Rönnerman et al. 2015). Such an approach has many potential benefits and addresses many of the concerns raised in this study. First of all, the approach links theory and practice, as theory is used to understand and inform practice. In this way, theory becomes a tool for learning and development, at the same time as it automatically becomes linked to the current professional concerns of the teachers (cf. Eraut, 1994, p. 43). Secondly, it includes both collaborative and autonomous forms of learning. Teachers themselves choose what they want to focus on and then design a model for implementation in dialogue with research, theory, colleagues, and/or educators. Finally, the approach has the potential to enhance the empowerment of teachers. According to Short, Greer and Melvin (1994), a characteristic of empowered individuals is that they “believe they have the skills and knowledge to act on a situation and improve it” (p. 38). In line with this, action research provides a means of resolving one’s own problems, taking charge of one’s own development and using one’s own skills and competences while developing new ones. As experiences of success in meeting new challenges have been seen to promote empowerment (Eraut, 2004, p. 269), it is also important that (student) teachers are offered sufficient support and encouragement during this process, in order to minimise the risk of failure.

At the same time, the results of this study also serve to remind us of the fact that views evolve and needs change. Initial teacher education thus has to strike a balance between meeting both immediate and long-term needs of student teachers, and as new interests and needs continuously arise, some aspects are perhaps better addressed as part of CPD programmes. For these reasons, we can never presume that specific approaches can provide the ultimate solution for every individual, in every situation and in every phase of professional learning (cf. Anderson & Olesen, 2006, p. 371). Teacher learning is, and needs to be, a life-long as well as a life-wide learning process (cf. chapter 1.1). From time to time, our approaches need to be evaluated and depending on the outcome, adjustments may have to be made and/or new approaches introduced. In other words, stagnation is never an option; we have to keep turning the wheels.

7.2 Methodological discussion and suggestions for further research

In chapter 4.4, I critically examined and discussed the methodological procedures used during data collection and interpretation. In this chapter, I will focus on more overarching issues related to methodology. Have the aims of the study been met? How should the results of the study be understood and what is the applicability and utility of the results?

As a means of striving to deepen the understanding of the process of becoming a teacher, my aim was to describe the evolving cognitions of the participants regarding their views about teacher learning as well as their views of the teaching profession. Can we then assume that the result gives an accurate picture of the teachers' cognitions?

First of all, it has to be stated that there are naturally advantages and drawbacks to any method or approach chosen. Neither are there any direct means by which other people's cognitions can be extracted, they have to be deduced from what is said or done. I chose narrative essays and semi-structured interviews as data collection methods, thus relying on how the participants chose to express their views. I see no reason to doubt that the statements made by the participants were reflective of their cognitions at that particular time, in that particular context. Even if it is possible that there might be aspects of the job or learning opportunities that they did not come to think of at the time, I believe that the statements reflected those aspects that for reason or other were particularly salient at the time of data collection.

The open, qualitative approach chosen in this study, where the participants were free to formulate their own responses and decide what to bring up in relation to the different themes, allowed for a fine-tuning and differentiation of the expressed views that would not have been possible if participants had been asked to evaluate or choose between a fixed set of alternatives. The goal of a hermeneutic phenomenological analysis is a thick description of the phenomena under study, which means that the description should capture the perspective of the participants "in its fullest and richest complexity" (Cohen, Kahn & Steeves, 2000, p. 72). The iterative process of data analysis as well as the different stages of data analysis enabled such a thick description and this is also reflected in the different modes of presentation. The scope and variety of meanings of the two phenomena are presented in two descriptive frameworks. Furthermore, the evolving views are described on a group level, illustrating and contrasting the collective views

representing the different phases, as well as on an individual level, where the narrative form allows for a contextualisation of the views.

When it comes to the question of how the results should be understood, it is important to remember that the phenomenon under study is the subjective cognitions of the teachers. In accordance with the qualitative research tradition, the aim is to elucidate how the participants view the phenomena and what meanings they attach to them (cf. e.g. Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This means that the result tells us what the teachers consider to be important learning opportunities and salient aspects of the job. No claims can be made as to whether the learning opportunities mentioned are, in fact, effective or not, or whether there might have been other forms of learning involved that, for reason or other, were not recognised by the participants (cf. tacit knowledge). These issues fall beyond the scope of this study but could provide interesting questions for further studies.

What is more, a small-scale qualitative study carried out in a specific context cannot make claims about the generalisability of its findings. The results of a research process are always dependent on the perspectives chosen. However, I have strived to openly account for my own role in the research process, for the measures taken and considerations made throughout the process, from data collection through to data analysis, interpretation and reporting. I have strived to be open and to provide sufficient detail in order to enable the reader to make informed decisions about the transferability of the results to other contexts, as well as about the trustworthiness and validity of the findings.

Furthermore, in keeping with hermeneutic tradition, the outcome is not to be viewed as a static, ultimate truth but rather as an alternative understanding against which other understandings can be mirrored. This is where I feel the greatest contribution of this study can be found, as the results provide perspectives on teacher learning and the teaching profession, against which others (student teachers, teacher educators, and researchers) can mirror and compare their views, as a means of broadening their understanding.

When designing and carrying out a study, certain perspectives are necessarily foregrounded, whereas others are left out or fall into the background. From this follows that even if the study offers an alternative way of perceiving the phenomena in question, it is necessarily limited. However, these limitations can offer interesting openings for further research and I conclude with a few suggestions for further research.

All the participants in this study were female, reflecting the fact that at the time of the intervention, we happened to have a cohort of students who were female. This is not an entirely uncommon situation, if I look at the cohorts of prospective language teachers I have had the privilege to teach over the years. Still, there are (prospective) language teachers who are male, and it could be interesting to investigate whether there are gender specific differences in terms of how the teacher's job and teacher learning are viewed.

In this study, the participants were all (future) language teachers. Since I did not include any other groups of subject teachers, I cannot tell to what extent the cognitions reported are specific only to language teachers. Previous research (e.g. Bramald et al., 1995) has indicated that views about teaching and learning may differ between different groups of teachers. Still, it is difficult to say whether the difference is due to a difference in instructional methods to which students are exposed or whether differences are connected to their subject of expertise. If one were to investigate this perspective, it would therefore be wise to include not only different groups of subject teachers but also to contrast their views with the views of their educators.

Finally, it would be interesting to continue on the journey I have started. How do teachers' cognitions evolve after the initial workplace encounters? What learning opportunities are considered important then and what aspects of the job are seen as central?

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Appendix 1: Instructions for the narrative essay in phase 1

Vasa, xx.xx.xxxx

Bästa språkläroarstuderande!

Du har anmält att du kommer att delta i Inledande Praktik i Vasa i augusti. Praktikperioden består bl.a. av föreläsningar och övningar i pedagogik och ämnesdidaktik, auskultering och planering & utförande av kompanjonlektioner.

Vi blir en förhållandevis stor grupp i främmande språk och finska i år och som lärare i ämnesdidaktik ser jag fram emot många intressanta diskussioner!

Även om ni alla har det gemensamma målet att ni tänker bli språklärare så tror jag ändå att det kan finnas rätt stora skillnader mellan er både när det gäller bakgrund, erfarenheter och personlighet. T.ex. har några av er redan läst en del pedagogik medan andra i detta skede ännu har allt framför sig. Några har längre eller kortare erfarenhet av att jobba som lärare, andra har kanske ännu ingen erfarenhet. Gemensamt är i alla fall att alla har någon slags erfarenhet av skolvärden utifrån elev- och/eller lärarperspektiv. Eftersom ni alla bär med er väldigt olika erfarenheter, kunskaper, insikter och förväntningar och mycket av det ni tar med er till utbildningen kanske är sådant ni inte närmare reflekterat över så skulle jag önska att ni tog er tid att skriva ner en reflektion kring era erfarenheter av och uppfattningar om ert kommande yrke. Denna text kommer vi sedan att använda som underlag för diskussion inom Inledande praktiken men vi kommer också att återvända till den senare i utbildningen. Med er tillåtelse planerar jag också att kunna använda berättelserna i min forskning, men mer om det när vi träffas i höst.

Du ska alltså skriva en berättande text där du fritt reflekterar kring följande punkter och frågeställningar. Det finns inga speciella krav på berättelsens längd, i vilken ordning eller omfattning du reflekterar kring de enskilda punkterna.

- 1) Bakgrund (namn, födelseår, eventuella tidigare studier, studieämne(n), hittills avlagda eller påbörjade studier i pedagogik, erfarenhet av lärararbete, varför du valt att bli lärare, finns/har det funnits alternativ till läraryrket?)
- 2) Egna minnen från språkundervisningen i skolan (Hur vill du beskriva språkundervisningen du fått? Vilka positiva/negativa erfarenheter har du?).
- 3) Inläroning och undervisning (Hur lär man sig språk? Vad är bra språkundervisning enligt dig? Vad vill du gärna betona i din undervisning?)

- 4) Lärarens arbete (vad ingår enligt din uppfattning, vad är viktigast?)
- 5) Lärarens kompetens (Vad behöver en lärare kunna? Vad behöver en *språklärare* kunna? Hur lär man sig detta?)
- 6) Dina förväntningar på lärarutbildningen.

Din text behöver vara klar senast onsdagen den xx.xx. Skicka texten till mbendtse@abo.fi. Du behöver också skriva ut ett eget exemplar som du tar med till det första tillfället i ämnesdidaktik, dvs. onsdag xx.xx kl. 12.15. Om du har frågor går det bra att kontakta mig på ovanstående e-postadress.

Med önskan om en solig och skön sommar innan vi träffas i höst,

Marina Bendtsen (Universitetslärare i främmande språkens didaktik)

Appendix 2: Interview guide phase 2

Intervjuguide fas 2

Några frågor om hur du ser på det att vara lärare. En del har du delvis besvarat tidigare men jag vill veta hur du ser det idag.

Berätta:

1. Om du tänker på den lärarutbildning du nu har bakom dig: vad tänker du på då?
 - Vad tar med dig när du går vidare?
 - Var det något du upplevde speciellt givande?
2. Var ser du dig själv om 10 år? Vad jobbar du med?
3. Skolans roll i dagens samhälle?
4. Den enskilda lärarens roll?
 - **Språk** lärarens roll?
5. Beskriv lärarens arbete åt någon oinsatt: Vad allt hör dit?
 - Något som du tycker är viktigare än det andra?
6. Vad behöver en språklärare kunna?
(förhållandet ämneskunskap & pedagogik/didaktik?)
7. Hur blir man lärare?
 - Något man är eller något man lär sig?
 - Hur kan man lära sig?

Precisera! Varför?

Appendix 3: Interview guide phase 3

Intervjuguide fas 3

1. Berätta kort om vad du jobbat med efter utbildningen.
 - var har du jobbat? hur länge?
2. Hur blev du emottagen på din första arbetsplats?
3. Hur skulle du beskriva arbetsklimatet på din(a) arbetsplats(er)?
4. Erfarenheter av yrket hittills:
 - något som förvånade/övertäckade/ngt du inte förväntat dig?
 - vilka är de positiva sidorna med ditt jobb?
 - negativa sidorna med jobbet?
5. Beskriv läraryrket.
 - vad gör en lärare?
 - vilka uppgifter har man?
 - vad är viktigast?
6. Skolans roll i dagens samhälle?
7. Din roll som lärare och språklärare?
8. Vilka kompetenser behöver en lärare/språklärare idag?
9. Hur skulle du beskriva din utveckling som lärare efter utbildningen?
 - finns det någon/några händelser som du ser som viktiga i din utveckling som lärare?
 - finns det något du upplever att du inte behärskar ännu/som du behöver bli bättre på?
10. Utvärdera lärarutbildningen
 - vad har du haft nytta av?
 - något du saknat?
11. Vad ser du dig själv jobba med i framtiden?

Appendix 4: Letter of consent

Vasa xx.xx.xxxx

Bästa språklärlärostudorande

Vid sidan om mitt arbete på Pedagogiska Fakulteten och Vasa övningsskola håller jag på att skriva en doktorsavhandling där jag är intresserad av blivande och nyblivna lärares uppfattningar om lärarskap. Under ett par års tid kommer jag att samla in empiriskt material för min avhandling och därför vänder jag nu mig till dig med en förfrågan om du kan tänka dig att vara med i min undersökning. Den reflektion du skrev inför den Inledande Praktiken skulle utgöra den första delen i undersökningen och här ber jag om din tillåtelse att få använda det materialet i forskningssyfte. Jag planerar ytterligare två interventionsfaser, en i studiernas slutskede och en efter att personerna varit något år i arbetslivet.

All information jag får i samband med undersökningen kommer att behandlas konfidentiellt och jag strävar till att ingen enskild människa ska gå att identifiera. Även om vissa direkta citat kommer att förekomma ska dessa inte gå att koppla till en viss person och ditt namn, din hemort, var du jobbar osv. kommer inte att framgå.

Ifall du nu väljer att delta i undersökningen och av någon anledning senare önskar avbryta så är det din fulla rätt. Jag skulle inte tro att du kommer att uppleva en eventuell medverkan som betungande eftersom det rör sig om ett par intervjutillfällen där vi diskuterar sådant som en (blivande) lärare ändå funderar på. Snarare kan det vara så att när man får sätta ord på sina tankar och funderingar så kanske ett och annat faller på plats för en själv i processen.

Med vänliga hälsningar,

Marina Bendtsen, FM

Pedagogiska Fakulteten vån F4

Strandgatan 2

65100 Vasa

Jag godkänner att mina reflektioner som jag skrev inför den Inledande praktiken får användas av Marina Bendtsen i forskningssyfte.

Jag kan tänka mig ett fortsatt deltagande i undersökningen

Nej, jag önskar inte delta i undersökningen.

Datum: _____

Underskrift: _____

Namn förtydligat: _____

Marina Bendtsen

Becoming and being a language teacher

Evolving cognitions in the transition from student to teacher

The initial phases of professional learning, including the transition from teacher education into working life, have been identified as a highly influential period in terms of learning and development. This study focuses on how (prospective) teachers themselves view the processes involved in becoming and being a teacher and aims to contribute to the understanding of how teachers' professional development can be promoted and supported.

The empirical study was carried out in a Finland-Swedish context and explores the evolving cognitions of a cohort of prospective language teachers (N=20) as they progress through teacher education and into the workplace.

Four qualitatively different ways of perceiving teacher learning are identified, including experiential learning, mediated experience, interaction and self-development, whereas views relating to the teacher's job evolve around three central themes: teaching, handling out of class work and managing the job. With time and experience the views gradually become broader in scope but also more diversified, complex and interconnected.

The results highlight a need to attend to how elements of theory and practice are connected in teacher education, to broaden prospective teachers' views regarding different forms of learning and to heighten their awareness of the intricate processes involved.



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