Chapter 4
Partnerships Between Schools and Teacher Education Institutes

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Introduction

Society has developed into a complex system of organisations and interactions, therefore the demands on schools and schooling has increased and the need for professional teachers increased accordingly. 'The profession of teaching is becoming more and more complex. The demands placed on teachers are increasing. The environments in which they work are more and more challenging' (Commission of the European Community, 2007, p. 2).

With the recognition of teaching as a profession it has been acknowledged that all teachers require specialised training in order to develop the knowledge and competences necessary to take on teaching. As early as the end of the 1980s a growing dissatisfaction with 'teaching practice' culminated in a UNESCO report in which teacher preparation was regarded as 'insufficient, due to a lack of linkages between for instance subject matter and teaching processes, and preparation for diverse class and school situations'. Furthermore, 'the lack of training of cooperating teachers and the lack of credibility of college or university supervisors' was seen as a real problem (Down, Hogan & Madigan, 1995, p. 62). To address these problems teacher education institutes developed curricula based on the real problems student teacher need to learn to address in order to do their work in schools and classrooms (e.g. Bullough, 1997).

Two important concepts underlying these new forms of teacher education are school-based teacher education and professional development schools. In the next section we will elaborate on these two concepts. During the last twenty years these changes in the practice of educating teachers have resulted in partnerships between schools and teacher education institutes. There is a great variety in form and intensity of partnerships in and between countries. We present three examples in two different countries of partnerships between schools and teacher education institutes to illustrate school-based teacher education and professional development schools.

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Christopher Bezzina describes partnerships in Malta, in the tradition of the professional development school movement.

Corinne van Velzen discusses a partnership in the area of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The main objective of this partnership is to create a school-based teacher education curriculum, especially the school part.

Peter Lorist presents a partnership in the Utrecht area, in the Netherlands. Vocational education institutes cooperate with the institute for teacher education to assure that school development becomes strongly intertwined with school-based teacher education: a form of professional development schools.

In the final sections of this chapter we summarize some of the consequences for teacher educators involved in these partnerships and we discuss some research outcomes.

School-Based Teacher Education and Professional Development Schools

School-based teacher education is based on the assumptions that teacher education should be based on the real problems student teachers need to address in order to do their work in schools and classrooms (e.g. Bullough, 1997). Teaching is a very complex profession and formative in nature, one grows within the profession and hence through daily experiences. Becoming a teacher is not only a matter of getting access to a certain body of knowledge and acquiring adequate skills. Becoming a teacher is transformational and it is therefore, first and foremost, about developing one's own personal and professional identity. Such an identity can be obtained and enriched by taking part in school practices and in the daily life of teachers. Next to participation student teachers do need a form of formal education.

Thus, school-based teacher education in our view is only possible when schools and teacher education institutes collaborate intensively and recognise the strengths and possibilities each has to offer to the student teachers' learning. As a consequence, teacher educators are not only found in institutes for teacher education, but more and more in schools.

Within these partnerships student teachers can learn from theory and practice, but the question how to link theory and practice is still an important issue in school-based teacher education. Collaboration between schools and institutes in order to encourage school development and connect it with teacher education can be one avenue worth pursuing to address this challenge. This form of collaboration is known as collaborative school-based teacher education and it elaborates on the ideas of the professional development schools (Ten Dam & Blom, 2006).

Professional development schools are initially developed in the USA (Holmes Group, 1986). In professional development schools teacher education is embedded in the overall process of school development and professional development of all teachers. A professional development school is based on collaborative relationships

between teacher educators and teachers. It is a school in which not only student teachers are educated, but also a place where teacher educators and teachers can collaborate on research and development (Abdal-Haqq, 1998). All this is to take place within an organisational structure that encourages professional development and empowerment. Professional development schools have a number of characteristics, although not all of them are realised in each school or within each partnership between each school and teacher education institute. Here we present three of the main characteristics:

Congruent learning and developmental possibilities for all partners: Pupils, student teachers, experienced teachers, teacher educators, researchers and management. A professional development school is an ideal setting for beginning institute-based teacher educators to work alongside teachers and student teachers as they 'learn' to address practical issues from a theory-practice perspective.

Professional development: Teachers take on new roles and differentiated responsibilities involving goal setting, problem solving, decision making, student assessment, teacher preparation, scheduling and staff development. Collaborative inquiry into the teaching and learning processes is encouraged to increase the knowledge base of teachers and teacher educators who are involved in teacher education.

Curriculum development: Collaboration between partners is directed at improving the education and experiences of all pupils. Teachers who work in professional development schools are encouraged to experiment and take risks. Staff members are involved in trying out and evaluating new practices both in designing and mentoring learning processes as in organisational development.

Establishing Partnerships: Three Examples

Over the last years teacher education institutes and schools in several European countries have experimented with partnership models. They developed their own ways of collaboration imbedded in the structures and cultures of their own institutions. In this section we present three partnerships that are based on the ideas described in the former section and each partnership has found its own solutions for problems that are connected with complex and new forms of collaboration. The examples are based on experiences of the three authors of this chapter. Each author is involved in the partnership between his or her own teacher education institute and secondary schools. The authors are also interested in the development of the teachers in the schools who supervise the student teachers. In the examples these mentors are developing more and more into school-based teacher educators.

The first example is from Malta. The Faculty of Education at the University of Malta is collaborating with secondary schools in order to improve the learning opportunities for the student teachers in particular and to create learning opportunities

and innovation in the schools and the Faculty of Education in general. In these examples the teachers from the university are referred to as Faculty and the supervising teachers are called 'mentors'.

The second and third examples are from the Netherlands. Partnership between schools and teacher education institutes in the Netherlands generally emerged from situations comparable to those that generated school-based teacher education in other European countries, such as the UK. Apart from the necessity to improve the quality of teacher education, as described above, predicted shortage of teachers in the Netherlands, made it necessary to find alternative ways to educate teachers (Bolhuis, 2002). Teacher education institutes, schools and the Dutch government decided to join forces, and with government funds, a number of schemes for collaboration between schools and teacher education institutes were developed. It is important to stress that schools and teacher education institutes were, and are, autonomous in designing their partnership, and collaboration became an opportunity for schools and institutes to learn from each other and improve the quality of teachers and ensure the education a sufficient number of teachers for the future.

The first Dutch example is from a university-based teacher education institute in Amsterdam, which is part of CETAR (Centre for Educational Training, Assessment and Research) and part of VU University Amsterdam. This institute offers a one year post-Master course for a teaching diploma that allows teachers to work at all levels of secondary education, including senior general secondary education and pre-university education. CETAR has formed partnerships with six schools in and around Amsterdam. A characteristic of this partnership is the education of the supervising teachers, who developed from mentors to school-based teacher educators.

The third example is also from the Netherlands. The Archimedes Teacher Education Institute is part of Hogeschool Utrecht, a university for professional education in the centre of the Netherlands. This teacher education institute offers various bachelor and Master courses for teaching diplomas for all kinds of secondary education. The example focuses on courses for pre-vocational education and vocational education and elaborates on the process of increasing collaboration between Archimedes Teacher Education Institute and about 150 schools. Over the years these mentors in these schools have evolved into school-based teacher educators.

In both Dutch examples the teachers of the institutes are called institute-based teacher educators and the educators who work in school are called school-based teacher educators.

Faculty of Education, University of Malta

This section explores an initiative undertaken in the island of Malta by the Faculty of Education as part of the developments in the teacher education programme. It presents its move to establish partnerships with schools. This initiative is being undertaken so as to capitalize on the expertise of beginning teacher educators to

bridge the gap between university studies and the realities of school life. This aim, it is envisaged, will address at least three objectives:

- Improve the quality of the teaching practicum.
- Create a more 'realistic' and meaningful environment for varied forms of learning to take place.
- Nurture a culture of cooperation and collaboration between the Faculty of Education and schools on different aspects of teaching and learning.

The educational climate within the Faculty of Education has witnessed, especially over the last ten years as, 'A shift from individualism to social relationships' (Bezzina & Camilleri, 1998). The four-year B.Ed. (Hons.) programme is based on the following main features: 'Participation, consultation, support, collaboration, reflection, motivation, openness and empowerment'. Various initiatives have been undertaken (e.g. Tomorrow's Teachers Project, 1998) which have helped both the individuals members within the Faculty but also the Faculty's own identity and character to grow.

Our discourse, together with that of our students, has taught us over the years that we need to seriously address the dichotomy between what is learned at the university and the realities in schools. Our discourse, together with a growing literature in the field of professional development schools (Darling-Hammond, 1994) has highlighted the benefits that can be gained through school-centred initial teacher training. Therefore the main purpose of the Faculty of Education professional development school partnership will be simultaneous renewal of the teacher education programme at the university and teaching and learning in schools.

The setting up of a University-School Partnership offers us the possibility of exploring different ways of learning as a result of which there will be greater relevance to the teaching-learning context (Teitel, 1998). Professional development schools create opportunities, which allow us, as teacher educators, to take on different roles. It is within such a context that we expect beginning teacher educators to feel at their best. They have just left the classrooms and are therefore ideally positioned to establish the necessary philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings needed for any professional discourse to take place. Experience has shown us the need to work together with teachers in schools. On the one hand we need teachers at the school site who, through their diverse qualities, will be good models to prospective teachers. In this respect teachers can serve as mentors or cooperating teachers, both fulfilling different but complimentary roles. On the other hand, the university lecturer has the opportunity of getting closer to the school and establishing the ground for educational discourse to take place between the student teachers and teacher educators alike. Such opportunities do not only effect the personal and professional development of participants in the classroom context, but also address areas which go beyond the classroom and which effect school life in general.

The contribution by mentors should ascertain a partnership of teachers and faculty alike in at least the following areas: the education of student teachers, the development of school programmes and continued teacher formation. In this model, the student teacher learns from a mentor and a cooperating teacher by spending

quality time in the classroom observing the cooperating teacher perform tasks, asking questions and receiving assistance and gradually assuming increasing personal responsibilities as his/her knowledge and skills develop. The cooperating teacher initially models the task for the student teacher, and then provides coaching (i.e. instructions, feedback) as the student teacher attempts the task, fading the amount of coaching and turning over more and more responsibility for task completion to the student teachers as their skills develop.

Within the context of school site management, which the government is striving for, the recommended reforms for the B.Ed teacher education programme will help to generate the climate that has been lacking in our schools – that of schools being centres of enquiry and activity. In this way the dynamics of schooling takes on a different dimension – one that puts educators at the centre of a process which generates uses and personalizes knowledge. Through such a process schools can gradually become valuable agencies of research and analysis and indeed learning communities (e.g. Bezzina, 2006) critical for the success of current government decentralisation reforms.

Such a context would be unique in this regard. It will help us to create a systematic programme based on job-embedded learning. The transition from the realities of classroom life for the beginning teacher educator to one where he/she needs to handle theoretical paradigms can easily be embedded within the strategy of professional development schools. Such a context will help to challenge the theory-practice divide through the creation of a 'natural' environment for 'shared' learning to take place.

It is hoped that with the proper piloting of this scheme the different stakeholders will appreciate the benefits that are to be accrued for the whole profession. All this may sound overtly optimistic. We are slowly becoming aware that the setting-up, and more so, sustaining such institutions is not only a highly political issue, but also one demanding extremely high levels of commitment at the personal/collective levels, and the financial backing to sustain such efforts (Teitel, 1998). Indeed no easy task. In fact, such concerns have been already shared with the appropriate authorities and we do expect their response and backing (Bezzina, Borg, Camilleri, & Mallia, 2005).

Establishing Partnership in Amsterdam

In line with international developments the teacher education department of CETAR initiated a partnership with six schools for secondary education in and around Amsterdam to improve the education of the student teachers. The teacher education program is a one year post-master study in which student teachers develop professional competences. In this section we address the way the teacher education curriculum has become more school-based.

Since 1987 teachers for pre-university education are educated in specialized centres within Dutch universities. From the very beginning student teachers spent

half their time in schools. Although the collaboration between the institute and the schools has always been good this collaboration was mainly organisational: schools provided places for student practice and the teacher educators at the university were responsible for all the assignments students had to carry out in the schools and for the assessment of the student teachers. Figure 4.1 illustrates the relation and responsibilities between school and institute.

In 1999 we, schools and the teacher education institute together, initiated a training program for mentors at the university in order to improve the quality of mentoring within schools. Twelve subject teachers from six different secondary schools were involved. These twelve teachers had some experience in mentoring student teachers, but none of them were formally trained.

In 2002 the schools and the institute agreed that part of the curriculum would be taught in school. The training of the twelve teachers, then, was extended to *teaching* teachers instead of only mentoring. Each school, in turn, set up a support system for their own staff.

A school-based curriculum in teacher education is based on shared responsibilities between school and the teacher education institute. The trained twelve teachers and the support system within the schools made it possible for the twelve teachers to take that resposibility. In 2003 six general themes (Becoming a Professional, Class Management, Communication and Interaction within the Classroom, Collaborative Learning, Lesson Design and Pupil Mentoring) were identified to be taught within the schools. School-based teacher educators would teach each theme, next to mentoring the student teachers. A number of seminars were designed to introduce the assignments and the theoretical aspects of the themes in a way which matches the ideas of the schools and the demands of the institute. At the university a supportive electronic learning management system in Blackboard was set-up for both students and educators. The mentors kept their roles in the classroom.

The assessment conversations became a shared responsibility of school and institute. The teacher educators in the schools had to learn to work with a digital portfolio
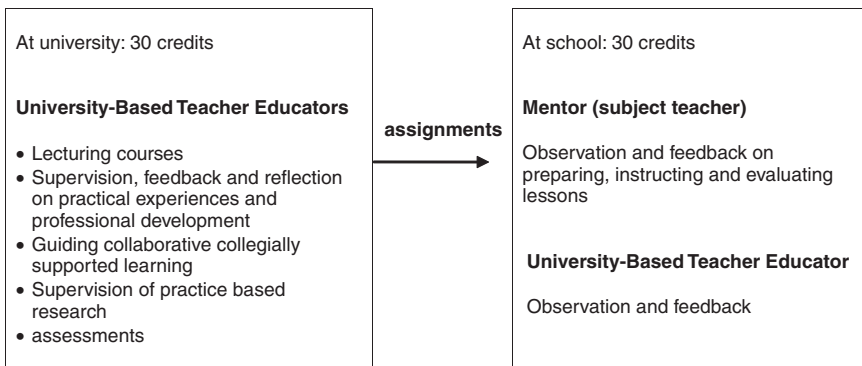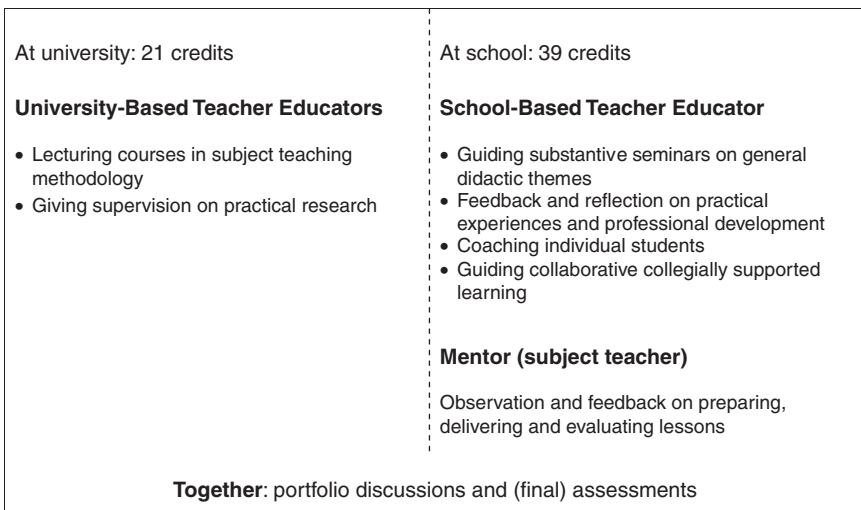

Fig. 4.1 Relation and division of responsibilities between institute and school in regular teacher education

and other assessment instruments that are commonly used to assess student teachers at CETAR. Special procedures were developed for the final assessment interviews and crediting the course. Although part of the curriculum now was implemented in the six schools, the institute still remained legally responsible for the students' certification.

A number of organisational adaptations had to be made. In each school the timetables were adjusted so that student teachers and their school-based teacher educators (who were also teachers) could meet on a regular basis. Similarly, at the institute things had to change. All teacher educators had to get used to the idea that student teachers can learn how to teach both within the institute and the school. It is not always easy to share responsibility, but on the whole school-based teacher educators, institute-based teacher educators and their student teachers were able to collaborate within the new and wider boundaries of the teacher education program. The division of responsibilities of our work together is presented in Fig. 4.2.

We are constantly improving the fruitful combination of university-based and school-based learning. We learn how important, next to planned seminars, the unplanned learning possibilities within schools are and how school-based educators can help student teachers to identify that moments and make them meaningful. Systematic deep and broad reflection is an important tool for us (see Korthagen, 2001). Special attention still has to be paid to different types of (theoretical) knowledge in and outside schools (Hodkinson, 2005).

In working together we experienced that good communication between all actors is a key factor for sucessful collaboration. So each school-based teacher educator has a permanent contact with an institute-based teacher educator, who informs the school-based teacher educator, gives feedback and supports the school-based

At university: 21 credits	At school: 39 credits
University-Based Teacher Educators	**School-Based Teacher Educator**
• Lecturing courses in subject teaching methodology • Giving supervision on practical research	• Guiding substantive seminars on general didactic themes • Feedback and reflection on practical experiences and professional development • Coaching individual students • Guiding collaborative collegially supported learning
	Mentor (subject teacher)
	Observation and feedback on preparing, delivering and evaluating lessons
Together: portfolio discussions and (final) assessments	

Fig. 4.2 Responsibilities of the institute-based teacher educator and the school-based teacher educator in 2006

teacher educator. Similarly, the school informs the institute about what happens in the school.

It is hard becoming a teacher educator within an institute for teacher education (see Chapters 6 and 7), but it is even harder to do so in school where pupil learning is the first focus. As it turned out, the training the twelve teachers received was insufficient; there was too little time for more formal courses. Even more important, while working as teacher educators, new and unforeseen challenges came up. For example school-based teacher educators thought it was very difficult to evaluate and asses the teacher students, especially at the end of the course. They also envisaged problems when working together with other mentors of the student teachers, like subject teachers. We had to find other ways to develop the competences and identity of the teachers who are becoming teacher educators in their own school (e.g. Ritter, 2007). That is why during these years we developed a way of cooperative learning, based on meeting on a regular basis, talking about our work and reflecting upon our actions, ideas and convictions. We now share our worries and celebrate our successes and we inspire and motivate each other. On the one hand, we are developing into a community of practice that is a group of professionals who are mutually engaged in educating teacher students, who see that as a joint enterprise and who are developing a shared repertoire of language, actions and tools (Wenger, 1998). On the other hand we value our differences and we are learning from frequently crossing the borders between school and institute.

There has been a major improvement in the mentoring of the student teachers and they are very satisfied with the personal attention and support provided. However, the cooperation between the school-based teacher educator and other teachers who act as mentors in the schools still needs improvement. We worked hard to establish these partnerships, partnerships which aimed to meet the needs and differences of the schools, the institute and the student teachers. Perhaps the most important characteristic of these partnerships is the trust we actually can teach teachers together.

The Utrecht Model

The 'Utrecht Model' is an intensive partnership between Archimedes Teacher Education Institute and several secondary schools and schools for pre-vocational and vocational education. Among others, the Archimedes Teacher Education Institute offers a four-year integrated bachelor course and a professional Master course to get a teaching degree in secondary education and vocational education. We start this example with a short description of what we have done over the last two decades. After that we will focus on the project 'Teacher in Vocational Education'.

Over the past twenty years Dutch teacher education institutes offering a bachelor level course developed a system in which student teachers engaged as trainees in schools for half of the final year of their bachelor course. During this period they are supervised by mentors and teacher educators from the teacher education institute. Despite the fact that this was a marked improvement in bridging the gap between

theory and practice, schools, especially those specializing in vocational education on the lower and middle level, were not satisfied with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that teacher education graduates brought into the school.

Between 2001 and 2003 The Archimedes Teacher Education Institute organised partnerships with several schools in the region. Up to now, about 150 schools are participating and these schools support around 1000 student teachers. In this partnership the institute and the schools work with a new competence-based curriculum in which workplace learning is a key feature. In their first year student teachers learn and work in a school for one day a week and over the four years the time they spent in schools increases to three days per week. Student teachers start as assistant teachers, progressing slowly to take on full class duties by the end of their four year course. As a consequence the schools have started to facilitate and train mentors as co-educators for student teachers. The partnership is now evolving into the concept of professional development schools as described earlier in this chapter. The education of student teachers is more and more integrated in the innovation of the schools and the development of the staff of the schools and the Archimedes Teacher Education Institute.

In 2003 Archimedes Teacher Education Institute and seven schools offering a pre-vocational education programme and educating pupils between the ages of twelve and sixteen, took the initiative to go one step further. We developed a new concept, 'Teacher in Vocational Education'. In this teacher education course student teachers work in a school which functions as their home base. Teacher educators will be in the school for at least one day per week. Deepening the student teachers' formal education is organised on a monthly basis at the institute and is continuously supported by an electronic learning platform. The learning process of the student teachers is organised in a congruent way for pupils, student teachers, experienced teachers and teacher educators, in combination with forms of (action) research (Swennen, Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2004; Ponte, 2002).

Since 2005 experienced teachers have attended professional Master's level programs supervised by researchers from Archimedes Teacher Education Institute. In this way an extra mode of congruent learning and teaching is emerging: learning processes of teacher students, teachers and teacher educators are likewise organised as learning processes of pupils. All learning processes are based on authentic tasks related to their learning aims. All participants benefit from this program. In the limited space we can only offer the experience voiced by one of the teachers of a participating school.

The school-based teacher educator and teacher economics, enjoys his job every day. He shows his enthusiasm about the new ways of learning for the pupils and student teachers. In the beginning it was hard work to adapt programmes of, for example, bookkeeping for the pupils, but it was well worth it. 'I used to have a lot of stress, because I thought that if I hadn't explained it all, the pupils would not have understood. I was always thinking whether I would

be able to finish the program. All that is over now. I am spending more time supervising pupils and student teachers to work more independently. Contact with pupils and student teachers has become much more pleasant and easy. They have their own responsibilities they are gaining more self-confidence.'

In any participating school between ten and twenty-five student teachers learn and work. These student teachers have different backgrounds: some of them just graduated from secondary education, while others have worked in industry or owned their own company. Student teachers spend the larger part of the week at their school, during which they attend a program organised in the school. They work on their tasks and reflection assignments in schools, at the institute or at home.

Each school has an educational team, consisting of the school-based teacher educator, the teacher educator from the institute, personal coaches for the student teachers and subject-knowledge experts (based at the institute). The teacher educator from the institute will work each week for at least one day at the school. He or she works intensively together with the school-based teacher educator and together they organise the learning process of the student teachers. Each student teacher has a personal coach, an experienced teacher working in the same team of the school.

In most schools the school-based teacher educators communicate with the school management and he or she is also responsible for finding personal coaches for all student teachers. He or she organises workshops for student teachers and colleagues, and offers collegially supported learning. The teacher educator from the institute is responsible for tutoring the student teachers in their professional career. Student teachers work on their own digital portfolio and they perform formative and summative assessments (see Chapter 12).

Experts from Archimedes Teacher Education Institute organise, on a regular basis, study and working conferences. They are also available to give advice to both students and their coaches. An electronic learning platform is used for presenting information, communicating and discussion, and as a portfolio environment. For all actors involved it is crucial to realise that they are members of an innovative project, acting as ambassadors on the school site and in the institute. This calls for a high level of enthusiasm and commitment. Evaluations involving teacher educators from both the schools and the Archimedes Teacher Education Institute show positive results, expressing the benefits that can be accrued for all stakeholders. At the same time, caution is needed so as to retain the high levels of commitment, enthusiasm and support at both the personal and institutional levels for progress to be maintained and disseminated.

Implications for Beginning Teacher Educators

Educating teachers in school-institute partnerships demands a lot of teacher educators whether working at school, at the institute or in both and as beginning

teacher educators are often involved in supervising student teachers, they will also be involved in school-based teacher education and we have formulated some of the most important implications for beginning teacher educators. Beginning teacher educators have to establish firm relations between schools and institutions and will need – depending whether they educate student teachers for primary of secondary education – knowledge and skills that include:

• Expertise about primary education and the transition of pupils from primary to secondary education.
• Expertise about vocational, secondary and tertiary education including the transition of pupils from primary to secondary, prevocational to vocational education, and from secondary to tertiary education.
• Expertise about local industry and institutions, because practice in society is part of the curriculum of the pupils, hence of student teachers.
• Expertise beyond the borders of their own subject areas so they can meet the needs of the schools and the student teachers.

Teacher educators have to play new roles, including:

• Being a member of both the school team and a member of the staff of the teacher education institute.
• Being a link person between school and teacher education institute and being asked to communicate, coordinate and address problems as they arise.

Teacher educators have to learn to act in new contexts:

• Institute-based teacher educators will be working next to school-based teacher educators in schools with pupils that have sometimes negative experiences, inside and outside education. These pupils need the best professional teachers, and the teacher educator is crucial in educating them.
• School-based teacher educators and institute-based teacher educators will be involved in school development, including action research, the innovation of the curriculum and staff development.
• School-based teacher educators and institute-based teacher educators will help to review, update and develop the teacher education curriculum program.

Within such a context beginning teacher educators can play a central and exciting role that can help create strong and valuable links between schools and teacher education institutes.

Discussion

This chapter has shown that different forms of partnerships can be established between schools and teacher education institutes, with respect to local circumstances and national or regional contexts. However, one aspect which evolves beyond boundaries is the desire and commitment to collaborate to improve learning

for teachers in general and student teachers in particular. This helps to diminish the gap between theory and practice and increases the opportunities for teachers and teacher educators to learn about teaching while working in the school context. The gap between schools and institutes is bridged over the whole range of professional development and innovation, because expertise of the teacher educating institute enters the schools and teacher educators get acquainted with school reality.

Educators occupying different roles at different stages in their career are placed in a position to address first and foremost issues directly related to curricular issues; developing schemes of work and lesson planning amongst other things. However, the main benefit is that all those involved are working together to create a specific context and culture. This is undeniably the critical and most important development that has been noted, because all educators involved learn to appreciate what it really means to be a member within a living institution, the partnership with all its ups and downs; learning to understand, empathise, listen, seek help, give advice.

Research about the benefits of partnerships in teacher education shows positive and negative outcomes. Neubert and Binko (1998) found that the professional development school internship was more effective than the regular programme in preparing teacher candidates to maintain classroom discipline, use technology effectively, and reflect on their teaching. Students teachers apply a greater variety of pedagogical methods and they are less vulnerable for the 'culture shock' when entering the profession (Book, 1996). Sutherland, Scanlon and Sperring (2005) found that pre-service teachers who are able to participate in the community of practice of teachers develop more insights into the professional practice than those who are involved in a more common practicum situation, who are more likely to develop a restricted technical knowledge.

Neubert and Binko (1998) explain that the use of mentors as teacher educators in schools had a profound developmental effect on the qualified teachers, who became more skilled at using theoretical discourse as part of their daily practice. Abdal-Haqq (1998) summarizes the outcomes of his research about the learning of the student teachers' mentors. Their learning improved and they knew better what is important to observe and to asses and how to do this. They record their insights and share them with others. In doing so they helped to establish a firm learning culture within their schools.

There are also serious concerns about the quality of teachers educated in schools especially when teachers lack the theoretical base of the profession. In Edwards, analyses of teacher education in England she presents examples of these concerns (Edwards, 2001).

Nevertheless it is our conviction that in the future teacher education will take place within partnerships between schools and the teacher education institutes. These partnerships will have a large variety of forms, depending on regional situation, learning styles of student teachers, aims of teacher education institutes and schools. Although not the easiest way, partnerships are the only way to provide a learning environment for students in which they can develop an identity as teacher and learn how to face the challenges of schools and their pupils in the near future.

As the Commission of the European Communities stated in the common principles on the characteristics of the teaching profession: 'It is a profession based on partnership' (Commission of the European Community, 2007, p. 12).

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