

Chapter 7

Second-Phase Induction for Teacher Educators: Challenges and Possibilities

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Introduction

Chapter 6 described how difficult, and sometimes stressful, the development of beginning teacher educators can be and from Chapter 6, we learn that beginning teacher educators receive limited formal support. This chapter addresses the issue of the induction of teacher educators in the university context. To understand fully the induction of university teacher educators, the notion of second-phase induction is a useful concept. This concept allows us to focus on the needs of beginning teacher educators and on the various kinds of support activities that can be offered during second-phase induction. Even though the examples given in this chapter are based on authors' experiences and observations in two quite different European countries, Estonia and Sweden, the problems will easily be recognised by those working in other teacher education institutes, and the support activities presented will be useful for those who are involved in the induction of teacher educators in a large range of countries in Europe.

The process of becoming a teacher educator differs from one country to another, but there are two main routes to become a teacher educator (see also Chapters 1 and 2). The first routes, quite common at the universities of Estonia and Sweden, is that of an academic who becomes a teacher educator. It is not unusual that researchers who have obtained a PhD become involved in teacher education. These teacher educators are familiar with the world of higher education and have no (or fewer) problems with research tasks than teacher educators who have been teachers. On the other hand, these academics have little or no experience as a teacher, and they might feel less confident in teaching student teachers since they are less familiar with the skills teacher students need to work in schools.

The second route to become a teacher educator is based on practical experience. Teachers who worked in primary or secondary schools continue their careers as teacher educators at the university. These teacher educators know the teaching profession from within as they have practical experiences as teachers. However, these

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educators may experience problems when having to do research, and they might encounter specific problems when teaching adult students in higher education. Whatever their background teacher educators may not always be fully prepared for their new jobs and further professional learning, what we term second-phase induction, is needed.

This chapter deals with the issue of how to induct beginning teacher educators for their new work at university teacher education institutes. In this chapter, the authors first introduce the notion of second-phase induction. This is followed by a focus on the problems concerning second-phase induction. The authors also provide suggestions to improve second-phase induction.

Second-Phase Induction

The concept of second-phase induction is developed by the authors of this chapter and it is grounded in their own experiences as university lecturers, researchers and supervisors of beginning teacher educators (see Eisenschmidt, 2006).

The induction phase is an important phase in teachers' professional development (Gold, 1996; Tickle, 2000). The term 'induction' in education is a fuzzy concept that generally refers to the teachers' first period of work in which novice teachers develop into experienced teachers. Sometimes the concept of induction is used to describe a period of time, like the first year. The concept is also used to indicate a support programme within this period, a more formal course, or a type of supervision by a senior teacher or mentor. The notion induction may also refer to the more individual professional learning process of novice teachers (Britton, Paine, Pimm, & Raizen, 2003; Blair-Larsen, 1992). However, the aims of induction is always to support professional socialisation, the development of professional competences and/or workplace learning (Eurydice, 2002).

The first induction phase is the phase new teachers go through when they start working in schools after finishing teacher education (or a new researcher may go through when s/he starts working at a university). For new teachers, the induction phase is considered to be a link between initial teacher education and professional development and lifelong learning as a teacher at school (see Fig. 7.1).

Teacher educators have had careers as teachers or academics and bring with them knowledge, skills and experience that are valuable for their work in teacher education. But no matter how extensive their prior working experiences as schoolteacher or academic is entering the university as a teacher educator is a major step that requires socialisation and learning, and hence the term 'second-phase induction' for novice teacher educators.

Second-phase induction is a socialisation process, through which the beginning teacher educator becomes a member of the teaching staff and accepts the knowledge, skills, qualities, norms and manners valued in the university. In this socialisation process, the opinions and attitudes of experienced teacher educators are of great importance to the beginning teacher educators.

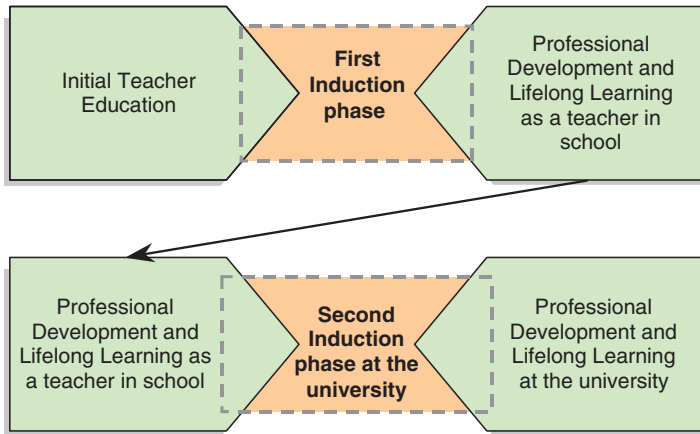


Fig. 7.1 First and second induction phase

During the second-phase induction, two processes take place simultaneously. In the first place, novice teacher educators develop within the organisation and it is, therefore, important to support novice teacher educators to understand the university culture and the aims of the university and one's colleagues. This process is known as socialisation within an organisation (Lortie, 1975; Lacey, 1987; Lauriala, 1997). In the second place, second-phase induction is a matter of professional socialisation. The prerequisite for continuous professional development of teacher educators is the willingness to develop and analyse their own work. During the first years in teacher education, the beginning teacher educators develop basic teacher educators' competences. They develop their own teaching styles and professional self-concepts. The ability of personal reflection is one of the most important abilities for professional growth (Schön, 1983, Calderhead, 1988; Korthagen, 1999; Harrison, Lawson, & Wortley, 2005).

Second-phase induction is a *learning process about teaching*. During this process, new teacher educators learn how their students learn and this provides opportunities to develop their teaching and their own professional identities as well. Mezirow (1991) supports the idea of professional development as a learning process by identifying three dimensions of learning:

- Instrumental learning to develop professional knowledge and skills.
- Dialogical learning to become a group member of the staff and to develop mutual, shared visions on teaching and learning.
- Self-reflective learning to develop personal identity in connection with other members of the organisation.

We argue that the conditions at a university differ significantly from the conditions at school. First, teacher educators are teachers of teachers and as such they serve as a model for student teachers. Teacher educators cannot just talk about how to teach, but must be able to model excellent teaching and should, therefore,

be excellent teachers. Second, teacher educators teach beginning teachers who are (young) adults, and teaching adults requires different knowledge and skills than teaching children or adolescents. Adult learners have strong personal practices and beliefs based on experiences, which have impact on their learning processes. Third, working in an academic environment differs from working in schools as the university is a complex social and political context requiring another set of competences, for instance, research competences. Formal induction or professional development opportunities for teacher educators are scarce (Smith, 2003), and even when induction opportunities are present, they may not always meet the needs of the beginning teacher educators (Murray & Male, 2005).

Examples from Estonia and Sweden

In this section, we will discuss two specific examples, one from Estonia and one from Sweden. The needs of beginning teacher educators are discussed, in relation to getting to know the world of higher education and coming to terms with the workplace, developing professional competences as teacher educators and developing personal and professional identities as teacher educators. Finally, some possibilities for an induction period in the career of a teacher educator, as well as some induction support activities, are explored. We also present good practices of emerging induction programmes for beginning teacher educators.

Our aim is to answer two specific questions: what are the needs of beginning teacher educators? And what kinds of support are possible, available and effective for them? We will focus on the specific problems and needs beginning teacher educators encounter as well as on activities to support them.

Second-Phase Induction in Estonia

Teacher education in Estonia is situated at the universities, and, therefore, teacher educators are university lecturers or senior lecturers. Teacher educators in Estonia, like those in other countries (see also Chapters 2 and 6), have many responsibilities as the level of the preparation of future teachers affects how well new generations will manage their lives. It thus influences the sustainable development of the education system and the whole society. A university lecturer in Estonia is expected to be able to teach and undertake research equally well; to be a supervisor and a counsellor; to be aware of the latest scientific researches and innovations in the educational field; to cooperate with employers and colleagues; to take care of professional development; and, if needed, also to do different kinds of administrative work. Although being successful in research is considered to be very important for university lecturers, it is still through teaching that teacher educators directly or indirectly influence hundreds (if not thousands) of students. In this section we will present some developing thoughts about the induction of teacher educators.

According to the national development plan for teacher education 2006–2010 (Õpetajakoolituse riiklik arengukava, 2003), university teachers often miss educational preparation and according to national evaluations, this is one of the reasons why most teacher education programmes are too theoretical. One course about university pedagogy is provided (6 ECTS) during the doctoral studies, but although this is not enough, a course like this helps future teacher educators. Here is a quote of a participant who attended and assessed the university pedagogy course:

I learned a lot from lecturers. I was pleasantly surprised by how the studies were conducted on a couple of occasions. I learned to behave more freely among students and acquired new good methods on how to involve students more actively in their learning process. I became more aware of different teaching methods and could systematize them. Until now I hadn't realized that teaching could be learned.

To improve the professional development of teacher educators, the national development plan defines that all general competence requirements for teachers also apply to teacher educators. University teacher educators need to possess teaching competences on a higher level and must be able to focus on teaching student teachers.

Official requirements for teacher educators in Estonia are described in the *Outline Requirements for Teacher Training* (Õpetajate koolituse raamõuded, 2000). Teacher educators who provide didactical training need to have at least 3 years of relevant teaching experience in schools. Regular in-service training to improve teaching competences is not required.

To date, there is no formal second-phase induction in Estonia, but we are in the process of developing such an induction phase. Second-phase induction needs to be developed in order to guarantee professional development for the coming generations. The need for additional support is aptly expressed in the following quote of a newcomer as noted in the assessment forms:

The process of becoming a university teacher is the same as the process of becoming an ordinary teacher; it is like teaching at school for the first year. I remember that feeling so well. Actually it is more complicated at a university than at school. The university's material basis is worse; the relations with colleagues are more superficial; the competition is higher – you feel more left alone and you have to manage on your own. A university as an organisation has a more complicated structure and is also much bigger.

This beginning teacher educator expresses the problem vividly and highlights the need for a second phase of induction. Uncertainty and loneliness may be experienced very strongly by individuals at the beginning of this learning process. At the university, there are higher and different teaching standards than in schools and a course outlining the pedagogy of teaching in universities would, therefore, be helpful.

In order to guarantee professional development for new generations of university teachers in Estonia, it is essential to create a support system for beginner lecturers and teacher educators. Ideally, second-phase induction should include formal mentor support, a course in how to teach in higher education and the compilation of an induction year portfolio. The universities ought to have means of assessing internal quality, which would include a system of conducting formal conversations

about the new educator's learning and giving constructive feedback. In particular, more attention should be paid to setting a value on teaching skills and the teaching process itself (Krabi, 2005).

Second-Phase Induction in Sweden

Teacher education programmes in Sweden are, as in Estonia, fully integrated in the Swedish universities. Universities in Sweden, like in other countries, have been very attractive employers, but since early 1990s, there have been changes in structure, in functioning and in financing of the university system. The student population at the university and in teacher education is larger and more diversified in terms of student ability, motivation and cultural backgrounds. Even experienced teacher educators report difficulties with coping with the new situation. Various factors such as class size, increased student intake, decrease of staff members and new courses demand more in terms of teaching skills. The working environment is still attractive, but the premises for university teachers in general and more specific for teacher educators have changed radically during the last few decades.

To be employed at the university as a former schoolteacher means a change in perspective and requires the development of new abilities and a new identity as a teacher educator in higher education (Biggs, 2006). The teacher educator needs to find her/his personal strengths and adapt to the new teaching context at the university.

In Sweden, teachers who become teacher educators have to meet several requirements and they receive support to fulfil these requirements. This may be seen as part of their induction as teachers in higher education, but not necessarily as teacher educators. Teacher educators without a doctoral degree will need to become involved in research to receive this degree. A lecturer is allowed, according to local agreements, to some time, for instance 20% of the working hours, to finish a doctoral degree. Lecturers can also get other funding for research education, for instance, in projects.

In Sweden, there is a national agreement specifying that all new university teachers, including teacher educators, need to take a course of 10 weeks on teaching in higher education to get a permanent contract at the university. The content of these courses varies from one university to another due to the decentralised system, but the main focus of each course is lifelong learning and professional development. These 10 weeks are regarded as a starting point for further professional development. Unfortunately these courses are not necessarily offered in the very beginning of a teacher educator's career in higher education and novice teacher educators might have to wait for the courses to start, and that affects the possibilities to develop as a university teacher.

There is no formal second-phase induction in higher education in Sweden on a national level, but there are certain support activities for university teachers and some developmental work activities much like second-phase induction. The university organises different kinds of workplace support on faculty level, institutional level and

even subject level. New teacher educators are ‘taught’ in their own subject group about how to become a professional teacher educator. The initial support can vary from just a single conversation with the head of the department to a support programme that will last for several days.

An example of second-phase induction can be found at the department of education of the University of Gävle, there is an introduction for 6 days. The introduction is focussed on what the beginning teacher educators need to know to develop as a professional teacher in higher education and as a teacher of teachers. The introduction is based on the beginning teacher educator’s most important needs as they are expressed in her/his own questions. The questions are personal and deal with a wide range of subjects. It is considered a good investment to spend time and other resources to organise a second-phase induction, which will support the teacher educators to feel confident in the workplace and the profession.

In Sweden, the system of mentorship in higher education is under construction. It is a common practice for newly appointed teacher educators to receive mentor support. For example, at the University in Gävle in the department of education, newly appointed teachers receive mentor support during their first year. It is only an offer and participation is voluntarily, but all novice teacher educators have agreed to have a mentor. The mentor and the mentee plan their meetings according to the mentee’s needs and possibilities. They meet often at the start of the first year, about once a week, while they might meet about once a month towards the end. In addition, new teacher educators are invited to observe more experienced colleagues during their lectures, seminars or supervising tasks. To avoid the danger that the beginning teacher educator adopts the more experienced colleague’s behaviour without proper reflection on its appropriateness, each observation has a follow-up to stimulate discussion and reflection. Newly employed teachers might get reduced teaching time during their first year – about 10% less than a full-time job, to be able to participate in support activities and prepare more carefully their teaching tasks.

To conclude, changes have been implemented in Swedish universities to enable better introductions to the workplace and the profession. It is considered as an important condition that has raised the quality of higher education.

Some Reflections

There are two types of introduction needed during the second induction phase of university teacher educators. To get an introduction to the *workplace* is important to all teachers in higher education, not only for teacher educators. The workplace introduction focuses on the organisational context for academic work, particularly for teaching, research and management. Introduction to the new workplace has to do with providing technical assistance for teaching and presenting local policies, local culture and local procedures. To introduce a new teacher educator to a workplace is a matter of making working conditions more visible, more accessible and understandable.

The introduction to the profession encompasses, among other things, effective subject-matter teaching at university level, understanding and meeting student teachers' needs, assessing student teachers' work and learning, reflective and inquiry-oriented teaching in the teacher education programme, understanding university's organisational aspects and participation options in the university community. The professional socialisation dimensions are more problematical. New teacher educators feel lonely and isolated, because of the size of the organisation and the competitive nature of the university, but mainly because there are too few possibilities to have professional conversations and moments for self-reflection about teaching and developing a professional identity as teacher educator. This means that organisational contexts do not always support professional development of beginning teacher educators in all dimensions.

Effective second-phase induction assumes a supporting culture that allows raising questions, to ask for advice or to ask experienced colleagues to talk about their own lecturing or tutoring. In some universities, this is a very common practice and attitudes towards new colleagues are open-minded, but not all universities have this kind of supportive culture. It might be possible to change the culture by asking questions, but it takes some courage (Gustafsson, Fransson, Morberg, & Nordquist, 2006).

If there are more new teacher educators in one department, it is very useful to stimulate them to make contact with each other. A good way of supporting new teacher educators during their second-phase induction is to organise regular meetings for them. It is wise to share one's problems with others in the same situation, like for example, difficulties in planning a working day, lack of peace and quiet, dealing with the competitive atmosphere at the university, being a colleague in a new working environment (Gustafsson et al., 2006). These meetings may also be important to organise more formal professional development activities that support the beginning teacher educators to develop the competences needed in their new and complex profession as teacher educators.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Schoolteachers who start a career as teacher educators have to learn the ropes of their new profession, which can be a very frustrating process. Experiences with mentor programmes in both our countries show good results. Therefore, we recommend the implementation of mentoring as a standard policy of induction programmes. However, new teacher educators cannot be forced to accept the support of a mentor. Mentoring has to be built on willingness to learn and develop. An experienced teacher educator should consider the task of mentoring as taking responsibilities for the teacher education programme, as well as for the professional development of teacher educators. It is important for all participants in the mentor programme to be explicit about their expectations. The mentor and the mentee should also be aware that they both have their own responsibilities in making the relationship work (Lindgren, 2003). Some aims

for mentoring, according to our two cases, are to improve teaching at the university level; to increase the retention of good teacher educators; to promote personal and professional well-being; to support teacher educators' attitudes towards themselves and the new profession; as well as to transmit the culture of the university to the teacher educator. To improve teaching, and especially the teaching of teachers, is the most important aim, but it is also the most challenging.

Besides the necessity of mentor programmes, we would like to emphasise the need to pay sufficient attention to career development, even in the early stages of a teacher educator's career, when beginning teacher educators still consider themselves as novices. Universities are known to be very elite systems and competition is always present. The assistance of a senior colleague might be helpful in this respect (Gustafsson et al., 2006). Questions to be asked are Will I go into research? Will I be a professor? What competences do I want to develop? What are my possibilities? What are my strengths? What are my weaknesses? What is the head of department expecting of me? What are my colleagues expecting? Which tasks suit me best? Which tasks do not suit me at all? What are my goals? How do I reach them? Who can give me advice and support me during my career? It is almost impossible to answer all these questions at once, but we would like to stress the necessity of planning and thinking ahead. The thoughts and understanding we have of ourselves and our possibilities are very important. With wrong thoughts and lack of understanding, we might take wrong turns in our career paths.

Here we will list our ten major recommendations to improve current induction practices of beginning teacher educators. We recommend new teacher educators to

1. Try to understand that being a beginning teacher educator in higher education is difficult.
2. Accept that it is all right 'not to know' and to be inexperienced, but accept the professional learning process.
3. Find out about activities related to induction and ask for at least 10% of work time to be able to participate in support activities.
4. Convince your head of the department that engaging in second-phase induction is a good investment.
5. Express your needs so that your needs can be used as a guide to planning the support during your induction.
6. Ask for the two types of support – a workplace introduction and a professional introduction.
7. Ask for an experienced colleague to serve as your mentor for your professional introduction.
8. Ask questions, ask for advice, ask experienced colleagues to inform you about their lecturing and tutoring experiences. Attend courses, seminars and conferences. Look for invitations to observe experienced colleagues performing various (teaching) tasks.
9. Think about your personal professional identity – what kind of educator do you want to become.
10. Think about your future – be active and design your own career at the university.

These ten recommendations are important to create possibilities for professional development. We know from our own experiences and research that teacher educators are key people in creating good and stimulating learning environments for student teachers. The pressure on teacher educators is high, and there is an increasing interest internationally in supporting teacher educators, as well as all kinds of university teachers. Educators in higher education around the world are realising that helping new teachers in higher education to learn more about teaching and student learning is a very important investment for the future. It is an investment for the university, for society, and also for the profession itself. It is the authors' intention that this chapter inspires new teacher educators in many countries to consider their own needs and support. In addition, the authors hope that this chapter will support boards of universities to review and improve current second-phase induction practices and to guarantee this kind of induction as a formal right of all new teacher educators!

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