

Student Teachers Creating Space for Teacher Educators' Reflection and Professional Development

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This chapter presents a study on how to support student teachers' reflection and how these reflections can be turned into teacher educators' professional development. The chapter is based on research conducted in the Finnish initial teacher education context and consists of two parts. The first part laid the foundation through the reconceptualisation of core reflection (principles and practices, relationship and interaction, and teacher disposition), which was further processed in the self-study conducted by the team of teacher educators. Based on the analysis, two themes appeared for teacher educators' professional development – namely, supporting the sense of community and utilising shared reflection for individual professional development. In conclusion, it is proposed that collaboration and shared reflection with teacher educators creates space for professional development both for student teachers and teacher educators.

Keywords: teacher educator; student teacher; reflection; professional development; teacher education

Introduction

Several studies have suggested factors affecting teachers' professional development, including teachers' ability to learn from teaching experience using reflection (Bragg & Lang, 2018; Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre, & Demers, 2008; Korthagen, Kessels, Koster, Lagerwerf, & Wubbels, 2001). Consequently, recent studies (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hagevik, Aydeniz, & Rowell, 2012; Russell & Martin, 2017) have advocated that teacher education should provide opportunities for student teachers to reflect on their teaching. Therefore, reflective teaching is currently embedded in the core of teacher education programmes in several institutions globally, and teaching experience and its reflection are now seen as a significant basis for teachers' professional development (Körkkö, Kyrö-Ämmälä, & Turunen, 2016; Korthagen et al., 2001). How student teachers reflect on their teaching experiences and learn to monitor their professional development is now seen as essential.

In this regard, teacher educators' significant task is to lead student teachers into learning the processes of reflective teaching. Supporting learning processes with reflection means considering and bridging student teachers' 'tacit knowledge gained in practicum experiences and the explicit propositional knowledge offered in their education classes' (Russell & Martin, 2017, p. 42). However, while teacher educators are mostly aware of the importance of their role in supporting reflective teaching for their student teachers, they often find it difficult to implement reflection into their education classes.

Conversely, although reflection has become a significant part of the initial teacher education programmes, its elusive features make it difficult to define and teach. Reflection on teaching experience has been criticised as having recently suffered from a loss of meaning (Rodgers, 2006). Accordingly, some scholars have noticed the risks of seeing reflection as a vehicle of self-reproach, which drains teachers' learning and development (Mäkinen, 2013). Similarly, there are arguments that the original concept of reflection has been inverted to become a superficial vehicle for control (Kilminster, Zukas, Bradbury, & Frost, 2010). Moreover, although several techniques have been created to foster teaching reflection (Jones & Jones, 2013), some studies, such as Valli (1992), have raised its complexities and brought to light many challenges teacher education programmes might face when teaching reflection on teaching experience. These include, for example, concerns about teaching dispositions related to reflection or implementing specific reflective practices at the course level (Jones & Jones, 2013; Valli, 1992).

Therefore, the professional development of teacher educators, although a relatively new phenomenon in teacher education research, is essential (Brody & Hadar, 2018; Loughran, 2014; Maaranen, Kynäslähti, Byman, Jyrhämä, & Sintonen, 2019). However, only a few studies have investigated how teacher educators learn and how the learning processes affect their professional development. In this chapter, we draw on a self-study approach to professional development for teacher educators – which is utilised due to its collaborative, inquiry-based and reflective methodology (Samaras, 2011; Zeichner, 2005). Teacher educators must learn to reflect on their teaching practices and seek new ways through which student teachers' reflective teaching can be challenged and facilitated at the course level in the teacher education programme.

To understand how the intensive promotion of teaching reflection for student teachers can be used to support teacher educators' professional development, this chapter addresses the following question: How do student teachers' reflections on teaching affect teacher educators' reflection and professional development?

Theoretical background

Professional development of teacher educators

Teacher educators are 'those who teach or coach (student) teachers with the aim of supporting their professional development' (Lunenberg, Dengerink, & Korthagen, 2014, p. 5). Due to teacher educators' work in promoting and supporting student teachers' professional development, their professional development is particularly important. However, there are concerns that the professional development of teacher educators is often neglected (McGee & Lawrence, 2009, p. 140).

Furthermore, in the induction phase of teacher educators' careers, teacher educators have concerns and feel like they are being challenged. Later in their careers as advanced teacher educators, they seem to find more space for reflection. This helps to address their main concerns and allows them to recognise their own identity and their students as individuals with different ambitions and needs. This shift in focus on career development among teacher educators seems to be a universal phenomenon (Van der Klink, Kools, Avissar, White, & Sakata, 2017). On the contrary, it has been argued that there is no fixed route to be followed in professional development nor is there an end to it as long as teacher educators are working in their profession (Smith, 2003, p. 203).

However, teacher educators' experiences regarding leading the professional development of student teachers have a strong impact on their own professional identity (White, 2014). Therefore, regardless of the phase of their career, teacher educators need tools, platforms and models to equip their competencies to teach and support student teachers to reflect on their professional development. They need to reflect on what reflective teaching can and should be for

student teachers and what constitutes their role in these learning processes. This cannot be done without fostering teacher educators' professional development through reflective activities.

Among self-studies, several studies have been conducted through reflective activities (Izadinia, 2014; Kim & Greene, 2011; Trumbull, 2006). The development of teacher educators' identity is a key feature in becoming a professional teacher educator (Izadinia, 2014). This kind of identity development can include issues such as confronting one's hypocrisies, holding ambiguity and sustaining authenticity in everyday practice (Kim & Green, 2011). In addition, Izadinia (2014) found that self-study has been reported as one of the useful and effective ways for teacher educators to develop their identity.

Promotion of reflection

Reflection has been a subject of much discussion in research focusing on teacher education, with different definitions. However, for this study, our interpretation of reflection is based on Korthagen and Vasalos's (2005) core reflection in the context of teacher education. Nevertheless, before entering their approach to reflection, we drew on a few definitions to scrutinise the nature of reflection. While the roots of reflection run rich through the ideas of many earlier scholars, ranging from Plato and Aristotle to Buddha, most research on teacher reflection draws on Dewey's (1938) theory of experience. Dewey (1944, p. 76) defined reflection as 'reconstruction or reorganisation of experience, which adds to the meaning of experience and increases the ability to direct the course of subsequent experience'. Several researchers have expanded and specified this definition. Mezirow (1991) links the foundation of reflection with transformative learning, bringing additional depth and breadth to reflection conceptualisation. Similarly, reflection can be perceived as 'a set of abilities and skills to indicate the taking of a critical stance, an orientation to problem-solving or state of mind' (Moon, 1999, p. 63). In this sense, these definitions share similarities with our understanding of the significance of enhanced analytical thinking in the context of teacher education.

Schön (1983) introduced the notion of 'reflective practitioner' as one who draws on reflection as a vehicle for exploring experience both to learn from it and to frame complex issues in

professional practice. Here, reflective learning involves the processing of experience in a variety of ways. Meaning is constructed within a community of professional discourse, encouraging learners to achieve and maintain critical control over the intuitive facets of their experiences.

Schön's (1983) idea of reflection as an iterative process is frequently supported in research. However, there is slightly empirical evidence on the successful implementation, in particular, of 'reflection-in-action' (thinking on one's feet) – the process whereby professionals are supposed to reflect on actual experience while solving a new problem. In contrast, there is extensive support for Schön's construct of reflecting after an experience termed 'reflection-on-action' and its practical applications and extensions – for example, in learning and teachers' professional development (Ghaye, 2010).

Korthagen et al. (2001) approached reflection from the perspective of intended use. They argued that reflective teaching could serve as an empowering means to prevent prospective teachers from settling on existing traditional educational patterns in schools. However, a starting point to a meaningful reflection is that the teaching experience is 'challenging enough to offer opportunities for a confrontation with gestalts that the educator would like to change' (Korthagen, 2010; Korthagen & Lagerwerf, 2001, p. 202). Confrontation, in this context, could be perceived as a critical incident or confusion that stimulates professional development. In this regard, teacher educators' significant role is to lead student teachers towards 'meaningful confusions' and assist them in learning the processes of reflective teaching.

Korthagen (2010) emphasised that the initial phase of teacher education needs a pedagogy that combines fruitful practical experiences and intensive promotion of reflection. He used the term 'suitable experiences' (Korthagen, 2010, p. 104) where the experiences make possible professional development possible towards preservice teachers' theoretical understanding of the learning and teaching situations in the classroom. Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) aimed to create an ideal model that can promote a systematic way of reflecting on practical situations. The idea of the model stemmed from the assumption that although teachers reflect on their experiences by nature, systematic reflection differs from what they are familiar with in their day-to-day situations. Thus, the model is aimed at constructing a holistic model for teachers and supervisors

and emphasising the importance of feelings as a part of analytical reflection (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005).

To achieve a systematic reflection of teaching experiences, Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) introduced the onion model. This onion model was developed as a variant or adaptation inspired by Bateson's (1972) model of five logical categories of learning (from zero learning to learning IV). Therefore, the onion model attempts to show the various levels of thoughts and functions in people that can be influenced during the reflective process. The levels are environment, behaviour, competencies, beliefs, identity and mission. The levels can be seen as different perspectives from which teachers can look at their functions. Only the outermost levels (environment and behaviour) can be directly observed by others (Korthagen, 2004).

In this study, we are particularly interested in reflection when it extends to the two deepest levels – identity and mission – which Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) referred to as core reflection. Core reflection reveals how a person sees their (professional) identity and personal calling into the world (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). In other words, what is deep inside us and what moves us to do what we do. Based on the onion model, the essential questions for developing teachers' professional identity and their awareness of their core qualities can be summarised as follows: 'Who am I?', 'What kind of teacher do I want to be?', 'How do I see my role as a teacher?' and 'To what end does the teacher wants to do his or her work?' (Korthagen, 2004, p. 81). Those core reflections are essential when we try to find out how to become more conscious of one's pedagogical approach. Through core reflection, we can explore the factors that contribute to professional development.

The research

Framing the research background

The research consisted of two parts within the Finnish teacher education context. This chapter focuses mainly on the findings of the second part of the research, whereas the first part laid the foundation for understanding what core reflection entails (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005) and developed a framework for core reflection, which allowed teacher educators to study their

reflections in the second part. Therefore, we consider the second part more relevant to this chapter's purposes.

The first part of the research dealt with supervised teaching practice within the Secondary School Teacher Education programme. The research aim was to examine the main themes linked with core reflection (Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). The data were collected from 16 student teachers' reflections in connection with their supervised teaching practice during one academic year. We studied and coded the student teachers' learning portfolios by using deductive content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Kondracki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002; Krippendorff, 2004). Using the deductive content analysis, we began with predetermined key variables based on Korthagen and Vasalos's (2005) six categories of the onion model. Afterwards, we extended the analysis within the categories of identity and mission. The aim was to classify and reveal more details of the student teachers' core reflection. Through the content analysis of the reflections, the results consist of a reconceptualisation of the core reflection areas (identity and mission). Three new categories were identified – namely, principles and practices, relationship and interaction and teacher disposition (reported elsewhere). Reflections on the *principles and practices* category deal with one's pedagogical thinking and aim for their pedagogical actions and pedagogical ideals and goals. These reflections are not just descriptions of behaviour or actions but reveal deeper aims for teaching how to handle the values and ethics of being a teacher. The *relationship and interaction* category emphasise both the relationship of the teachers with students and the teachers with their colleagues. These reflections reveal how becoming aware of one's influence on others and harnessing that influence to serve one's pedagogical ideas is part of this category. The *teacher disposition* category includes reflections on one's personal and professional sense of being a teacher. The reflections in this category can be described as a negotiation between the professional role of a teacher and one's identity.

Setting up the self-study

Based on the first part of the study, we used the three categories to frame our reflections. We used questions such as 'How do I operate and what are my competencies?' (principles and practices), 'How do I relate to others?' (relationship and interaction) and 'Who am I as a teacher?' (teacher disposition) to spark student teachers' reflection and support our reflections as well. These reflections were processed in the second part of the study and thus placed within the self-

study domain of teacher education (Loughran, Hamilton, LaBoskey, & Russell, 2004; Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015).

Self-study is one of the methodologies that has been reported as a useful way for teacher educators to develop their professional development. In addition, self-study researchers do not rely on habits or traditions but try to constantly find ways to examine teaching practices critically to develop ‘consciously driven modes of pedagogical activity’ (Samaras, 2002, p. 433). Self-study offers a valuable method to focus on one’s practices and thereby provides the privileges of using collaborative interactions that lay the foundation for the research process, but its validation is based on trustworthiness (Samaras, 2011; Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015). Reflective activities have been the most common approaches to conduct self-studies (Cochran-Smith, 2005; McDonough & Brandenburg, 2012; Samaras, 2002, 2011). We also considered the dialectical nature of reflection (Trumbull, 2006) as beneficial for teacher educators to examine and reconstruct the idea of teaching and learning by resorting to personal prior experience and the experiences of others. Furthermore, the reflective approach offered us as teacher educators a useful tool for connecting our roles as researchers and practitioners (see Cochran-Smith, 2005).

Research procedures and participants

The self-study was conducted through an advanced-level course *teacher’s professional learning and development* (10 ECTS), which was composed of the themes and ideas derived from the previous sub-study (including addressing the three categories). The one-semester course consisted of a series of half-day seminars with different topics such as teacher’s professional development through reflective practices, theoretical models about teacher’s professional development, understanding the various challenges of teacher’s work in current society and professional well-being. The topics were approached with short keynote lectures, group discussions, collaborative study in small groups and online assignments. Reflective methods were practiced throughout the course. Articles and other relevant materials were shared online.

The course was designed in a way that gave various kinds of reflections from both student teachers and teacher educators. A total of 58 student teachers participated in the course, and they

represented different orientations from kindergarten teachers to adult education teachers. The reflective assignments for student teachers were given at the end of each seminar, and they were required to complete and return them before the next seminar meeting. The reflections were instructed to focus on the three categories driven from the study framework (created in the previous stage in the study). All seminar teaching, learning activities and assignments were jointly planned by the teacher educators (authors of this article). Informed consent to participate in the study was sought from all the student teachers and their anonymity was maintained.

Participants in this self-study part consisted of the three of us as teacher educators in the programme and as teacher-researchers in the faculty of education. We represented different backgrounds and phases of teacher educator career. The first author was an experienced teacher educator and university lecturer in the faculty with a long mentor experience in the faculty's Teacher Training School, while the second represented a novice teacher educator profile who has experience in continuous and transnational teacher education. The third author was a professor of teacher education in the faculty with a long previous experience in schoolwork. As insider teacher-researchers, we are considered a substantial resource because we have access to student teachers' voices and timing in data collection.

The data were collected through written reflective journals and self-reports. We wrote personal reflective journals (a total of 25 pages) immediately during and after every seminar session and supervised online discussions like 'reflection-in-action' (Schön, 1991). Another dataset comprised of a collection of our self-reports of core reflections (a total of 32 pages) like 'reflection-on-action' (Schön, 1991), which were reflected and written after reading the student teachers' texts. The reflections produced by student teachers gave us valuable inputs and mirrors for our core reflections.

The strategy for analysing the data was based on the directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) regarding the conceptualisation and framework created in the first part of the study. The current data were read carefully several times in order to find all the relevant basic units. The basic unit was defined as a notion containing a reflection expressing one of the three categories. However, we aimed to promote accuracy in the analysis by ensuring estrangement from the

individual bias by resting on investigator triangulation and discussing regularly the criteria for coding and categorising the data. The discussions were conducted after the course on four separate occasions. At the beginning of our discussions, the student teachers' and our notions were mirrored side by side. We talked about our professional histories, experiences and pedagogical assumptions and aspirations. The discussions were rich and inspiring and, though our values seemed to be aligned, we all had our views and interpretations. As the analysis progressed, while the student and teacher educator reflections were examined in parallel, it allowed us to identify the main themes of teacher educators' reflections. Finally, two themes emerged, and they were considered in relation to the research question of how do student teachers' reflections on teaching affect teacher educators' reflection and professional development. In the following section, we report the results more closely. When using citations to exemplify our findings, we used a pseudonym name (Lisa, Maria and Anna) to indicate the teacher educator.

Findings

The implemented tool for reflection provided us with new lights on the reflection of the student teachers and ourselves. Our reflections were characterised by awakening, questioning and reframing. Even though the reflections provoked many questions they did not create anxiety or worry but stirred discussion and ideas on how to further develop teacher education and our professionalism and practices. In addition, during the analysis, we noticed the importance of discussing our reflections together. In the following sections, we introduce the findings of our reflections.

Supporting the sense of community

From the beginning, we designed and conducted the course together in accordance with the self-study procedure, emphasising systematic and diverse reflection practices. According to our results, the key elements in shared reflection were creating space for dialogue and harnessing emotions for shared learning. The shared reflection appeared to be a springboard for individual reflection as well.

In their reflections, the student teachers conveyed ideas that a teacher should be curious, ready to learn new things and utilise the communality as a resource. The students understood that transformative teaching requires an ability to adapt to changes and courage to face the challenges. For us, these kinds of attitudes and thoughts were an invitation to join in a dialogue to wonder and foster shared curiosity for deepening understanding both as teacher educators as well as with the students. Because two of us have had long experience in the field of schoolwork accompanied with the academic careers in university level teacher education, while one has had a shorter experience in continuous teacher education, we also had different kinds of expectations of our competencies as teacher educators:

During our discussions, my colleagues describe things that I hadn't come to think as a part of my professional development. (Teacher educator Anna)

We also recognised that student teachers appreciated our collaborative 'reflecting aloud moments', which seemed to be useful in the sense that usually the thinking behind the acts of teacher educators is invisible to novice teachers (Bragg & Lang, 2018; Loughran, 2014). Likewise, Maaranen et al. (2019) reported how teacher educators described that students are the most important aspect of their work. However, we strived to find a balance between distance and closeness with the students.

During the seminars, I encouraged student teachers to find their own ways to participate while respecting their own ways of being involved. (Teacher educator Maria)

Moreover, we understood our suspicions and expectations through dialogue. The dialogue helped us to appreciate our strengths together and utilise them in our teaching. Creating space for dialogue meant, in practice, paying attention to the interaction with the students.

When looking more closely at the aspects of interaction, the most important part of interaction for the student teachers seemed to be the focus on emotions. For example, some students reflected how they want to meet the children with warmth and respect and how being a teacher requires emotional skills as well as teaching them to their pupils. However, during our own reflections, we realised how demanding it is to incorporate this into our teaching.

Students' reflections convey the idea that emotions are meaningful in interaction. I think that emotions are important for learning and interaction, but how much do I step back to think about how emotions can be utilised in teaching? Or am I ready to

receive and embrace strong or even negative feelings as the student wrote? (Teacher educator Lisa)

Some students reflected on how they have immersed themselves in their own professionalism and received support during the course. While some of the reflections tell of uncertainties or even negative experiences, there is a sound of trust and the volition to grow professionally strong in their reflections. (Teacher educator Maria)

As a part of this, we recognised a tendency to keep the academic teaching in a theoretical level and missing the impact of emotions in interaction, even though we were well acquainted with the recent research focusing on the inner strengths and emotions of teachers (Mälkki, 2010; Seligman, 2011; Zwart, Korthagen, & Attema-Noordewiera, 2015). Research has shown that how teachers deal with emotions can have an impact on their professional development and may strengthen their approaches to effective education (Cowie, 2011; Zwart et al., 2015). Although learning to identify and verbalise one's emotions creates a basis for trust in interactive learning situations, besides that, we need to develop skills to harness the emotions to support learning, analytical reflection and teacher-student relationship (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014; Korthagen & Vasalos, 2005). Furthermore, we reflected that we need to develop the ability to handle students' strong and even negative emotions constructively. This means the ability to distinguish those emotions that need to be addressed for learning and those that prevent it.

The reflections of the student teachers revealed both insecurity and willingness to engage in a professional community during their studies. We consider this readiness a good starting point for developing dialogical relationships in teacher education. This requires modelling from teacher educators on how to invite the students into the dialogue and create possibilities for different kinds of participation. This means that the student teachers should both have opportunities to develop a personal relation to theories and the ability to encounter emotions and create a shared understanding of different pedagogical phenomena. As teacher educators, we need to process this among ourselves to model this kind of dialogical relationship in teaching situations.

By understanding the value of dialogue and the strength of our emotions, we can support the sense of community in teacher education. This kind of awareness of building trust and collegiality is essential in successful teacher education programmes (Mäkinen, Lindén, Annala, & Wiseman,

2018). According to Korthagen (2010), developing such pedagogy in teacher education where different kinds of experiences serve a basis for joint reflection during teacher education is needed. We identified teamwork in the self-study context and joint reflections between colleagues as more meaningful for our professional development than our previous experiences of individual learning, self-reflection on course activities or student feedback. This kind of team-related experience supported a sense of being part of the teacher educator community and provided learning opportunities. The power of team-based ways of working has also been shown in some previous research (Barak, Gidron, & Turniansky, 2010; Smith, 2003) on teacher educators' professional development. Trust and safety in the community can encourage personal reflection and professional growth. Therefore, we argue that by supporting the sense of community, we can create room for personal reflection and development as well. (We will elaborate this in the next section.)

Utilising shared reflection for individual professional development

The results indicated that shared reflections sparked individual reflections as well. Two main elements arose: identifying the contribution of one's professional path and reinforcing one's pedagogical approach – including, strengths, ideals and competencies. In a safe and confidential atmosphere, shared reflection opened possibilities for individual reflection. However, these individual reflections are linked to shared reflections at the same time.

Identifying and understanding the place where we are in our professional journey means both being able to 'map' ourselves on the path of professional development and simultaneously helping the student teachers to navigate their own development journey. We all have our individual paths, but our experiences, when shared, could be 'light posts' to others. Thus, identifying this can contribute to one's professional development on an individual level. During the course, we recognised that we have discussed with the students more about our development as teachers than earlier. It led to a reflection on how much the teacher educator should reveal the core of their teaching.

I felt that sharing our own experiences was very uplifting during the seminars. Some students came to talk after teaching more than in other courses. In addition, I realised that throughout my career, I have deepened and developed my approach of guidance.
(Teacher educator Anna)

Therefore, we needed to immerse ourselves in the student teachers' world views and place them in their professional path to support them. We concur that incorporating teacher educators' prior experiences and knowledge, reflecting on them and connecting them into practice support teacher educators in shaping the desired notion of teacher educator identity, which is consistent with previous studies (see Haamer, Lepp, & Reva, 2012; Lamote & Engels, 2010; Wenger, 1998). However, this can also be seen as mutually beneficial for student teachers because the process of developing a professional identity can be similar to them.

Accordingly, we became aware of the foundations of our professionalism and realised how our self-confidence and self-efficacy has developed over the years. However, the student teachers' reflections showed more fragile and budding features of professional identity. We realised how important it is to recognise and address these potentials in teacher education in order to build confidence within the students. We reflected those questions, as the quotation from Lisa's reflection shows.

I wonder how the ideal is constructed – whether it comes from teacher education or comes from a broader framework. Second, I wonder, what is the ideal of a teacher educator. Is it similar to the students' descriptions or something different? (Teacher educator Lisa)

As the previous quotation shows, in our individual reflections, we dealt with ideals, strengths and competencies as well as reinforced our pedagogical approach. Although we could recognise our approaches and conceptions, as teacher educators, we considered the most central competence – or at least an aim – to help students to find their strengths and courage to examine their own beliefs and those areas in which they need to grow. In addition, when reading the students' reflections, we realised how they have embraced many pedagogical principles without our contribution. We noticed we tend to interpret and assess the students' thoughts in relation to learning theories, especially to those that we value and that guide our pedagogical thinking.

Students have embraced good pedagogical principles, some even without the involvement of a teacher educator. There is a great temptation to start interpreting a student's thoughts in relation to learning theories and how they have realised them – that is, there seems to be a built-in need in me to assess students' reflections on theories that I either value or that guide my own teaching. In other words, I easily start to reinforce (or over-evaluate) the students' reflections based on something I, myself, have similar experiences. (Teacher educator Maria)

Therefore, we learnt that we should pay attention to situations when students tell us about a pedagogical principle that we do not agree with or do not value. Understanding one's development of pedagogical thinking can help the teacher educator to leave room for the students to create their own pedagogical principles and practices. Thus, as White (2014) reported, the experience of being alongside professionals among teacher educators, such as sharing ideas or discussing learning together, strengthened teachers' perception of their appreciation of personal development.

Further, when student teachers reflected on their pedagogical principles, they talked about child-centred teaching and learning – for example, emphasising play as the most natural way of acting for children and organising teaching from that perspective. Reflections on child-centred learning activities sparked a reflection in us as to what this should mean in the teacher education context. For example, the students talked about levelling with the children, which led us to think about what this means and how does it look like at the university level.

Students' talk about getting to the children's level. I wonder what it could mean or how could it look like at the university level. What kind of structures should I be able to create as a teacher in order to reach the world of students? If I just follow the curriculum goals, do I lose something? On the other hand, if I base my teaching on the needs of the students, will something essential be ignored, or will learning be fortified with my own opinions? (Teacher educator Lisa)

According to the results, this kind of situation with the student teachers led us to clarify and reinforce our pedagogical approach. This is in line with some studies that showed how advanced professionals seemed to be concerned about their own identity – what kind of teacher educators do they want to become – and see their students as individuals with different aims and needs (Van der Klink et al., 2017). To summarise, as teacher educators, we see it significant to understand the meaning of one's professional path and being aware of the foundations of one's professionalism and their contribution to team-based teaching practices (Barak et al., 2010).

Discussion and conclusions

This study contributes to the body of knowledge on teacher educators' professional development, particularly the significance of collaborative reflection in a team of teacher educators. The results are based on our experiences as a team while teaching the course in the master's level program

of teacher education. Especially, a close collaboration with student teachers and immersion into their reflections gave meaningful insights into how the relationship between teacher educators and student teachers influenced our reflections and learning. Furthermore, we consider that the self-study conducted through reflective journals and self-reports of reflections and conscious reflective discussions with colleagues throughout the course influenced the improvement of our professional learning and development. In addition, our method served as a means by which personal reflections could be made public (Loughran 2014) for creating a deeper understanding of teacher education for improvement.

Having said that, the findings of our study do not contribute, as such, to teacher educators' development unless the reflections are interpreted and adapted to different contexts. We argue that supporting student teachers' reflection can promote a meaningful space for reflection for teacher educators. However, to turn the reflection into learning and development, according to the findings, shared reflection is more beneficial than self-improvement in isolation (compared to Lave & Wenger, 1991; Samaras, 2002). For us, the two different themes of reflections generated discussions and ideas on how to utilise coteaching and shared reflection in teacher education in order to support a sense of community and how to understand the chain nature of teacher education by mapping our professional development journeys. Figure 4.1 shows the relationship between the study procedure and the self-study process and summarises how teacher educators can benefit from using reflective practices as a means to support professional development.

<FIGURE 4.1 HERE>

To conclude, we argue that if teacher education and teacher educators focus solely on teaching theories to students their own professional development can become stagnated as new input comes only by reading research and gaining new knowledge. We do not advocate that teacher educators should not base their teaching on research but as this study shows supporting student teachers' reflections and working closely together with the students, teacher educators are presented with possibilities for professional development. In addition, when teacher educators reflect together, the whole teacher education programme can be improved. Further studies are needed to examine teacher educators' reflective practices and professional development in

different kinds of teacher education contexts. Thus, it can be taken as an initiative to develop teacher education programmes together.

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Teacher Education in Finland

In Finland, teachers are required to have a master's degree – except for kindergarten teachers, whose qualification requirements include a bachelor's degree. Teacher education is arranged by academic universities and universities of applied sciences. Teacher education is a popular field of study, and the institutions can select the most well-suited, most motivated applicants for their programmes. The curriculum and contents of teacher education is created and developed independently by the organising institutions. The link between teaching and research is emphasised throughout the studies. In addition, supervised teaching practice is included in every program in teacher education. The teaching practice is mainly implemented in the universities' own teacher training schools. Supervised teaching practice involves giving of lessons, guidance discussions with the supervisors and familiarisation with tasks and responsibilities related to the everyday life of schools. The aim is for student teachers to become independent and responsible teachers, become increasingly proficient in their teaching subjects and learn to develop the work community in cooperation with other members of teaching staff.

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(word count: 7,284)

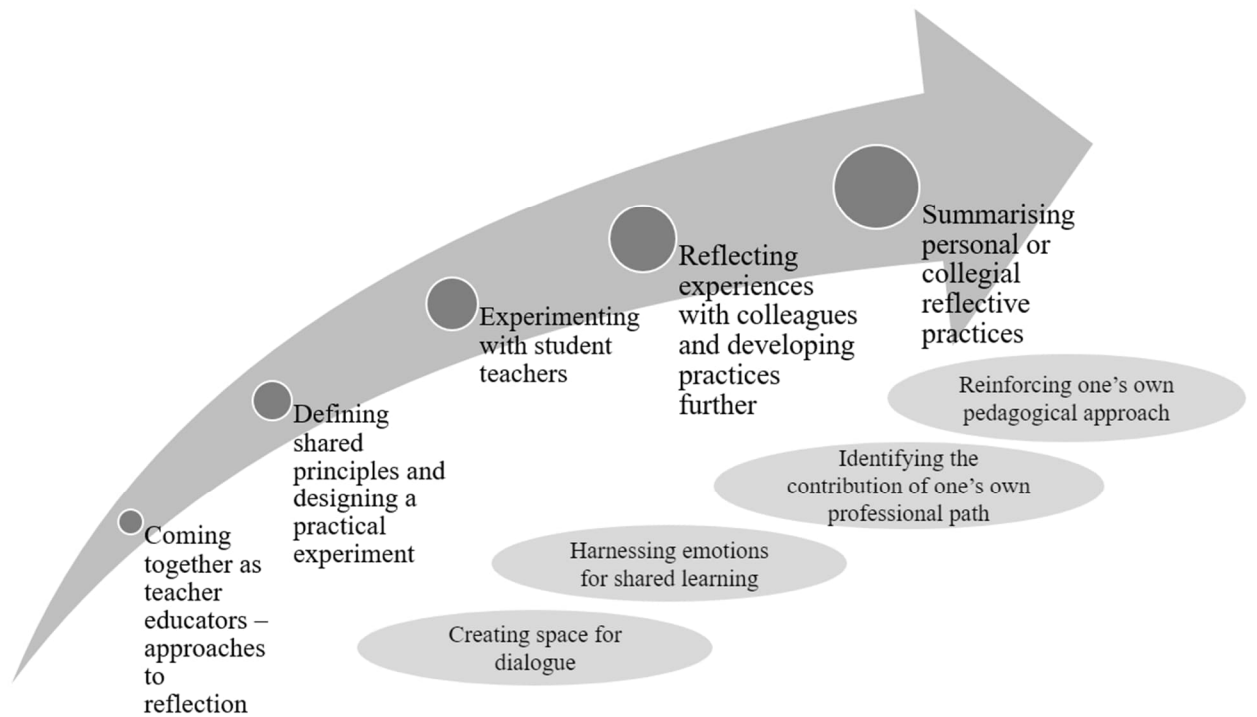


Figure 1. Emerging model of using reflection as a means to support teacher educators' professional development