

Anne Martin & Matti Pennanen

# Mobility and transition of pedagogical expertise in Finland



UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ  
FINNISH INSTITUTE FOR  
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

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## Abstract

Mobility and transition of pedagogical expertise in Finland is a publication based on the project “Mobility among pedagogical experts”, which was funded by the European Social Fund. The project was carried out in 2010–2013 in collaboration with the Finnish Institute for Educational Research, Finnish National Board of Education and the Vocational Teacher Education College, Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences. The publication gives an overall view of the teacher mobility and transition in the Finnish education system and discusses the key findings from the report on Mobility among pedagogical experts. Data for the above-mentioned project was collected by an online questionnaire (n = 4500) and interviews with former teachers (n = 15).

In Finland people consider teaching an appealing occupational choice for various reasons. Teacher’s work is autonomous, highly appreciated and found diverse and challenging. However, at some point in their teaching careers many teachers start to look for opportunities for career development and possibly consider another occupation altogether. Reasons for considering intra- and transprofessional mobility are very individual and usually connected to professional development, work contracts, working conditions, or seeking new challenges.

The beginning of the teaching career is loaded with huge responsibility. In the Finnish education system, teachers’ have full pedagogical and juridical responsibility since their first day of employment. Although induction is very important in the transition from teacher education to actual teachership, Finland does not have any statutory national induction programme for teachers. This leads to a variety of induction practices because every municipality is responsible for organising the induction for new teachers.

According to teachers, their profession has become increasingly diverse in terms of skill requirements. The future teacher is a multitalented professional who is collaborating with colleagues and multidisciplinary groups. Besides subject knowledge and pedagogical skills, information and communication technology skills are essential in the future. While pupils and students call for more individual attention, knowledge and skills of special education and differentiation are needed in the classroom.

Keywords: teachers, teachership, teacher mobility, general education, vocational education, beginning teacher induction, skill requirements



## Tiivistelmä

Julkaisu perustuu Euroopan sosiaalirahaston rahoittamaan Pedagoginen asiantuntijuus liikkeessä -tutkimusprojektiin (PAL-hanke). Projekti toteutettiin vuosina 2010–2013 Koulutuksen tutkimuslaitoksen, Opetushallituksen ja Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulun ammatillisen opettajakorkeakoulun yhteistyönä. PAL-hankkeen keskeisiä havaintoja tarkasteleva julkaisu tarjoaa yleiskatsauksen opettajien liikkuvuuteen ja siirtymiin Suomen koulutusjärjestelmässä. Projektin aineisto kerättiin verkkokyselyllä (n = 4500) sekä haastattelemalla entisiä opettajia (n = 15).

Suomessa opettajan ammattia pidetään houkuttavana ja alalle hakeudutaan monista eri syistä. Opettajan työ on itsenäistä ja arvostettua, ja se koetaan monipuoliseksi ja haastavaksi. Usein käy kuitenkin niin, että oltuaan alalla jonkin aikaa opettajat alkavat tutkailla mahdollisuuksia urakehitykseen tai ehkä harkita eri ammattiakin. Syyt, jotka saavat opettajat harkitsemaan ammatillista liikkuvuutta joko alan sisällä tai ammattialaa vaihtaen, ovat hyvin yksilöllisiä ja ne liittyvät useimmiten ammatilliseen kehitykseen, työsopimuksiin, työoloihin tai uusien haasteiden etsimiseen.

Opettajan uran alkutaivalta rasittaa suuri vastuu. Suomen koulutusjärjestelmässä opettajilla on täysi pedagoginen ja juridinen vastuu heti ensimmäisestä työpäivästä alkaen. Vaikka perehdytys on hyvin tärkeää siirryttäessä opettajankoulutuksesta ammattiin, Suomessa ei ole käytössä lakisääteistä valtakunnallista perehdytysohjelmaa. Näin ollen perehdytyskäytännöissä on suurta vaihtelua, koska jokainen kunta vastaa itse perehdytyksen järjestämisestä uusille opettajille.

Opettajien mielestä heidän ammattinsa on entisestään monipuolistunut. Tulevaisuuden opettaja on monilahjakas ammattilainen, joka toimii yhteistyössä kollegoiden ja

monialaisten ryhmien kanssa. Tieto- ja viestintäteknologiset taidot ovat tulevaisuudessa olennaisessa osassa oppisisältöjen hallinnan ja pedagogisten taitojen ohella. Oppilaat ja opiskelijat tarvitsevat yksilöllisempää huomiota ja siksi luokassa tarvitaan myös erityisopetuksen sekä opetuksen eriyttämisen tietoja ja taitoja.

Asiasanat: opettajat, opettajuus, opettajien liikkuvuus, yleissivistävä koulutus, ammatillinen koulutus, aloittelevan opettajan perehdytys, taitovaatimukset

## Introduction: Education and the profession of teaching in Finland

The continuously changing world is setting new challenges and difficulties for schools and teachers. Globally, many teachers end up leaving their occupation after just a few years of teaching. At the same time retirement percentages keep rising, which further increases the risks of teacher shortage. This trend is common in both European and American countries. The situation is especially serious in Northern America, where, according to many researchers, the percentage of teachers leaving their profession within five years from graduation is up to 50 per cent (Brill & McCartney, 2008, p. 750; Blazer, 2006, p. 1; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003, p. 3; Ingersol & Smith, 2004, p. 29). Nevertheless, one should be cautious with these percentages, as it seems difficult to find any comprehensive empirical data about them.

A similar trend of teacher mobility seems to occur in Finland as well, though to a lesser extent than in many other countries. This trend of crossovers and changing jobs within the educational field can be partly explained by the natural mobility in the Finnish labour market: mobility has become more common in all occupations in the last decades (Aho, Virjo, & Koponen, 2009; Aho & Mäkiäho, 2012). In addition, rapid changes in the world of work have created a need for pedagogical expertise in non-educational trades, like business, administration and coaching. Still, it is important to study these trends closer to gain knowledge about the phenomenon of mobility.

A lifelong career in teaching calls for continuing professional development. Teachers' should be able to receive support and possibilities to develop themselves throughout their careers: from the induction phase up to retirement. In order to keep our qualified professionals in the field of education, we must seek for ways to promote their professional development and well-being at work. More information is needed about the mobility and transition of teachers and the reasons behind it. It is the work of talented, committed and qualified teachers that makes our schools bloom, and that is why it is important to examine the expected future needs for teachers and look for ways to support teachers in their careers.

## The history of the Finnish school system and teacher education

The church was the central stakeholder of education till the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century when formal public school was introduced. Until then basic education had been a responsibility of the Lutheran church, their main aim being literate citizens who were able to read the Bible. Only the elite of citizens were allowed to participate in higher education. As the ideology of public education was gaining ground, the profession of teaching started to gain more social and political influence (Väljörvi, 2006, pp. 12–13; Sahlberg, 2011, pp. 70–71). After the civil war in 1918, public education was seen as a way to unify the divided nation by standardised upbringing of children from different social backgrounds (Väljörvi, 2006, p. 14). In the 1920s basic education became a legal obligation and right for all citizens of Finland (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 70). This changed the nature of the profession of teaching in a way that teachers had to be trained to have good organisational skills and ability to control and direct heterogeneous pupil groups. The number of children involved in schooling grew rapidly which increased the need for teachers. Meanwhile also the role of teachers as builders and establishers of an independent and patriotic nation was increasing. The key mission of education was to civilise the entire generation in order to improve Finnish industrial life and living conditions (Väljörvi, 2006, pp. 13–16).

The Finnish educational system was divided into two school sectors: everyone attended four years of elementary folk school, after which they would choose to move on either to grammar school or to civic school. Grammar school was the only route to academic studies, while civic school focused on vocational and practical education. The aims, content and pedagogy as well as the teacher training of these two schools were substantially different. It was commonly recognised that the system was causing social inequality. Gradually the popularity of grammar school started to grow, as the parents from lower social classes wanted to secure their children's future. An idea of merging the grammar, civic and primary schools into one compulsory school started to take shape. In the 1970s, after a long development process, the new comprehensive school (*perus-*

*koulu*) was launched. The comprehensive school was divided into two levels: primary level (grades 1–6) and lower secondary level (grades 7–9) and became compulsory for all Finnish children. The transfer to comprehensive school entailed changes to teacher training as well. Primary school teacher education was shifted to universities and the old teacher seminars were closed down. Pedagogical contents were increased in subject teacher training and the university-based teacher education programmes were made equivalent to other academic programmes leading to a Master level degree (Väljjarvi, 2006, pp. 15–17, Sahlberg, 2011, pp. 17–23, 71).

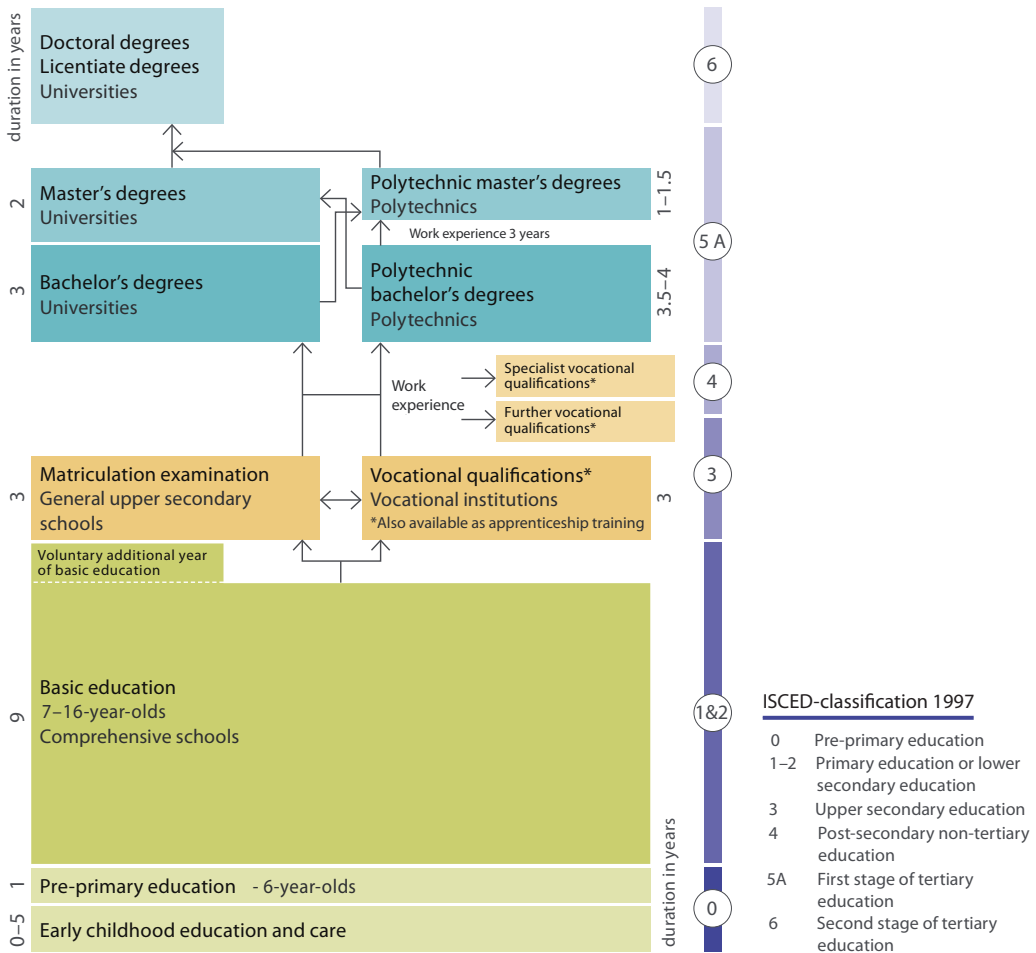
The first vocational schools were founded in 18<sup>th</sup> century. Vocational education started to evolve further in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when schools were founded for various fields such as economics, technology, agriculture and nursing. The popularity of vocational schools grew in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the structure became more organised and uniform. Gymnasium (High school) was a part of the Finnish education system since the 1850s and it has long historic roots in Finland. It was a continuum for grammar school and thus a gateway to academic studies. After the transition to the comprehensive school system, these more or less classic high schools became upper secondary schools, which provide general education for students (Nurmi, 1981, pp. 42, 69–72).

## The Finnish school system today

A central objective in the Finnish education policy is providing equal educational opportunities to all citizens. Compulsory education begins when a child turns seven and ends at the age of 16, in practice when completing the comprehensive school, thus lasting for about nine years. In Finland, pre-primary education, basic education and upper secondary education are free of charge (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013a). According to fairly recent statistics, the average number of pupils in Finnish primary school classrooms (grades 1–6) is 19.2 and at the lower secondary level (upper grades of the comprehensive school) the average class size is 17.4. For special education classes the average is 14.12 pupils (Karjalainen, 2011, p. 15).

The comprehensive school comprises the primary level (grades 1 to 6) and the lower secondary level (grades 7 to 9). The school-based curricula are based on a national core curriculum. Basic education lasts nine years, after which most students apply either for a general upper secondary school or a vocational school. Municipalities can also organise one year of additional basic education for young students (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013a). This additional year is called grade 10 and it is intended for young people who need support in raising their comprehensive school grades so as to improve their chances for employment or further studies.

**Figure 1.** Formal education in Finland (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013a)



General upper secondary education provides versatile knowledge and skills and prepares students for further studies. Studying at general upper secondary school is course-based and takes usually about three years. At the end of this school, virtually all students take the matriculation examination, which gives eligibility for further studies in universities, polytechnics and vocational institutions (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013a).

Vocational education lasts three years and all vocational qualifications consist of 120 credits (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 26). The aim of vocational upper secondary education is to improve the students' working skills in their chosen occupation and to respond to skills needs in society. Unlike general upper secondary students, the vocational students do

not have the matriculation examination (except for those pursuing a double qualification). Instead, they graduate with a vocational qualification, which allows them to apply for further studies or move to working life (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013a). According to Sahlberg (2011), a few years ago more than 40% of upper secondary students were enrolled in vocational schools. In recent years, however, vocational education has surpassed the general one in popularity, accounting now for a slight majority of new students at this level.

## Teacher education

In the comprehensive school, grades 1–6 are taught mainly by class teachers whose major subject at university was education. Grades 7–9 and general upper secondary levels are taught by specialised subject teachers having majored in their particular teaching subject and qualified in education as their minor subject at university. Vocational upper secondary and polytechnic teachers have usually had years of experience in their respective occupational field, after which they have acquired their teacher qualification through appropriate studies in a vocational teacher education college in a polytechnic. In 2010 there were about 40.000 principals and teachers working in basic education and about 7900 principals and teachers at upper secondary schools in Finland. About 90 per cent of them were formally qualified (Ojala, 2011, pp. 38, 52).

In Finland there are eight universities that coordinate training for primary school teachers (Karhu & Väistö, 2011, p. 25). Primary school teacher education consists of a three-year Bachelor's degree component and a two-year Master's degree component. The programme includes education, language and communication studies, multidisciplinary school subject studies and minor subject studies. A Master's thesis is compulsory for all teacher students (Sahlberg, 2011, pp. 78–81). The number of applicants has been growing constantly and therefore the percentage of accepted students is decreasing every year. About 70 per cent of primary school teacher students are women (Karhu & Väistö, 2011, pp. 25–28).

Before students become primary school teachers in Finland, they have passed a highly demanding selection process (Table 1). Besides appropriate academic achievements the teacher students must have great interpersonal skills, positive personality and show ability, willingness and commitment to work as a teacher. The candidates go through a two-phase selection: first they are scored and ranked based on their matriculation examination scores, school-leaving certificates, prior experiences in the educational field, and their success in the national teacher education entrance exam. Secondly, the candidates with highest scores have an interview in which they have a chance to show their motivation and capability as to becoming a teacher (Sahlberg, 2011, pp. 73, 75).

**Table 1.** *The applicants and accepted students for Finnish primary school teacher education*

Year	Number of applicants	Number of accepted	Percentage of accepted %
2008	5 695	880	15
2009	6 353	845	13
2010	6 832	858	12.5
2011	7 079	703	10
2012	7 918	779	10

Subject teacher qualification for grades 7–9 and general upper secondary schools include a Master's degree with a teaching subject as the major and teachers' pedagogical studies for at least 60 ECTS credits. Most faculties provide specific subject teacher programmes as an option for new students to apply directly for. It is also possible to begin the teacher studies later on after a few years of focusing first on the subject studies.

Vocational teacher training is organised in five Finnish polytechnics. In addition, one polytechnic provides vocational teacher training in Swedish. Vocational teacher training is targeted for present and prospective teachers of polytechnics and vocational schools. The applicants are required to have a suitable vocational qualification and at least three years of work experience in the occupational field. The annual number of applicants varies roughly within the range of 4 000–5 000. The acceptance percentage is usually about 50%. In 2010 the average age of the accepted students was 41 (Karhu & Väistö, 2011, p. 29).



## Background of the study

The research project *Mobility among pedagogical experts in Finland* was implemented in 2010–2013 in co-operation with the Finnish Institute of Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä; the Vocational Teacher Education College of JAMK University of Applied Sciences and the Finnish National Board of Education. Focusing on teachers' professional mobility and transition, the purpose was to gain empirical knowledge about the reasons and trends of this phenomenon. At the same time the project also aimed to evaluate expected future needs for teachers and find tools to support teachers' well-being and professional development.

## Methods

A web survey about the mobility and expected future needs of teachers was carried out in spring 2011. The questionnaire contained both quantitative multiple-choice items and qualitative open-ended questions. A sample of 4500 people was drawn from the members of the Trade Union of Education in Finland, The Swedish Trade Union of Education and the Trade Union of Adult Educators. There were altogether 1938 respondents, although with missing data for some factors. The questionnaire data were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. As a part of the research project, 15 former teachers were interviewed. The interviews were analysed using qualitative content analysis and narrative methods.

## Respondents of the survey

Of the respondents (N=1938), 1356 (70%) were general education teachers: class and subject teachers from comprehensive schools, general upper secondary school teachers and special education teachers, whereas 330 (17%) were working in vocational education (vocational schools, vocational adult education, and polytechnics). The rest 252 (13%) were mostly representatives of administration and education organisations. This report focuses mainly on the general education and vocational education teachers.

**Table 2.** Gender distribution of respondents by educational fields

Educational field	Gender	
	Female %	Male %
General education	74.1	25.9
Vocational education	54.4	45.6
Others	64.0	36.0
Total	69.6	30.4

As Table 2 shows, about 74 per cent of the general education teachers and 54 per cent of the vocational education teachers answering the questionnaire were women. These gender distributions are similar to the national statistics from 2010: according to Ojala (2011), 72.8 per cent of teachers and principals in general education are women and according to Kumpulainen and Karkama (2011), 52 per cent of teachers and principals in vocational education are women. The ages of the respondents varied between 20 and 70 (Table 3). The smallest age group was 20–29 (general education 6.7%, vocational education 1.6%), which is natural since most students begin their 5-year teacher studies at the age of 18 at the earliest. Teachers in vocational education represent older age groups, because they usually have previously worked in other occupations before becoming teachers. In general education the distribution is more even across the age groups.

The two national languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish. 72.7 per cent of the respondents from general education identified themselves as Finnish-speakers and 26.5 per cent as Swedish-speakers. 94.1 per cent of the vocational teachers were Finnish-speakers and 5.6 per cent were Swedish-speakers, matching closely the national ratio of these language groups. The percentage of respondents whose first language was other than Swedish or Finnish varied from 0.3 to 2.3 per cent. Most of the participants (general education 77.7%; vocational education 75.1%) had permanent full-time jobs as teachers. 10.9 per

**Table 3.** Respondents' age distribution by educational fields

Educational field	Age groups (in years)					Total
	20–29 %	30–39 %	40–49 %	50–59 %	60–69 %	
General education	6.7	22.6	25.4	34.2	11.0	100
Vocational education	1.6	10.3	20.5	43.3	24.4	100
Others	3.0	16.9	23.9	37.8	18.4	100
Total	5.4	19.8	24.4	36.2	14.2	100

cent of the general education teachers and 6.7 per cent of the vocational teachers worked full-time but with fixed-term contracts of employment. 10 per cent of the vocational teachers were working part time, whereas only 2.5 per cent of the general education teachers had a part-time job. Some respondents were on maternity leave (general education 4.7%, vocational education 2.4%).

Most of the vocational teachers in this study had sought to teacher education after working in their occupational field for several years. They had worked in both public and private sectors and in various positions such as employees, directors, consultants and entrepreneurs. At present, vocational teacher students must have at least three years of work experience in their field (Karhu & Väistö, 2010, p. 29). Some of the respondents had become teachers before the current qualification requirements when previous work experience was not yet required. About a half of the vocational sector respondents had applied for vocational teacher education while working elsewhere.

## Why do Finnish students want to become teachers?

In Finland teacher's occupation is perceived as an independent and autonomous profession, whereas in most other countries it is seen rather as structured and regulated mainly from the outside, lacking autonomy. According to various occupational surveys and rankings, in Finland the teaching profession enjoys a high general appreciation similar to other academic professions such as lawyers and medical doctors even though the salary of teachers is much lower (Sahlberg, p. 2011). Unlike other Nordic countries, Finland has managed to keep up the appreciation and attractiveness of the teaching profession, which is reflected in the high level of applicants for teacher education (Bjerkholt & Hedegaard, 2008, p. 58; Välijärvi, 2006, pp. 9–10, 19). Because of their high academic education and strong social status, Finnish teachers are also given a prominent role in schools' decision making, when compared to other OECD countries. For example, Finnish teachers are entrusted with such things as curricular content planning, choosing which educational material to use, and taking charge of student assessment. On the other hand, the increasing amount of responsibilities can also feel like a burden (Välijärvi, 2006, pp. 19–20; Välijärvi, 2005, p. 112).

In the project *Mobility among pedagogical experts* researchers asked the participants to explain their motives for pursuing a teacher's career. On the basis of the responses, an interest towards teaching can occur in any point of one's life. Some told that they had made the decision of becoming a teacher in their childhood already, whereas some others had done

so during their upper secondary or academic studies and some at a later stage of their previous careers. The underlying motives for choosing the teaching profession varied depending on the age, experiences and personal backgrounds of the respondents. In general, teaching was considered a social and interactive occupation, where working with children or young people can be combined to one's own interests. According to the data from the questionnaire's open-ended questions and the interviews alike, the motives of becoming a teacher can be divided into the following categories: Interest towards teacher's occupation, meaningfulness of the job, social aspects of the teaching profession, role models and family background, suitability to one's personality, academic education, and no particular reason or "drifting" to the occupation.

A teacher's job was seen as an interesting, versatile and suitably challenging profession, which allows personal orientations, such as education in general, different subjects and social activities. Teaching, upbringing and education were considered to be significant and important from a social and humane point of view. The respondents felt that teachers' work is important for society. Also, the motives of teaching had often to do with the social aspects of this work. Working with people, collaborating with colleagues and interaction with students were seen as an important source of motivation for choosing this occupation, which is well in line with the notion that teacher student candidates are expected to be socially talented.

The academic status of teacher education is a strong motive for many to apply for teacher training. The chance to study for a master's degree at university is appealing. The academic nature of Finnish teacher education illustrates the public appreciation of the occupation and some may feel that a master's degree enables various job opportunities in the educational field. Moreover, role models can have a deep impact on one's desire to become a teacher. The most typical role model is a parent or other family member, but an admired or appreciated teacher from one's childhood or youth can also set an example for future career choices. The respondents describe teaching as a job that fits their own personality and interests. Being able to express oneself and to work using one's personality is considered significant.

Some respondents could not specify their motives for choosing a teaching career, and many of them stated that they had simply drifted to the occupation. For example, a university student of a particular subject such as history or mathematics may realise that there are not many employment opportunities without a teacher's qualification and therefore seek to the pedagogical studies. Some may be encouraged to apply for teacher education by friends and family. Nonetheless, as students themselves choose to apply for this line of studies, drifting does not refer here to ending up unconsciously to being a teacher.

The motives for becoming a teacher in vocational education were somewhat different compared to general education teachers. Vocational teachers have work experience

Why do Finnish students want to become teachers?

of several years in their respective vocational fields before coming to teacher education. Some of them saw teaching as positive and attracting as such, while others saw it as the only occupational choice available for them in a challenging employment situation, like in recession. Some respondents regarded teaching as a natural continuum of their careers, a way to develop their expertise and to get a better job with a more steady income. Working as a teacher offers new professional challenges and a possibility to take advantage of one's previous occupation and training. Further motives for teaching can also be found in personally unsatisfying previous jobs, family's needs and prior experience in teaching. Vocational teachers mentioned long vacations, good employment opportunities and reasonable salary as motives more often than teachers from general education.

# Mobility of pedagogical expertise in general and vocational education

## Intraprofessional and transprofessional mobility

Mobility refers to changes of profession, where a person moves from one occupational group to another. These transitions are influenced by different changes in working life, such as structural changes, development of technology and economy's trade cycle. Employees react to these changes by seeking new job opportunities, some willingly and some out of necessity. Mobility can also arise from one's desire to move on or develop in their career. It can also be a result of various personal reasons (Hanhijoki, Katajisto, Kimari, & Savioja, 2011, p. 92).

Mobility in the study's context can be intraprofessional or transprofessional. Transprofessional mobility refers to moving from one occupational field to another, i.e. leaving not only the teaching job but the entire field of education. Intraprofessional mobility refers to changing jobs but staying in the field of education. For example, some teachers may start teaching a new subject or become principals or student counsellors. This is seen as a part of teachers' professional development. It is natural that some teachers want to move forward in their careers and this should not be considered a negative change, but rather as an opportunity to make the most of teachers' expertise in the field of education.

## Mobility internationally and in Finland

The lack of qualified teachers is a rising concern in many countries. Both European and American countries face the challenges of teachers leaving their jobs after just a few years of working. According to many researchers, in Northern America the percentage of teachers leaving their profession within five years from graduation is up to 50 per cent (Brill & McCartney, 2008, p. 750; Blazer, 2006, p. 1; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003, p. 3; Ingersol & Smith, 2004, p. 29), though it is not clear whether these percentages refer to intraprofessional or transprofessional mobility or both. There are a large number of 'dormant' teachers of working age in Europe. Some teacher graduates may never enter the teaching profession in the first place. There are also outflows of experienced teachers to other professions or withdrawing from the field for family reasons. Local employment problems can also increase the number of dormant teachers (European Commission, 2006, pp. 9, 68).

There has been some debate about teachers leaving their profession in Finland. The percentages presented in the media seem sometimes as exaggerated. There are no official, statistical data available about the percentage of teachers who leave their profession. Nissinen and Välijärvi (2011, p. 31) estimate that about 15 per cent of today's qualified primary school teachers will leave their profession because of intra- or transprofessional mobility by the year 2025. The estimates for subject teachers and vocational teachers vary depending on the subject, field and the method of assessment (Nissinen & Välijärvi, 2011).

The trend of crossovers and changing jobs within the educational field can be partly explained by the natural mobility in the labour market. According to Lehto and Sutela (2008), about 40 per cent of Finns have stayed in a single occupation for their entire careers. Employees in the field of education seem to be most loyal to their occupation: about 51 per cent of educational workers have stayed in their occupation for their whole careers. According to national statistics from 2008, 37 per cent of all Finnish employees had changed jobs within the last five years. This percentage includes people who have stayed in the same occupation, but changed workplaces. There is a big variation in changing jobs among different age groups: 76 per cent of 15–24 year old employees had changed jobs during the last five years, whereas the percentage is only 11 per cent in the age group of 55–64 years (Lehto & Sutela, 2008, pp. 24–27). It is unclear how the general economic situation since then has affected these percentages. Estimating future mobility is challenging, because it is influenced by so many economic factors, changes in occupational structures and industrial life and various individual reasons (Hanhijoki, Katajisto, Kimari & Savioja, 2009, p. 114).



## Results of the study

### Teachers' plans: Staying or leaving

When asked if the respondents (Table 4) would rather stay in teaching or cross over to another job, most preferred to stay in teaching. A fifth of the teachers reported they would rather do something else than be teachers and had seriously considered changing their occupation. However, these percentages do not tell whether they were considering leaving just teaching, yet staying in the field of education, or changing altogether over to another occupational field. Over one fourth of the teachers had considered leaving their current job and about a third of both general and vocational teachers had thought of taking a sabbatical leave. When asked about their interest towards postgraduate studies or studying for a new occupation, about a third of the respondents told they had considered these options.

**Table 4.** Future plans for the work career by educational fields

Career plan		Educational field			Total %
		General %	Vocational %	Others %	
Further studies	Yes	34.3	35.8	39.8	35.1
	No	60.3	55.1	54.1	58.7
	Cannot say	5.5	9.1	6.1	6.2
Changing profession	Yes	20.4	17.0	24.6	20.3
	No	74.0	79.4	72.2	74.7
	Cannot say	5.6	3.6	3.2	5.0
Changing work place	Yes	28.1	24.7	32.6	28.0
	No	65.6	67.0	64.7	65.8
	Cannot say	6.3	8.3	2.6	6.2
Having a sabbatical leave	Yes	36.6	36.4	31.0	36.0
	No	57.8	55.4	62.0	57.9
	Cannot say	5.6	8.2	7.0	6.1

Mobility within the educational field seems to be greater in the vocational sector, as there 23.8% of the teachers had transferred to other posts, while 88.2 per cent of the general education teachers had stayed in their teaching posts (Table 5). Different posts within the educational field can relate to administration and management, various projects (coordinating, assisting and directing), training, or research and development.

**Table 5.** *Moving to other posts within the educational field*

Educational field	Have you moved to other posts within the educational field?	
	No %	Yes %
General	88.2	11.8
Vocational	76.2	23.8
Others	56.9	43.1
Total	82.6	17.4

Almost a half (49.4%) of the vocational teachers had come from another profession. For general education teachers this percentage was only 14.1 per cent (Table 6). This difference can be explained by the different nature of vocational and general teacher education: vocational teachers are expected to have several years of work experience from their own field before applying for teacher education. The general education teachers who had shifted to teaching from another profession came mainly from business life, industry, youth work and administration. As currently requested, vocational teachers had typically worked in their respective vocational fields before becoming teachers.

**Table 6.** *Coming to the teaching profession from another trade*

Educational field	Moved to teaching from another trade	
	No %	Yes %
General	85.9	14.1
Vocational	50.6	49.4
Others	66.5	33.5
Total	77.7	22.3

## Reasons for leaving teaching

The motives for intraprofessional mobility have to do with professional development, ambition to move on in one’s career and interest towards new job positions. Some respondents explained their intraprofessional mobility with a chance: an interesting position happens to open up at the right time or the management asks a teacher to apply for a particular position. Transprofessional mobility was not very common for the respondents

of this study. The job positions outside the educational field could have to do with sales, the corporate world, enterprises, journalism and random jobs (summer jobs, working abroad). The reasons for transprofessional mobility varied from simply being recruited to a new job to pursuing a better salary. Some had wanted more challenges, while others had looked for less stressful and demanding work. Also employment issues, like not finding a job as a teacher, or at least not with a satisfactory contract, had made some respondents leave the educational field.

In the general education sector, teachers were interested in developing themselves and finding new challenges. This was one of the main reasons for considering leaving the teaching profession. Teachers might want to move forward in their careers or had been offered different interesting jobs. Teaching can be stressful and straining: problems with students and their parents can feel overwhelming. Some respondents felt that the demands and responsibilities were in discrepancy with the salary and appreciation of teachers' job. In addition, possible problems in the work community and the lack of support from superiors can also decrease teachers' job satisfaction.

Vocational school, polytechnic and adult education teachers had considered leaving the teaching profession for partly the same reasons. The most commonly mentioned reasons were changes in teachers' work, problems with the organisation and leadership, and personal professional development. The teachers felt that new responsibilities take too much time from actual teaching. Organisational Changes, poor management, reduced resources, and tiresome bureaucracy gave rise to the ideas of shifting to another profession. Professional development and readiness to move on in one's career can also drive teachers to new challenges. Vocational school and adult education teachers found the increased burdens and instability of their jobs a problem. Vocational school teachers mentioned low salary and problems with student behaviour as reasons for considering a change of occupation.

The respondents were asked which characteristics of their work strengthen or weaken their willingness to stay in the teaching profession. They perceived autonomy of the work, good relations with the students and colleagues, work enjoyment and positive work atmosphere as the most strengthening aspects of teacher's work. Working time and communality were also important strengthening aspects for general and vocational education teachers alike. The vocational teachers emphasised the chance of developing oneself and work-related connections more than general education teachers. Large teaching groups and changes in teachers' occupation were considered to weaken the motivation for teaching.

## Interviewees' perceptions

As a part of the study, former teachers were interviewed about their experiences in teaching and the reasons for changing their occupation. The reasons could be divided into three categories: progress and development in career, multitalented teachers with versatile interests, and working circumstances. Some former teachers felt that a teacher's career does not offer many chances for moving on in one's career. Teachers may have a desire for new challenges and they may be interested in postgraduate or further studies. Some of the interviewees had interests towards different occupational opportunities and had been offered an interesting job or position: teachers are often multitalented, socially active people whose personality can suit to many occupations. Problems with the working circumstances had also been one reason for the interviewees to leave teaching. These problems could be social, personal or physical: unsatisfying characteristics of teacher's work, low salary, problems with motivation and unhealthy working spaces were mentioned in the interviews.

# The induction phase for new teachers

## Challenges to new teachers

Unlike in most other fields, newly qualified teachers are given a full pedagogical and legal responsibility in the very beginning of their work career (Bjerkholt & Hedegaard, 2008, p. 46; Tynjälä & Heikkinen, 2011, p. 12). The beginning is crucial for new teachers and sometimes it might feel like a “swim or sink” period. The induction phase is an intermediating link between initial teacher training and in-service teacher training. (Jokinen, Heikkinen & Morberg, 2012, p. 4). It has also been described as a period of transition, where beginning teachers are offered supervision and support to adjust to their new roles as teachers (Blair-Larsen, 1992, p. 1). To overcome the challenges of the early working career, induction is a necessary form of support.

According to their own assessment, newly qualified teachers do not possess adequate knowledge about the curricula, school community, and local operation principles and practices. During their early years in teaching new teachers must learn and grow into their job through professional development, but the induction phase also includes socialisation and getting to know the school community and its work culture. Facing the daily challenges of teaching is considered problematic and demanding for the new teachers (Bjerkholt & Hedegaard, 2008, p. 46; Jokinen, Heikkinen, & Morberg, 2012, pp. 1–2). Tynjälä and Heikkinen (2011, pp. 13–17) have identified the following difficulties awaiting for new teacher graduates: 1) threat of unemployment, 2) inadequate knowledge and

skills, 3) decreased self-efficacy and increased stress, 4) early attrition, 5) role and position of newcomers in a work community, and 6) importance of workplace learning.

Teachers should receive systematic guidance and support during their induction year (Blomberg, 2008, pp. 50, 211). According to the European Commission (2007), all teachers should be able to take part in an effective induction programme within the first three years of their careers. Induction programmes emphasise the element of structured support, such as guidance and mentoring, by experienced teachers or other educational professionals. (European Commission, 2007, pp. 12–13). In Finland, in their mentoring groups with their colleagues, teachers typically discuss everyday problems and challenges, such as problematic students, behavioural problems, interaction with parents, and cooperation schemes (Jokinen & Välijärvi, 2006). The Finnish model of peer-group mentoring has had very promising results as a nation-wide induction programme (Heikkinen, Jokinen, & Tynjälä, 2012).

## Induction in the Finnish education system

The respondents were asked to what extent they had used or been offered different forms of inductive support at the beginning of their teaching careers. Two main factors were discovered: the support organised by the educational institutions and the support from colleagues. The first mentioned includes formal support such as specific events organised by the employers, orientation folders, and brief orientation sessions. The latter form of support includes social and personal support such as mentoring and guidance by colleagues or the principal. The respondents felt that they had better opportunities to utilise the social support given by colleagues, mentors and principals. Institutional, structured support was not perceived as useful as the social support. The question remains, however, to what extent new teachers have actually taken advantage of the inductive support offered to them.

The contents of support in the induction phase were divided into four categories: 1) interaction and pedagogical skills, 2) co-operation with partners outside the school, 3) getting to know the school, colleagues and school's operation culture, and 4) becoming familiar with the school's administration. The participants were asked how important they considered these different contents. Teachers from both general education and vocational education considered the third category to be the most important one for teacher induction. Familiarising oneself with the school's facilities, materials, curriculum and rules and getting to know the colleagues, principal and other staff members were seen essential for a new teacher. Interaction and pedagogical skills such as developing one's own teacher identity, working with students and their parents, and recognising the needs of different learners were also considered important, especially for general education teachers. Com-

prehensive school teachers have a strong obligation to participate in the upbringing of the pupils and therefore interaction with both pupils and their parents plays a significant role in their work. The importance of co-operation with partners outside the school seems to be more significant for the vocational teachers, which is understandable due to the nature of their work: vocational teachers must have good connections to the world of work as they have to arrange many opportunities for the students to get to know their future vocation. Co-operation with partners outside the school includes, for instance, collaboration with professionals from other fields, contacts to partners, international activities, and research and development schemes of the school. Becoming familiar with the school's administration and collaboration with representatives of the administration was perceived as the least important element in the induction phase.

## Perceptions and experiences of induction phase support

In general, induction phase support was seen as beneficial for new teachers. The support brings professional, personal and social benefits: It can increase self-confidence and well-being at work, improve professional knowledge, raise commitment to the school and students, and increase possibilities for collaboration with colleagues. Induction phase support can also facilitate contacts to parents, the local community, and professionals from other fields. Inductive support can also enhance chances to participate in the development work of the school. Female respondents put more emphasis on the benefits of inductive support than their male peers did.

The interviewees pointed out the social aspects of support for new teachers. The support, advice and openness of colleagues were considered meaningful. Especially general education teachers had experiences of a mentor or trusted colleague, whose support was appreciated. The help from a tutor was mentioned also by interviewees from the vocational sector. The support received from management and principals varied. Good ways for a principal to support a new teacher included openness and showing interest towards teachers' development. Most interviewees perceived the support they had received as lesser than expected or needed. Some felt that they had been "thrown to the wolves" without providing them with the tools they would have needed.

While there has apparently been some improvement in terms of offering inductive support and teachers taking advantage of it, it is still important to continue developing the Finnish induction system. Further research is needed to gain more knowledge about the present induction practices and ways to improve them

## Teacher induction: how to support new teachers?

Some kind of support is usually provided for new teachers' in the induction phase. The word *induction* can be conceptualised as "professional competence development for beginners" or "support to novice teachers" (Bjerkholt & Hedegaard, 2008, p. 46). According to the European Commission (2010), induction aims at reducing teacher drop-out rates, improving teacher quality, supporting professionalism in schools and providing feedback for initial teacher education. These aims are pursued by offering personal, social and professional support to new teachers through mentoring, peer and expert support and self-reflection (European Commission, 2010, pp. 13–19). Mentoring is the most widespread form of inductive support. Other common types of support are meetings for discussion about teachers' challenges, assistance with the planning of their work, participation in other teachers' classes, classroom observation, special compulsory training and visits to other schools and resource centres (ibid, p. 41).

Most European countries have a structured induction programme where beginning teachers receive additional training, personalised help and advice for several months. In many European countries induction is a compulsory phase, which includes a final assessment as a prerequisite for final qualification (European Commission, 2013a, p. 39). In other countries, induction is aimed at teachers who are qualified and have license to teach or who are qualified but do not have the license to teach. Some countries have no structured induction programme but rely on regulations or recommendations on other type of support for new teachers (European Commission, 2010, pp. 10–12). In Finland, there is not yet any official nationally organised induction system. Education providers and individual schools can autonomously arrange support for new teachers and therefore there are notable differences between schools in terms of their induction practices. The high appreciation of teachers and the overall success of Finnish schools may partly explain the lack of induction programmes in Finland, but there is also growing awareness of a rising need for support to new teachers (Bjerkholt & Hedegaard, 2008, pp. 52, 58).

Mentoring is regarded as an effective way to promote the professional development of induction phase teachers. Peer-group mentoring (PGM) is a model of collegial support, where both mentors and mentees can reciprocally learn from each other, share thoughts and experiences, solve problems and create new knowledge. The PGM meetings are usually held once a month and each session lasts from 1 to 3 hours. The groups make their own rules for participation, decide on the discussion topics, and set the schedule for the meetings.

The Finnish model of peer-group mentoring is developed and disseminated by the Finnish network for Teacher Induction, which is part of the national Osaava programme. This programme started in 2010 and it is funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education



and Culture. The purpose is to create practices and tools to enhance teachers' professional development and promote their well-being at work (Heikkinen, Jokinen, & Tynjälä, 2012). At this point PGM has proven to be a very potential and promising model to support professional development and the induction of new teachers in general and vocational education alike. Feedback and experiences have been consistently positive and the model works mainly as planned; it supports teachers' professional development and promotes their well-being at work.

## Expected qualitative needs for teachers in the future

Teacher's job is continuing intellectual, social and emotional interaction with students, colleagues and parents as well as society at large. In a society where knowledge and information are in rapid change teachers are expected to be ethically aware pedagogical experts with a broad knowledge of information technology (Väljärvi, 2006, pp. 21–22). At the same time, constant reforms are straining teachers and taking time away from actual teaching and interacting with the students (Syrjäläinen, 2004). In this pressure, teachers have to develop their skills and competences, while professional development is seen as an obligation in most European countries, including Finland (European Commission, 2013b, p. 57). In order to plan future teacher training, up-to-date knowledge is needed about the central aspects of pedagogical expertise and the future trends of the teaching profession (Tynjälä, 2006).

### **Finnish Teachers' in-service training and skill requirements now and in the future**

Teachers' participation in in-service training to increase their professional knowledge varied between educational fields. The most popular forms of such training were visits to various corporations, seminars organised by professionals of different fields, seminars

organised by educational departments, joint projects with partners from the working life, and training pertaining to work practice programmes. In our data, vocational teachers were the most active group to participate, whereas general education teachers' participation was rather minimal compared to other educational fields, except for corporation visits. The average amount of general education teachers' in-service training was less than a half compared to the vocational teachers. On average, the general education teachers had received approximately 4.5 months of in-service training, whereas the figure for vocational teachers was about 10 months and for the other educational field 7.5 months.

Teachers need a wide range of skills and competences to manage their daily tasks. In this study teachers assessed the importance of 15 different skill areas for the teaching profession at present (Table 7) and in the near future, after five years (Table 8). For the present, the teachers rated subject and content skills, general pedagogical skills and creative thinking skills as the most important skill areas in every educational field. Skills related to workplace cooperation were assessed notably higher for vocational education, and overall the vocational teachers gave higher ratings for the skill areas in comparison to the other teacher groups. As for the future skill requirements, the respondents emphasised the importance of ICT skills, knowledge about diversity and how to organise special support, besides the aforementioned skill areas. Interestingly, the ratings were higher for the future skill requirements than for the present ones. Every skill area presented in the questionnaire was rated at least as quite important (3 or higher on the scale 1–5), so requirements for teachers' competence are quite diverse and will get increasingly demanding in the future from the teachers' point of view.

Qualitative data about anticipated skill requirements for teacher's competence were gathered by means of open-ended questions. The analysed data were consistent with the quantitative data: teachers reported a wide range of anticipated future skill requirements. Skills related to social interaction formed a major portion of the general education teachers' answers. For classroom management, teachers need to be capable to instruct students both individually and in groups. This involves ability to recognise the individual needs of the students and possibly differentiate the teaching accordingly. Furthermore, teachers' must be able to handle pupils with learning difficulties and take account of the variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Also cooperation with colleagues and multiprofessional groups was reported in the qualitative data. Successful cooperation calls for appropriate interactive and communicative skills. For professional expertise, teachers need to have adequate pedagogical skills and up-to-date content knowledge, including information and communication technology. To maintain an adequate level of expertise, teachers need to take care of their professional development and keep up a critical and flexible orientation. In an organisation like school also administrative, juridical and leadership skills will have importance for teacher's work in the future.

**Table 7.** Importance of skill areas for the present

Skill area	Educational field						F	Significance
	General		Vocational		Others			
	Mean	s	Mean	s	Mean	s		
Subject knowledge	4.49	0.69	4.54	0.69	4.46	0.67	0.99	
Pedagogical skills	4.42	0.72	4.32	0.78	4.40	0.73	2.34	
ICT-skills and pedagogy	4.00	0.79	4.14	0.83	3.92	0.94	5.26	*
Guiding and instructing	3.71	0.90	4.17	0.83	3.95	0.90	35.76	***
Combining theory and practice	3.57	0.96	4.22	0.82	3.80	0.94	61.98	***
Cooperation and collaboration	3.90	0.87	4.04	0.86	4.00	0.84	4.22	*
Assessment skills	3.87	0.87	4.02	0.86	3.78	0.90	5.30	**
Creative thinking	4.10	0.82	4.11	0.84	4.21	0.83	1.53	
International networking	3.36	0.98	3.63	0.98	3.44	1.02	10.03	***
Diversity knowledge	3.69	0.95	3.66	0.98	3.68	1.01	0.20	
Special education and differentiating teaching	3.92	0.93	3.82	1.00	3.75	1.04	3.59	*
Knowledge about educational system	3.65	0.91	3.74	0.96	3.55	0.95	2.66	
Knowledge of working life	2.92	1.02	4.16	0.89	3.39	1.09	201.51	***
Leadership	3.82	0.92	3.90	0.85	3.75	1.03	1.95	
Lifelong learning	3.89	0.92	4.07	0.91	4.00	0.90	5.70	**

\*\*\* = significance level  $p < 0.001$   
 \*\* = significance level  $p < 0.01$   
 \* = significance level  $p < 0.05$

The increasing number of students with learning difficulties and different ethnic backgrounds is also challenging teachers' pedagogical competence in vocational education. Accordingly, skills related to working with different types of learners formed a major streak in the data, while the vocational teachers' reported widely the need for competences pertaining to special education. In addition, they pointed out the need for continuous development of pedagogical thinking, skills and knowledge. The answers reflected an anticipated change in teacher's role, which was seen to become more like that of a guide or coach in the future. Because of this new role, teachers will have to transform and develop their pedagogical competence to meet the new expectations. The "new pedagogy" involves a variety of perspectives, new learning environments, breaking the boundaries of traditional settings, and emphasising the role of networking and group learning.

**Table 8.** Importance of the skill areas in the future

Skill area	Educational field						F	Significance
	General		Vocational		Others			
	Mean	s	Mean	s	Mean	s		
Subject knowledge	4.46	0.84	4.60	0.71	4.46	0.79	3.77	*
Pedagogical skills	4.56	0.78	4.52	0.74	4.57	0.77	0.43	
ICT-skills and pedagogy	4.49	0.81	4.54	0.77	4.30	0.95	5.77	**
Guiding and instructing	4.13	0.94	4.55	0.72	4.26	0.88	27.50	***
Combining theory and practice	3.77	1.02	4.47	0.77	4.07	0.95	69.09	***
Cooperation and collaboration	4.18	0.90	4.34	0.80	4.32	0.83	5.88	**
Assessment skills	4.01	0.94	4.23	0.84	4.04	0.90	7.66	***
Creative thinking	4.34	0.85	4.42	0.75	4.49	0.74	3.61	*
International networking	3.82	1.05	4.12	0.97	3.90	1.01	11.22	***
Diversity knowledge	4.24	0.92	4.20	0.91	4.23	0.93	0.22	
Special education and differentiating teaching	4.29	0.93	4.20	0.97	4.04	1.07	6.30	**
Knowledge about educational system	3.80	0.95	3.90	0.93	3.76	0.97	1.59	
Knowledge of working life	3.25	1.08	4.45	0.84	3.73	1.12	169.16	***
Leadership	4.00	0.96	4.16	0.85	4.03	0.95	3.46	*
Lifelong learning	4.16	0.92	4.32	0.88	4.33	0.80	6.16	**

\*\*\* = significance level  $p < 0.001$

\*\* = significance level  $p < 0.01$

\* = significance level  $p < 0.05$

## Teachers' pedagogical expertise and development of the profession

The teachers' views were surveyed by open-ended questions about future pedagogical expertise and how they would like to develop their profession. Their views about pedagogical expertise were in line with their responses for anticipated skill requirements; the teachers saw their profession as a multifaceted pedagogical profession. Future teachers are multitalented professionals, whose role is expanded to collegial collaboration with multidisciplinary groups. Such collaboration involves also international and multicultural projects. The general education and vocational teachers held largely similar views, but with some significant differences.

The diversity of their job description poses a huge challenge to teachers. In the future, the respondents would prefer to focus on the pedagogical and educational task, and consolidate their fragmented task field. As general education teachers saw it, this requires emphasising the parents' responsibility for their children's upbringing, in other words family-like nurturing or parenting should not be the first priority in teacher's work. Hence, in addition to the development of collegial collaboration and networking, this calls for enhanced collaboration between school and homes. In general, the vocational teachers shared the view about the fragmented task field, although with some contrary opinions as well. But mainly the vocational teachers wished for the development of communality, equality across the different fields of vocational education and training, and shared understanding of the common responsibility for the educational task that has been set for the organisation.

Despite the already high appreciation of teacher's profession in Finland, the respondents suggested that the significant developmental targets should include not only the salary level and working environments but also the appreciation of the teaching profession in general. While the teaching profession enjoys a high status in Finland, a key question is how to maintain this high status in the future. The current salary level of Finnish teachers is about average in international comparison. On the other hand, the dissatisfaction for the salary level is understandable because, according to the survey, teachers feel that the work has become more demanding over the years and believe it will only become increasingly demanding in the future. As salaries have not risen accordingly, teachers feel that the current salary level is not in line with the job expectations. At present, teachers are working largely outside of their teaching hours and when the salary is paid based on the teaching hours, teachers are actually doing extra work without getting paid for it. The data shows clearly the demand that either the teacher's work tasks should be pruned or the salary level should be upgraded to match the scope of their work.

The working environment is also a major concern for teachers. Teachers may end up in the classroom with almost 30 students and this kind of class size makes it difficult to e.g. differentiate the teaching or pay attention to any individual needs of students. Hence, smaller teaching groups were one concrete example of teachers' wishes or proposals regarding how to develop the working environment. Another concern had to do with the condition of school buildings: many schools suffer from mould, dampness and indoor air problems (Reijula et al., 2012). Municipalities are responsible for organising the education and this covers also the maintenance of the facilities. The report about public buildings (ibid) points out that the maintenance has obviously been neglected if we look at the condition of the facilities and the fact that the poor condition of school buildings has already caused health problems to many teachers and students across the country.

## In-service training: importance and development

The respondents emphasised in-service training as a meaningful way to support teachers' professional development. Most of the general education teachers regarded that their in-service training should be voluntary and based on the teachers' own interests. However, some teachers mentioned that the in-service training could also be obligatory. One group of general education teachers stated that in-service training alone is not sufficient but teachers would also need supplementary studies and qualifications. Other suggested forms to support teachers' professional development were peer-support, mentoring and clinical work supervision ('työnohjaus' in Finnish). According to some responses, also the work community needs development and support, for instance in terms of learning from colleagues, shared planning time and increasing the collegial collaboration. This would call for reforms with respect to the working hours and collective agreements, so that teachers could have opportunities and common time for collaboration. Furthermore, the respondents speculated about reforming the teachers' job description and eventually also teacher education. Teacher education was criticised for being too theoretical, and it was wished that the training programme would involve more practical training and contacts with the working life.

The vocational teachers' views of in-service training focused on subject and content knowledge and know-how, as well as on developing their pedagogical expertise. According to them, in-service training for pedagogical expertise should include special education aspects and knowledge about working with multicultural student groups. In addition, teachers would also need information about occupational well-being, utilisation of social media, and enhancing communication and interaction skills. In all, the views about in-service training were quite varied and the identified needs seemed to depend on various regional, organisational and individual matters. An important feature of in-service training was its perceived successfulness. Positive past experiences tend to feed willingness for future participation. This applies to in-service training as well.

## Summary

### The mobility and transition of pedagogical expertise

Phenomena are always situated in some kind of a context and this applies to teachers' mobility as well: it takes place in the context of the educational system and the labour market setting. In the Finnish educational system, teacher students graduate with full formal qualifications for the profession and when working as a teacher they also have full pedagogical and juridical responsibility from the outset. Teacher's heavy load of work and responsibilities may come as "a reality shock" for beginning teachers, and they may end up looking for other work opportunities. However, in the study *Mobility among pedagogical experts* there are no clear indications of any major transprofessional mobility of beginning teachers because of early attrition. In general, teachers are willing to stay in teaching, and only less than a fifth of the respondents in this study did report they had seriously considered leaving the teaching profession. The main reasons for considering other options were self-development, progress in career, and self-fulfilment.

In spring 2013 the City of Helsinki announced, that they had almost 270 permanent teaching posts open for applications, and over 7100 persons applied for these vacancies. These facts demonstrate that especially for newly qualified teachers the first years are often harsh competition for a permanent job among other teachers, and those not succeeding in this may face a mixed period of unemployment and substitute teaching or part-time teaching on a temporary basis. Temporary employment can vary from one day to a whole school



year. Finding a job may also mean moving to another city or town in order to get as much teaching experience as possible. Then again, as regards the general labour market activity, the beginning of a career in any industry usually involves some kind of intraprofessional mobility and temporary employment (Aho & Mäkiahho, 2012). In this sense, the teaching profession is not an exception, and young teachers are slightly more actively mobile in the labour market than their more experienced colleagues. Nowadays fragmentary employment is quite normal and in line with general labour market mobility. For the question whether or not the young teachers' intraprofessional mobility is necessary or inevitable as such, the current study can provide no answer.

Teachers' mobility is also a major concern for teacher training. According to a study (Nissinen & Välijärvi, 2011), teacher demand will be increasing in the future in Finland, due to the expected growth of age cohorts entering the school system. Teacher education departments have to respond to this demand by training an appropriate number of teachers, but estimation of the right number may be difficult because of several interfering factors, including teacher mobility. Hence, in order to make correct assumptions and thereby more accurate estimations of the future teacher demand, we need a better understanding of teacher mobility. PISA 2012 results (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013b) indicate clearly why Finland will need qualified and competent teachers in the future as well.

## Support for teachers' throughout their careers: from induction up to retirement

Induction is one of the intermediate phases in the continuum of professional development from initial teacher training up to the final stages of a teaching career. Besides actual professional development, the induction phase also includes socialisation with the school community. Support for new teachers in the induction phase is essential to help them over the challenging first years and has many benefits for teachers' professional growth. One important finding in our study was that the Finnish teachers felt they had better opportunities to utilise the social support available than institutional, structured support. In the same vein, they also felt that social support was more useful than institutional support.

Mentoring has become the most common way of induction in Finnish schools and the Finnish Network for Teacher Induction 'Osaava Verme' has developed one form of mentoring. The practice is called peer-group mentoring (PGM), and in contrast to the traditional notion of mentoring, in this model learning is reciprocal between the mentors and mentees. The most important aspect of the PGM-model is that it creates a time and space for the dialogue enabling mutual professional learning between the colleagues. Teachers get a chance to meet other teachers and receive social support from their peers. Peer-group

mentoring offers thus a site where social support can be cultivated. Even though PGM is regarded primarily as an induction programme for new teachers, it is beneficial also for more experienced teachers. Sharing ideas and gaining new perspectives may help experienced teachers to try new things and methods in their daily work. This supports the idea of professional development throughout the whole career.

### Phenomena affecting teachers' future skill requirements

Teachers listed a wide range of anticipated future skills when they were asked what skills teachers will need in the future. While some differences were found between the general education and vocational teachers, there were also many similarities with regard to the anticipated competence requirements, like those associated with ICT, pedagogic and content knowledge, and special education. One of the biggest challenges in the future will be the usage of ICT in teaching. Although Finnish schools are relatively well equipped with technology, the utilisation rate is still remarkably low compared to other European countries (European Commission, 2013b). The respondents in our study had also realised this and they strongly emphasised the importance of ICT-skills in the future.

The teachers rated competences related to pedagogic and content knowledge as important, and the pedagogical and educational task was seen as the "core task" for teaching. Yet, at present teachers cannot focus just on this "core task" due to their highly fragmented task field, which is affected by many factors. A growing challenge is the large number of students needing special educational arrangements and differentiated teaching. According to the respondents, there are an increasing number of students who need special support for learning, and teachers are not always capable to offer the kind of support these students would need. Teachers need not only knowledge of special education, but also knowledge of how to organise support for the students who need special attention. Furthermore, the respondents wished for more school-home collaboration and emphasised parents' role in children's upbringing.

In-service training is important in supporting teachers' professional development, and meaningful training is essential in order to keep our teachers' skills and knowledge up to date. The current forms of in-service training are insufficient and the system needs reforming. The respondents mentioned that changes ought to be made e.g. regarding collective agreements, initial teacher training, and the collegial collaboration and support within the school system. Teaching is not anymore a task to be carried out by a "lonely rider". Instead, teacher's job is seen as a multifaceted pedagogical profession, now and perhaps even more so in the future. Future teachers will be multitalented professionals, whose role is expanded to collegial collaboration with multidisciplinary groups.

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**WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE** want to be teachers in Finland? Do they stay in their profession or are they considering leaving it? What are the anticipated skill requirements for teacher's profession in the near future?

*Mobility and transition of pedagogical expertise in Finland* investigates these questions in the light of the results of a project titled *Mobility among Pedagogical Experts*. The project was funded by the European Social Fund and carried out in collaboration with the Finnish Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä; the Finnish National Board of Education; and the Vocational Teacher Education College, Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences in 2010–2013. The data were gathered by online questionnaires for teachers and interviews with ex-teachers.

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