Mentoring of Newly Qualified Teachers in the Educational Sense

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The importance of lifelong learning in teachers' professional development has become increasingly topical issue globally. In teaching, especially the transition from education to occupation seems to be more challenging compared to other fields. It is evident that under the rapidly changing circumstances teachers' professional knowledge has to be constantly renewed, and especially in the phase of transition from teacher education to working life, new approaches are needed. In the modern world, the role of teacher has been challenged in many ways. We may say that even some of the fundamental presuppositions of knowledge construction and learning have changed due to the rapid expansion of information and communication technologies in our everyday life and the practices of working life, which in turn have an effect to learning processes in schools and universities.

Many different kinds of systems have been introduced in order to promote the professional learning and well-being of newly qualified teachers, with varying success (e.g. Tynjälä & Heikkinen 2011). We may ask, however, if the growing concern about attrition of new teachers is essentially an educational concern. It seems that much of the debate of teacher induction and mentoring has been motivated by interests that are pre-set somewhere outside the educational field, such as politics, production or economic life. On this basis, I introduce the idea of *induction and mentoring in the educational sense,* beginning by drawing on the recent discussions on lifelong and lifewide learning to introduce the counter-directional trends of *informalization* and *formalization* of learning in modern working life.

In its most profound sense, the idea of lifelong learning has its roots in the philosophical ideas of *paideia* in Ancient Greek philosophy and *Bildung* in German human

philosophy *Geisteswissenschaft* (Heikkinen 2015; Swachten 2015). These notions frame the examination of *education* versus *schooling* (Kemmis 2014). In terms of teacher education in its pure sense, the aim is to support professional learning and well-being at work by promoting teachers' autonomous professional agency. But if we want to promote the autonomous agency of new teachers, we find ourselves in a dilemma: how to act as a person (a teacher educator) so as to make another person (a student teacher or a new teacher) autonomous. But this is not quite enough; the ultimate aim of a teacher educator is to help the prospective teacher to make their pupils autonomous and critical thinkers. This is what I call the *second order paradox of teacher education* (Heikkinen, Tynjälä & Kiviniemi, 2011).

Formalization and informalization in professional learning

In contemporary research and policies on adult education, the concepts of *lifewide* and *lifelong* learning have been widely used and sometimes regarded as synonyms. However, there is an important conceptual distinction between the two. The concept of lifelong refers to the time-span of learning; the learning process continues throughout the lifetime of the learner. Lifewide learning, in contrast, means that learning takes place broadly in different settings, such as work, human resource development processes, during free time, in family life, or hobbies. (European Commission, 2001; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner 2007, 29–30; Tynjälä & Heikkinen 2011).

In the daily activities and practices of teacher education and professional development, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the above types of learning. For example, in many occupations active information retrieval is essential. The internet, social media and the various portable devices to make use of them, such as smart phones and tablets, have also become increasingly crucial tools for professional development. Formal education also frequently applies methods that resemble informal learning. For instance, training events that include pair or group discussion enable people to better link their everyday or work-life experiences to the phenomena being addressed. It is also increasingly common to integrate work-based learning, projects, and portfolio work into formal education. Social media has also changed the forms of learning and contributed to the blurring of formal learning boundaries. For example, it is common for university course participants or workers in the workplace to form a group on Facebook, WhatsApp or other social media platforms. This communication, while often highly casual, typically involves a broad exchange of ideas

relevant to work or course work. With such discussion groups it is often quite difficult to distinguish what is learning that complies with the course curriculum, and what is something else.

The role of formal learning has changed both in schools and in contemporary working life. We have witnessed a trend in formal learning towards a kind of informalization of learning, i.e., a move towards more non-formal and informal learning. The lines between informal, formal and non-formal learning have been blurred.

The informalization of learning is a reflection of a contemporary pedagogical trend, constructivism. The idea of constructivism is based on the metaphor of knowledge construction, which is done by the learner and scaffolded by the teacher. The basic assumption is that knowledge is not transferred from one person to another, but that the learners construct their knowledge on the basis of their prior views, knowledge, and experiences. In terms of mentoring, the constructivist approach is a marked departure from traditional mentoring, which has been described as the transfer of (tacit) knowledge from a more experienced person to another. This traditional understanding of mentoring is clearly rooted in a different understanding of learning that is contradictory to a constructivist understanding.

However, the lines between formal, informal and non-formal learning are also being blurred for another reason – coming from an altogether opposite direction. In parallel with the discussion of the informalization of learning, there has been another discussion of the *formalization* of learning. This discussion is related to the notion of *recognition of prior learning*, which has been promoted in formal education, especially in the vocational education sector. A practical reason for this in vocational education is that it would simply be a waste of resources for both the learner and the school to invest time in training skills or knowledge that they already possess. It is better to offer opportunities to demonstrate and build on what they have already learned in their work and everyday lives. Skill demonstrations and portfolios are used for this purpose. Thus, two opposite processes seem to be at play within professional learning, and they are sometimes difficult to distinguish from each other. As a consequence of these interconnected processes, formal, informal, and non-formal learning converge.
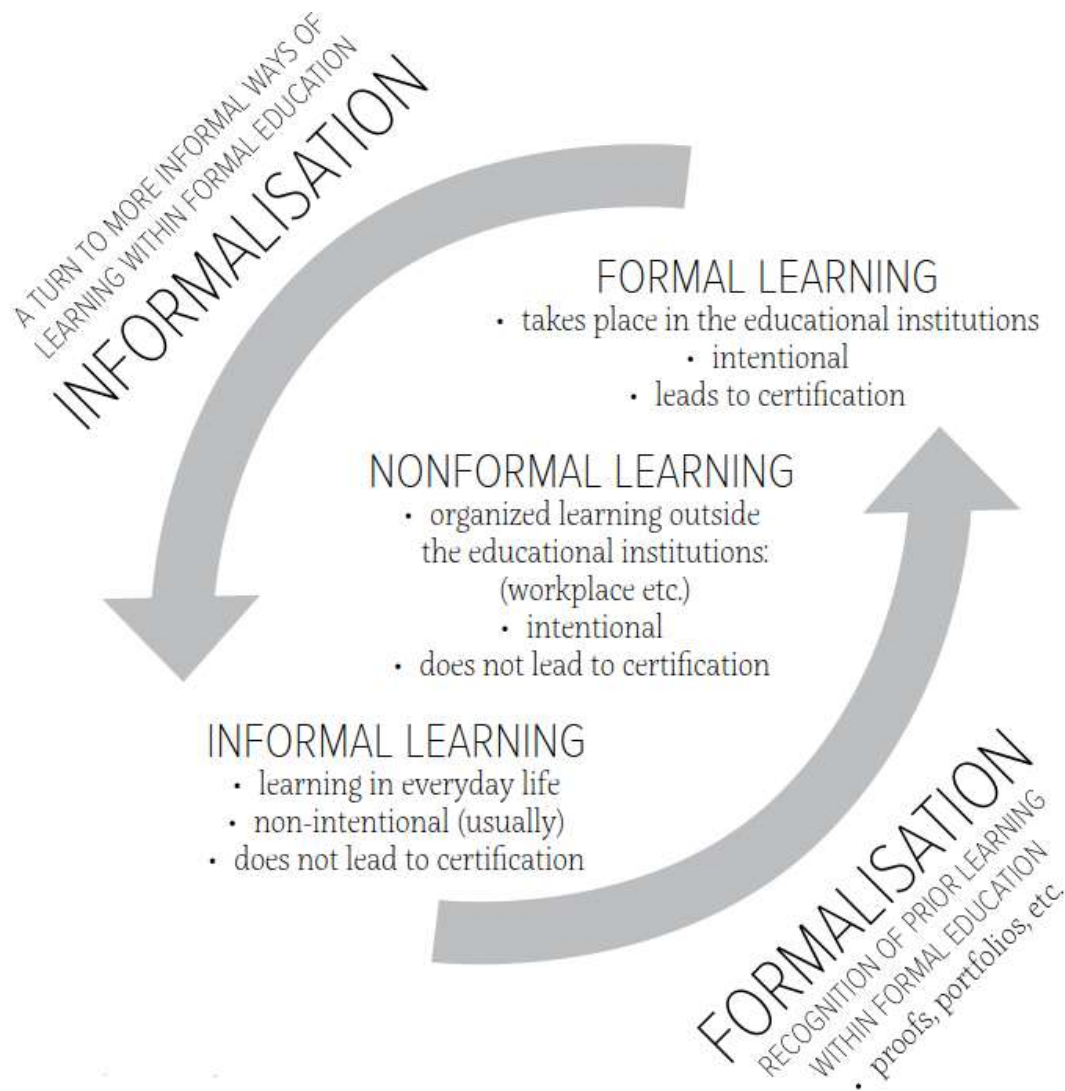
Figure 1. The dialectics of formalization and informalization of learning (Heikkinen et al., 2012; Heikkinen 2015).

Whereas in traditional approaches it has been typical to distinguish between formal in-service training and informal job-embedded learning, in the modern approaches it is recognized that formal forms of learning are integrated with informal learning. In informal learning, the learning experiences which often are implicit are explicated to a conscious and conceptual level. The greater understanding of common challenges helps the teachers to face new situations and develop new solutions.

Induction and mentoring in the educational sense

Induction and mentoring are not the same everywhere. Mentoring practices are rooted in the

general practices, or *metapractices* (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008), that take place in schools and educational systems in various national settings. Drawing on the theory of practice, we may say that different countries have different *ecosystems of practice,* or *practice architectures*, which form the preconditions for the activities and actions that are possible or desirable in the given social setting (Kemmis & Heikkinen, 2012). These different national arrangements and practice traditions prefigure (enable and constrain) the actual daily practices in schools and educational institutions.

An important precondition for the various mentoring practices is the question of whether education is understood as a value and aim in itself, or as something that serves other external aims and purposes. At a general level, we may make a distinction between *education* in its pure meaning, and *schooling,* which is something narrower than education. This distinction between *education* and *schooling* has an important effect on the practices of teacher induction and mentoring (Heikkinen, Moate & Lerkkanen, 2014; Kemmis, 2014).

Education in its most profound sense is something that enables self-cultivation and aspirations for the good life of individuals and society. 'Education is (…) an initiation into the kinds of practices that foster the good life for each person and the good for humankind (Kemmis 2014, 15).' It is a process of identity work that is not limited by pre-set targets or standards, but engages people in discussion of the values and aims of (good) human life. Education is about actualizing the unique potential in every human being in society; it is a process of individual and collective self-formation; it is personal as well as collective identity work (Kemmis 2014, Swachten in this volume). Education takes place not only in schools or classrooms, i.e. *formal* settings, but also in *non-formal* settings, such as the human resource development processes of workplaces, and *informal* settings, such as the everyday life of a family or a community. Schooling, in contrast, is a practice that takes place in the formal settings of educational institutions. It is taken for granted that schooling is intended to be educational, but it sometimes actually turns out to be the opposite. Schooling can also be *non-educational*, even *anti-educational*, if it does not promote people's aspiration for self-cultivation (Kemmis 2014, 45).

Schooling, instead, is rooted in instrumental thinking; a means-ends rationality according to which schools are understood primarily as servants of pre-set aims, targets or values that have been discussed and decided outside of education. In this paradigm, teachers and schools have been commonly viewed as servants of something other, such as the nation state, where the teacher's task is to build national identity and to serve the administration of society. This civil servant metaphor has gradually been replaced with neoliberal metaphors;

teachers are no longer regarded as servants of the state, but of production and the economy. In contemporary Western (and nowadays global) discourse on education, economic imperatives play a central role. Teachers are expected to produce workers, consumers, (inner) entrepreneurs, active economic agents and actors who adapt to market trends. Both of these servant metaphors share a common feature: teachers serve an external party that exploits teachers, education, and upbringing as a medium. This thinking has been globalized through the New Public Management doctrine, which uses market forces to hold the public sector accountable and the satisfaction of preferences as the measure of accountability (Kemmis, 2014; Lapsley, 2009).

Since the emergence of nation states in the modern age, education has been used as an instrument for reproducing national values, collective identities and even patriotism (McDonough & Cornier, 2013). But education is also seen as a servant of larger collective identities, such as Europe. Concerns regarding the emergence of a so-called *European dimension* of education have become heightened in the wake of recent European Commission white papers and other EU policy documents that reveal an EU vision for education that is shaped by economic targets and aims; the European Union wants to be the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world by the year 2020 (European Commission, 2010). In line with this objective, performance in education should be improved.

Consequently, much effort has been invested in developing vocational education and training. Contemporary aspirations for lifewide and lifelong learning are also rooted in the interest of developing labour skills; 'students' have been reconceptualized as 'lifewide consumers of education' (Siivonen, 2010). Interestingly, the social impact of education has also often been reduced to the concept of 'human capital', the primary purpose of which is to enable economic growth (Schultz, 1971). In short, economic discourse has colonized education discourse in many ways. This can also be seen beyond the contemporary discussions of mentoring and teacher induction.

All in all, the emphasis on schooling instead of education has come about through a neoliberal development in education which in practical terms has led to a considerable shift in focus towards the pursuit of economic objectives. As Stephen Kemmis (2014) puts it, the instrumental view pays little attention to what makes human beings human or what the good life might be. In the neoliberal discourses about accountability and effectiveness, there is little discussion of the aims or values of education. It has actually been claimed that education has been reduced to another element of production; '*producing people who are little more than the bearers of useful skills of production, good consumers, and good providers and*

clients of commercial and administrative services (Kemmis, 2014, 47)'. Drawing on this, we may examine also the practices of teacher education, induction and professional development of teachers in terms of *schooling* versus *education*. Induction of new teachers in the *schooling* sense has much to do with formal organization and administration, arrangements and institutions, agreements and qualifications, directives and formal standards as well as support systems, such as reduction of teaching load or organization of support. Mentoring in the schooling sense focuses mainly on the tools, methods and instruments of mentoring rather than its aims and values. Consequently, this may also mean that mentoring in the schooling sense is motivated by external aims and values, which can also make it non-educational or even anti-educational. The global tendencies towards accountability, standardization and neoliberalism underpin *schooling* instead of *education* in mentoring practices as well as other practices in schools.

Teacher retention rate and educational system effectiveness are often measured purely in terms of their impact on the economy. Teacher attrition, especially during early career years, is a serious problem in many western societies, with problems in the induction phase leading to increasing numbers of young teachers leaving the profession. In the US, for example, it has been estimated that up to 50% of teachers leave within the first five years (Ingersoll, 2003). The economic impact of this problem seems to be the central motive behind various attempts to introduce extensive induction programmes for new teachers (e.g. Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010; Devos, 2010; Howe, 2006; Lambson, 2010; Marvel et al., 2007; Nasser-Abu Alhija & Fresko, 2010; Scheopner, 2010).

The *education* element of teacher induction, in contrast, involves teachers and other educational professionals in reflection and discussion about the values and aims of (teacher) education, i.e. human and professional growth. Mentoring in the educational sense is rooted in communication and interaction between teachers and other educational professionals. Induction and mentoring in an educational sense has much to do with the aspiration for the good life and happiness, identity construction and everyday social relations.

Induction and mentoring in the educational sense also means communication and dialogue between more and less experienced workers. There is a major difference here between traditional mentoring and the modern approaches. Traditionally, mentoring has been understood as the transmission of (explicit or tacit) knowledge from a more experienced worker to a less experienced one. Modern approaches, in contrast, are based on the idea that the relationship between the mentor and the mentee is reciprocal and both parties have something to offer. Mentors do not 'transfer' the correct view or knowledge but rather

construct meanings and interpretations together with others. A dialogic relationship is based on the assumption that the other is recognized as an equal, which enables reciprocal exchange of ideas and joint construction of knowledge, from which both parties learn. In a mentoring dialogue, both parties participate in verbalizing their conceptions and experiences. In international research literature, the interactive and communicative character of mentoring is highlighted through such expressions as *co-mentoring, mutual mentoring, collaborative mentoring, peer collaboration, critical constructivist mentoring, dialogic mentoring, peer mentoring* and *peer group mentoring* (Bokeno & Vernon, 2000; Heikkinen et al., 2012; Musanti, 2004; Le Cornu, 2005).

The communicative character of mentoring in the educational sense may also be conceptualized through Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action (1984). Mentoring in the educational sense can be understood as communicative action, whereas mentoring in the schooling sense is rather strategic action. In strategic action, other persons are regarded as objects of speech, whereas in communicative action others are regarded as equal subjects of communication whose interests and opinions are taken into account genuinely and authentically. Communicative action is a process where two or more individuals interact and coordinate their action based upon agreed interpretations of the situation and, more generally, of the values and aims that are valued in society and thus form the background and motivation for social practices. Communicative action respects the right of all participants to express themselves in everyday interaction between the parties regarding the virtues and values of the good life. Strategic action, in contrast, is instrumental action toward other people; purely goal-oriented behaviour where other persons are not equal subjects of human interaction but rather recipients of the message. In strategic action, the concern is to find methods and means to promote aims that are predetermined, either democratically through communicative action in society or in some non-democratic or authoritarian manner. Strategic action is typical of interaction between persons whose positions and relations are determined within social *systems*, whereas communicative action takes place in the *lifeworld* of society (Habermas 1984, 18–95). Mentoring in the schooling sense clearly represents the *system* of mentoring and *strategic action* in human relations, whereas mentoring in the educational sense represents the *lifeworld* dimension of mentoring, which promotes *communicative action* toward others and reflection on the basic values and ends of mentoring.

The dilemmas and paradoxes of teacher autonomy

The abovementioned understanding of *education* in its pure form – not that of *schooling* – means that in mentoring practices the aims and values of teachers' work are problematized and critically reflected upon, and not taken as givens embedded in the traditions of education and society. From this point of view, the main purpose of education is to emancipate from irrationality and immaturity; to empower people to use their own reason, as the enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant (1803/1964) put it (see also Hamilton, 1999). It follows, therefore, that mentoring meetings should include an aspect of critical reflection. Mentoring in the educational sense is based on a collective aspiration for good life and happiness, and promotes the identity construction of teachers and other educational professionals as individuals and educational communities.

Professional autonomy is both a prerequisite and an aim of the practices of induction and mentoring in the educational sense. High professionals are autonomous agents whose decisions are not made by following orders from somewhere outside the professional field, but are based on mutual understanding of right and wrong, achieved through collective will-formation among the professionals. In other words, professional autonomy is guided by professional ethics.

Professional autonomy is thus social in nature. It is achieved within a social process of collective will-formation, not through individual will-formation. In this respect, there seems to be some confusion regarding the concept of autonomy, which is sometimes misunderstood as individualism. It has been suggested, for example, that teachers in Finland are too autonomous. I would argue that they are not too autonomous in the truest sense of the word, but some teachers may well be too individualistic.

So as to justify my statement, I have to go back to the etymological origins of the word autonomy. The word stems from the Ancient Greek words *auto* and *nomos*, meaning *self* and *law* or *rules*, respectively. Literally speaking, the word means operating 'according to laws that one has made for oneself'. But this simple translation does not reveal the social aspect of autonomy; originally the word referred to social rather than individual practices. In Ancient Greece, this expression was used for a town-state *(polis)* that instituted its own laws. In such an autonomous *polis,* laws were discussed and established by its own citizens. If, however, the town was ruled by laws that had been constituted by another *polis*, in which case the town or village was described as *hetero nomos*, literally meaning that someone else (another *polis*) has instituted the laws. This is the origin of the word *heteronomy,* the opposite

of *autonomy*. The original use of the word autonomous implies *interaction and collective will-formation in a social sphere*, whereas individualism refers to action based on the will of a particular individual (Heikkinen, Tynjälä & Kiviniemi, 2011). In terms of the aforementioned theory of communicative action (Habermas, 1984), we may say that in its original meaning autonomy is rooted in communicative action between participants in society.

Professional autonomy requires capacities and skills for critical thinking. A useful distinction can be drawn here between *critical thinking in the strong sense* and *in the weak sense*, which adds another dimension to the concept of autonomy. Critical thinking in the weak sense is an attitude based on egocentric and biased beliefs; being critical towards others without reflecting or questioning one's own presumptions, actions or behaviour. This is what we often mean when we say that someone is a critical person who readily points out flaws, weaknesses and shortcomings in the world around them, but not so readily in themselves. Critical thinking in the strong sense, instead, starts from self-criticism, where one's own assumptions and beliefs are reflected on, re-examined and questioned. (Paul, 1994.)

Applying this idea, we can draw an important distinction between autonomy in the strong sense and in the weak sense. The autonomy of a professional community in a weak sense means that the community takes a self-centred view of the broader society, which means that collective will-formation takes place only within a limited community and does not take into account the broader social context. Such a professional community focuses on promoting the private interests of the members of the profession. This manifests in strategic action towards others, lobbying and persuading other parties to accept the demands of the professionals. This kind of professional autonomy is typically represented by labour unions.

Professional autonomy in the strong sense is rooted in discussion of the values of the profession and its role in society as a whole. One might say that the will-formation process is based on rather general and public interests and, ultimately, the good of society or humanity. Professional autonomy is realized through communicative action, which is oriented towards mutual understanding and unforced consensus between all possible parties concerned. The main distinctions between individualism and autonomy in the weak sense and in the strong sense are indicated in the table below.

Table 1. Individualism and autonomy in the weak sense and in the strong sense (Heikkinen, 2014 and 2015).

INDIVIDUALISM	AUTONOMY	
	WEAK AUTONOMY	STRONG AUTONOMY
-personal, individual will-formation	-social will-formation within a limited community	-collective will-formation
-promotion of personal interests	-promotion of collective interests of the community -lobbying	-promotion of generalized interests
-the good of the individual	-the good of the professional community	-the good of society and humanity
-strategic action: oriented to success of the individual	-strategic action: oriented to success of the profession	-communicative action: oriented to mutual understanding and unforced consensus

But how to promote autonomy through education? How can we act as a person (a teacher educator) so as to make another person (a student teacher or a new teacher) autonomous? Here we meet a classic problem, *the pedagogical paradox,* first formulated by philosopher Immanuel Kant in his lectures on pedagogy (1803/1964, 718): 'How to cultivate freedom through coercion?' The essence of the pedagogical paradox is that we face the problem of assuming the existence of something for which education is the precondition. How it is reasonable to assume that in order for education to be possible the individual must be free, and simultaneously, in order for the individual to become free education is necessary? How can one become something that one already is? In general terms the pedagogical paradox arises when a teacher declares that education should foster autonomy in the sense of a free essence, but on the authority of the teacher. The paradox precipitates a clash between a person's internal regulation *(Selbstbestimmung)* and external regulation *(Fremdbestimmung).* Following the Kantian ideas of Enlightenment, education in general should aim at *maturity (Mündigkeit)* and autonomy, which means that everyone should be able to use their own

reason: 'Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another (Kant, 1784/2011).

Following this Kantian idea, teacher educators actually face not only the traditional pedagogical paradox, but an also an even more complex pedagogical dilemma: their task is to educate teachers and also inherently the pupils of the prospective teachers. The pedagogical paradox for teacher educators thus becomes a *second order paradox,* as their purpose is not only to promote the autonomy of the upcoming-teachers but also the autonomy of the upcoming-teachers' future students. Philosophically, this is an intellectual dilemma that cannot be solved through rational thinking. In everyday life, however, we have to do our best to find a way forward.

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