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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates challenges in developing teacher education, focusing on the relationship between teacher educators' professional development and organizational change. Its *purpose* is to achieve a deeper understanding of why – apparently all over the world – changes in teacher education occur slowly and are difficult to implement. Its *aim* was to gain a better understanding of the possibilities and obstacles pertaining to teacher educators' professional development, and how these are related to organizational development and change. These issues were investigated in terms of teacher educators' professional identity negotiation, professional agency, and the possibilities and obstacles connected with participation in shared practices and meaning construction, within a teacher education department. The study addressed three main *research questions*: (1) Considering the teacher education department as a context for professional development, what kinds of resources does the department offer teacher educators, and what obstacles does it create? (2) How can teacher educators exercise agency within their working contexts, and how is this related to their professional identity negotiations? (3) What kinds of community-based and organizational development exist within a teacher education department?

The *data* consisted of in-depth, open-ended interviews with eight teacher educators, and a research diary kept by the researcher while she was working as a departmental coordinator within the teacher education department under study. The data were analysed using qualitative content analysis, thematic analysis, and discursive analysis. The *findings* suggest that four main themes can be named as representing challenges in developing teacher education: (1) obstacles in renegotiating professional identity, (2) a lack of boundary-crossing within the department, (3) internal competition between subject-matter groups, and (4) a discrepancy between individual agency and organizational development. As a *conclusion* the study argues that the challenge lies in understanding and enhancing the processes of teacher educators' collective agency in (i) the renegotiation of their professional identities, and (ii) developing their working practices, education, and organization. The study introduces practical implications based on the findings, and offers suggestions for future research.

Keywords: agency, discursive approach, organizational development, professional development, professional identity, sociocultural theory, teacher education, teacher educator

Author's address Päivi Hökkä
Department of Education
University of Jyväskylä, Finland
P.O.Box 35
40014 University of Jyväskylä
e-mail: paivi.hokka@jyu.fi

Supervisors Professor Helena Rasku-Puttonen
Department of Teacher Education
University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Professor Anneli Eteläpelto
Department of Education
University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Reviewers Professor Jean Murray
Cass School of Education
University of East London

Professor Eero Ropo
Department of Teacher Education
University of Tampere

Opponent Professor Eero Ropo
Department of Teacher Education
University of Tampere

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ORIGINAL PAPERS

The study is based on the following publications, which are referred in the text by the Roman numerals I−IV:

Article I Hökkä, P., Rasku-Puttonen, H. & Eteläpelto, A. 2008. Teacher educators' workplace learning. The interdependency between individual agency and social context. In S. Billett, C. Harteis, & A. Eteläpelto (Eds.) Emerging Perspectives of Workplace Learning. Rotterdam: Sense, 51−65.

Article II Vähäsantanen, K., Hökkä, P., Eteläpelto, A., Rasku-Puttonen, H. & Littleton, K. 2008. Teachers' professional identity negotiations in two different work organisations. Vocations and Learning: Studies in Vocational and Professional Education, 1(2), 131−148.

Article III Hökkä, P., Eteläpelto, A. & Rasku-Puttonen, H. 2010. Recent tensions and challenges in teacher education as manifested in curriculum discourse. Teaching and Teacher Education, 26(4), 845−853.

Article IV Hökkä, P., Eteläpelto, A. & Rasku-Puttonen, H. 2012. The professional agency of teacher educators amid academic discourses. Journal of Education for Teaching, 38(1), 83−102.

The articles are reprinted with the kind permission of the publishers. Copies of the articles are appended to this report.

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If we knew what it was we were doing,
it would not be called research,
would it?
-Albert Einstein-

1   INTRODUCTION

This study aims to achieve a deeper understanding of the challenges in developing teacher education. The focus of the study is the relationship between teacher educators' professional development and organizational change. Globally, there is a consensus that teacher education must be developed in order to better respond to the challenges of the 21st century (Cochran-Smith 2003; Futrell 2008; Hoban 2005; Imig & Imig 2007; Korthagen 2010; Murray 2008; Niemi 2002; O'Connell Rust 2007). There is undoubtedly considerable variation in the implementation, pedagogy, and structure of teacher education in different countries, and in the involvement of national governments. However, despite the differences, the field of teacher education has consistently been the object of political attention. Reforming teacher education has been a key strategy in government policies to develop schooling and promote the work of teachers – and also to support economic development, safeguard a socially coherent society, and conserve the cultural heritage (Murray 2008; Smith & Welicker-Pollak 2008; Snoek & Zogla 2009). In the developed world in particular, demands for better student learning and worker productivity have caused teaching and teacher education to come under scrutiny (Imig & Imig 2007). In Europe, voices urging the development of teacher education have been heard in connection with the harmonization policies of the European Union.

The professional competency of teachers has been seen as one of the most critical issues affecting educational outcomes (e.g. Caena & Margiotta 2010; Cochran-Smith 2003; Peck, Gallucci, Sloan & Lippincott 2009). It is clear that on-going changes in the wider world have created new challenges for teachers, who are expected to be self-directed lifelong learners and to work collaboratively and across disciplines in order to fulfil the demands of increasingly complex societies (Margolin 2007; O'Connell Rust 2007). Questions arise as to whether we are educating teachers for a knowledge-based and global society or still educating them for a long-departed industrial era (Futrell 2008). The role of teacher educators is seen as crucial in enhancing teacher quality, and thus the efficacy of teacher education has become a point of concern in many countries (Hoban 2005; Liston, Borko & Whitcomb 2008; Murray & Harrison 2008; Niemi 2002; Peck et al. 2009; Young, Hall & Clark 2007). For the future

development of societies, how prospective teachers are educated – and by whom – is clearly of huge importance.

Teacher educators are seen as having the main responsibility for ensuring the quality of teacher education and developing teacher education programmes (Smith 2003). Pleas for reforms in teacher education often concern how to enhance teacher educators' networking opportunities and develop the culture of teacher education according to more collective and collaborative models (e.g. Arreman 2005; Autio & Ropo 2005; Grangeat & Gray 2008; Murray et al. 2009; Rautiainen 2008). The issue of collaboration among teacher educators is highlighted because the culture of teacher education departments is important: it affects not only the educators who work there, but also the student-teachers undergoing training, and ultimately influences the practices enacted in the student-teachers' future workplaces – namely the schools. This idea is based on assumption that teacher educators act as role models to prospective teachers, and that teachers teach as they themselves are taught, not as they are taught to teach (Blume 1971; Lunenberg, Korthagen & Swennen 2007).

Such considerations strengthen demands for new collaborative models in teacher education. Luukkainen (2005) emphasizes that the most important challenge in recent attempts to enhance teaching lies in the change from individual teaching to collaborative educational practices. If teacher education institutions are to be effective, it is argued that they must support a culture of continuous collaborative learning, and that they will have to reform their practices in order to promote this culture among their students (Margolin 2007; Matusov 2001). However, it is recognized that the development of teacher education in a more collaborative direction is far from easy, and indeed, the same applies to all innovations in the field (e.g. Arreman 2005; Fullan 2001; Gorodetsky, Barak & Harari 2007; Grangeat & Gray 2008; Korthagen, Loughran & Russell 2006; Margolin 2007; Niemi 2002; Smith 2003); hence there is a danger of fossilization. It is difficult to change well-established teacher education programmes, even in times when the field of education is undergoing constant change (Smith 2003).

The importance of collaboration and shared practices between teacher educators has been emphasized in many studies. This idea is based on the theoretical assumption that professional learning and development among teachers is best conceived as an aspect of a collective, distributed, and communal enterprise (e.g. Van Huizen, Van Oers & Wubbels 2005; Zellermayer & Munthe 2007). It is argued that if teacher education departments are to become learning communities, there is a need to participate in professional development through shared practices; this applies to teacher educators and student teachers, and also to other professionals, including teachers at the normal school (i.e. teacher training school) and in subject departments (Helleve 2010; Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2006). In creating such learning communities, the teacher educators' own collaboration with colleagues within their respective institutions is highlighted. It has been argued that it is impossible to teach student teachers to construct a community of learners if teacher educators

themselves cannot provide this educational model (Matusov 2001; O'Connel Rust 2007; Wells 2002). After all, if teacher-students are to be educated as collaborative lifelong learners and developers, the people who educate them should provide a suitable model (Margolin 2007).

Another concern, shared globally, is that compared to other areas in the educational field, teacher education has not been much researched (Korthagen et al. 2006; Lunenberg et al. 2007; Swennen & van der Klink 2009) and is a relatively young field of study (Zeichner 2005). Moreno (2007) argues that pre-service teacher education is, in most countries, one of the most obsolete parts of the education system. It is only recently that teacher education has begun to be properly recognized as an important object of academic research (Korthagen et al. 2006). However, in Finland there has been considerable interest in studying teacher education, and the field has been evaluated several times over the past fifteen years (e.g. Hämäläinen 2000; Jussila & Saari 2000; Lahtinen 2003; Niemi 1996; Niemi & Kemmis 1999; Opettajankoulutus 2020 2007). These evaluations have detected problems, for example, in the co-operation between different partners involved with teacher education (e.g. subject faculties, practice schools, teacher education departments), in the division of work between partners, and in the flow of information between these partners (Kosunen & Mikkola 2002; Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2006). Nevertheless, these evaluations have focused mainly on a systemic level of analysis, or on questions of pedagogical and educational knowledge. In Finnish teacher education studies (as in the majority of international studies) the perspective of the teacher educators has for the most part been neglected. The studies conducted have not paid attention to issues such as teacher educators' professional learning and identity construction amid the changing demands placed on them. Thus, in recent handbooks on teacher education (Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, McIntyre & Demers 2008; Townsend & Bates 2007) there is hardly any mention of teacher educators' professional learning and identity. Overall, it can be claimed that up to now, teacher educators have been a poorly understood professional group (Korthagen, Loughran & Lunenberg 2005; Murray 2008) although they play a central role in implementing and developing teacher education. There appears to be a general lack of empirical research focusing on teacher educators and their work, their professional learning, and their identity construction (Cochran-Smith 2003; Hoban 2005; Murray & Harrison 2008; Smith 2003).

In the last few years there has been a certain upsurge of interest in teacher educators' work, and this has brought with it recognition of the need to understand their professional identity construction as a key element in their professional development and in the overall development of teacher education. However, we know little about the professional learning of teacher educators and the ways in which it is intertwined with their identity construction; nor do we know much about how these aspects are constrained and resourced by teacher educators' involvement in shared and communal practices, discourses, and institutional structures (Lunenberg et al. 2007; Murray & Harrison 2008; Robinson & McMillan 2006). Recent work on teacher educators and their

professional identity has mainly concentrated on new teacher educators and their development as teacher educators. The emphasis on the identity processes of new teacher educators derives from the fact that in many countries new teacher educators are recruited from the school sector, and are seen as representing successful school teachers rather than academics. Thus, prospective teacher educators must renegotiate their professional identity to fit the demands set by the academic context (e.g. Murray & Male 2005; Robinson & McMillan 2006; Swennen, Shagrir & Cooper 2008; Swennen, Volman & van Essen 2008). In this respect the Finnish teacher education system differs from most other teacher education systems, since in Finland teacher educators are mostly recruited from the field of higher education; in fact, only a few of them are qualified or have experience as primary school teachers.

On a global scale, the lack of research on teacher education is quite surprising when one considers the importance of it at a societal level. Teacher education is particularly well-placed to influence future society, given that almost all members of a society experience schooling. Furthermore, teachers are widely viewed as playing an important part in school reforms, in addition to their role in developing society as a whole (Fullan 2001; Niemi 2002; O'Connell Rust 2007) and promoting human rights and democracy in a globalized world (Aloni 2002). It would thus seem that studies are needed both for the sake of understanding the new challenges in teacher education, and more broadly for the sake of society as a whole. Overall, it appears that there are gaps in understanding teacher educators' professional learning, and how this learning is affected by their practice of agency, their involvement in communal initiatives, and the institutional structures within which they operate (Murray & Harrison 2008). So far, studies in national and international contexts have not paid much attention to teacher educators' own perspectives and discourses concerning their professional development and the development of teacher education. There is thus a need to go beyond existing studies and theoretical notions if we are to understand the relationships between teacher educators' professional development and organizational change.

Considerations of this kind entered into the motivation for the present research, with a desire to understand the challenges bound up with the professional development of teacher educators and the overall development of teacher education. Over time, the focus of my research moved more specifically to the obstacles that impede professional development, and also those that hold back organizational change. Thus, in this study I examine the intertwining between the work context and teacher educators' identity negotiations as these emerge in socioculturally constructed practices and in the discourses of teacher education. My general aim has been (i) to find new perspectives to understand the challenges and obstacles involved in developing teacher education, and (ii) to understand the relationships between the social context of teacher education department and the professional development of teacher educators.

As a theoretical starting point the sociocultural approach offered a framework within which these issues could be examined. In the sociocultural

approach social and contextual factors have to be considered when one is aiming to understand learning and development. This means that professional learning and development are best conceived as an aspect of evolving participation in a social practice (Boreham & Morgan 2004; Van Huizen et al. 2005; Lave & Wenger 1991; Peck et al. 2009; Vescio, Ross & Adams 2008; Wenger 1998). If one takes a sociocultural approach to understanding organizational development and change, seeing these as issues of interaction and of individuals' participation in local communities, it means that one should focus on the processes intertwining individual and social development.

The structure of this report. This report summarizes and discusses the theoretical underpinnings, methodological decisions, and results of research conducted during 2005–2010. One particular feature of this research has been my own role, as both a practitioner and researcher at the teacher education department under study, where I worked as a departmental coordinator during 2001–2006. The issue of my own position and its meaning for the study is discussed in detail in the section on Methods (5.1) and in the Discussion section (7.4). The data for this research were collected via in-depth and open-ended interviews with eight teacher educators. The research data were supplemented through a research diary that I kept while working in the department. The research process was conducted through four empirical sub-studies, which were published as independent publications, and which are appended to this report. The overall aim of the present report (i.e. excluding the appended articles) is to provide a summary of the sub-studies and thus to contribute to current discussions concerning the challenges in developing university-based teacher education in Finland.

This first section, the Introduction, introduces the general foundation for this study and the way in which the study task emerged. Section 2 outlines recent views on teacher educators' work and professional development. It focuses particularly on the Finnish context of teacher education. This section discusses teacher educators' work in terms of the roles and professional development of the educators, and recent challenges within their work. Section 3, the theoretical part, aims to introduce the main theoretical concepts and to position this particular study within the educational research field. This section introduces the sociocultural approach, which is adopted as a theoretical foundation for the study. It also illustrates the main concepts utilized in the study: professional development, organizational development, professional identity, and professional agency. Section 3 ends with a summary, in which the entire theoretical framework of the study is outlined.

The research task and aims of the study are presented in Section 4. This section also introduces the three overarching research questions addressed in the study. Section 5 introduces the methodological approaches utilized in the study. The study adopts a qualitative approach, and it utilizes qualitative content analysis, thematic analysis, and discursive analysis. These are illustrated in relation to ontological and epistemological issues, the conduct of the study, the limitations of the study, and the ethical issues involved. Section 6,

which introduces the Findings, is divided into four subsections. The first subsection gives brief summaries of the four separate empirical sub-studies (Articles I-IV). The next three subsections are divided according to the overall research questions; they introduce and discuss the main research findings in the light of prevailing theories and in relation to previous studies in the educational field. In the Discussion section (Section 7), the main findings are summarized and elaborated within a more general framework; the aim here is to discuss what this research has revealed about the challenges in developing teacher education, and how this study contributes to the field of teacher education research. Here, four different issues are presented as the main obstacles that appear to hinder this development. This section also introduces the theoretical conclusions and addresses questions of trustworthiness. It further presents practical implications for developing teacher education, and looks at challenges for the future.

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2 TEACHER EDUCATORS – MULTIFACETED PROFESSIONALS

Teacher education is a complex and multifaceted task. There are many definitions of teacher educators' work and of the responsibilities included in it. Thus, Koster et al. (1996) defined eight general functions that teacher educators need to encompass: they need to be facilitators of the learning of student teachers, encouragers of reflective skills, developers of new curricula, gatekeepers, researchers, stimulators of professional development for school teachers, plus team-members and collaborators. In addition to mastering professional competencies, teacher educators are also expected to exercise inter- and intra-personal intelligences, and to be empathetic, courageous, assertive, committed, and tactful in working with students and colleagues. Furthermore, teacher educators are not only responsible for educating their students, but indirectly also for educating the pupils who will be taught by their student teachers (Swennen et al. 2008). The professional development of teacher educators is thus not only a matter of expanding theoretical knowledge on a specific subject, but also one of personal development with cognitive and affective aspects (Smith 2003; 2011). All in all, the profession is highly demanding, involving serious responsibilities and continuous professional learning.

Characteristics of teacher educators' work. Even though their responsibilities are many and varied, the main task of the educators is considered to be that of educating prospective teachers for their role in serving society. Thus, it is their role as teachers that is seen as paramount. Nevertheless, the role of a teacher of teachers is problematic, in a manner covered by the concepts "first order" and "second order practitioners". This means that in many countries as (former) schoolteachers, the educators are seen as representing first order practitioners, and as operating in their original fields in the school sector. However, as professional teacher educators their work has changed: as teachers of teachers, operating in the field of teacher education, they are second order practitioners (Murray 2007; Murray & Male 2005). This shift from a first to a second order practitioner is demanding: a transformation is needed if the individual is to

produce, reproduce, and transmit the discourses and practices of a higher education institution. This creates tensions for teacher educators when they are asked to fulfil the requirements of both higher education and their original professional fields (Murray 2007). Teacher educators thus require more advanced professional knowledge and understanding, including more extended pedagogical skills, than those required of classroom teachers (Swennen et al. 2008). Furthermore, the teacher educators' position involves a complex dual role. They not only support student-teachers' learning about teaching, but at the same time, through their own teaching, model the role of the teacher. In other words, teacher educators are teachers for their students at the same time as they teach about teaching. They thus need to understand the differences between teaching children and adults, and also to put this kind of understanding into practice (Korthagen et al. 2005).

Although the teacher educator's role as a teacher is emphasized in many studies, their polyphonic relation to research has recently emerged as a central issue on a global scale. Recent studies in various parts of the world have addressed the issue of teacher educators' contested relation to research (e.g. Cochran-Smith 2005; Lunenberg & Willemse 2006; Menter & Murray 2009; Robinson & McMillan 2006; Smith 2011). In many countries, teacher educators operate within university contexts and thus they have a dual role as both researchers and practitioners: they are expected to be experts in teaching and learning and at the same time are judged according to the quality of their research and the number of publications they produce (Korthagen et al. 2005). As researchers they are expected to be intelligent consumers of research, meaning that they need to be able to interpret new research findings, and also to have expertise in conducting research on their own practices (Cochran-Smith 2005). This viewpoint emphasizes the value of on-going systematic enquiry as a key element in the work of teacher educators. It also underlines the notion that active engagement with research should involve *all* teacher educators and not just a few active researchers within a teacher education department (Livingston et al. 2009).

There are, nevertheless, other views on the relationship between teacher educators and research. Murray (2008) argues that not all teacher educators need to be involved in conventional published research. Rather, it should be acknowledged that there are numerous forms of being involved as an academic scholar. Alternatives may include the following activities: engagement in educational studies through sustained reading and reflection; enquiries into personal practice, informed by research; action research, reported in academic theses; communal participation in small-scale studies published in professional journals; writing books and teaching materials; involvement in large national or international research projects. Murray (2008) further argues that teacher education must oppose the prevailing way of defining research narrowly as the production of published research papers, according to criteria set by external auditors or national education standards.

In parallel with demands for more research, there are also calls for educators to take on a greater role as learners, and as developers of their own work practices. This idea is closely connected with the demand that new teachers should become self-directed lifelong learners in order to face the demands of a changing world. It is argued that if teacher-students are to be educated as collaborative lifelong learners and developers, the teacher educators should be able to provide a collaborative model (Margolin 2007; Smith 2003). The demand for teacher educators to become learners is not easy to implement, since it means deep transformations, and the negotiation and renegotiation of professional identities. The transformation from a teacher to a learner means challenging prevailing knowledge and opening oneself to continuous learning, with reflection on one's own previous knowledge, understanding, and practices (Gorodetsky, Keiny, Barak & Weiss 2003). In addition, teacher educators carry the main burden of ensuring the quality of teacher education, and this means up-dating and developing teacher education programs (Smith 2003). This, too, requires participation in an on-going learning process. Continuous learning and reflection has to be built on the teacher educators' own participation in and membership of different communities (Helleve 2010).

Professional development of teacher educators. Professional development and learning is a multifaceted phenomenon, which can be discussed at different levels and involve many dimensions. Thus, teachers' professional learning can be considered at (i) the political and societal level, with the focus on notions of professionalism as constructed by policy-makers and politicians, and (ii) the communal level, where attention turns to smaller-scale aspects, taking in local communal sites as dimensions of professional learning. One can also focus on (iii) the issue of identity, exploring professional learning through the ways in which professional identity is negotiated, supported, challenged, and constrained (Berry, Clemans & Kostogriz 2007). In this study I am interested in teacher educators' professional development and especially in the intertwined relationship between contextual factors – i.e. the affordances that the teacher education department and the university offers for teacher educators' professional learning – and further, how this is related to organizational development. Thus, in this research the focus is mostly on communal and identity levels, and I wish to elaborate the relationship between these. However, the issue of the broader societal context is also taken into consideration: it affects teacher educators' professional development, since the levels mentioned above overlap with each other and are mutually connected (Berry et al. 2007).

It would, in any case, be impossible to ignore larger societal and political contexts in considering the professional development of teacher educators. The work of teacher educators is strongly connected with the socio-historical context of the society in question, and an understanding of their professional learning is always related to a particular context. Thus, their work and their professional learning are tightly bound up with changes in society. Recent changes in society have strongly affected the teacher education system and the

teacher educators' profession. It has been argued that teaching in the 21st century is one of the most stressful professions (Day & Gu 2007), and in recent years, teachers have faced major challenges; these are bound up, for examples, with societal pressures involving pupils' decreased well-being, and multicultural issues. Furthermore, because in Finland teachers are educated at university level, changes in the academic context have a direct influence on teacher education. For decades the aim of Finnish teacher education has been to develop teacher education as a research-based field. The shared understanding has been that teacher educators need research in order to implement high-quality education, and to develop their own professional practices. However recent discussions on the university sector have emphasized the turbulent nature of present-day academic work and the erosion of academic professionalism (Delanty 2008; Julkunen 2007; Murray 2008; Saarinen 2009). In addition, many reforms have taken place in the Finnish university sector, involving salary restructuring, quality assurance, and a strong push for high-quality international research. The reforms have led to a situation in which universities are increasingly coming under pressure from market and state forces (e.g. Delanty 2008; Moos 2009).

Universities, like other educational organizations, have witnessed the strong emergence of what is termed the *new public management culture* (NPM) (Julkunen 2008; Moos 2009; Rinne & Koivula 2005). It can be argued that the adoption of NPM has meant a shift from "loosely coupled" organizations to "tightly coupled" organizations. Traditionally, educational organizations have been described as loosely coupled. Organizations of this kind operate via a "flat" management culture, with space and responsibility given to small-scale, separated, and self-governing teams. In this kind of organization, individuals and groups are tied together loosely, although they can interact with each other. Individuals have opportunities to oppose external demands and reforms, and this tends to lead to slow and steady organizational development (Meyer & Rowan 1977; Weick 1976). Loosely coupled educational organizations are regarded as providing teachers with substantial autonomy, especially in matters concerning the content of their work and pedagogy. It has also been thought that teachers' professional development will be best promoted if the management culture emphasizes the autonomy of teachers' work. Hence, teachers have traditionally been encouraged to be self-directed and reflexive in their work (Hargreaves 2000).

Recent societal changes, with the shift towards the new management culture, have moved many educational organizations in a more tightly-coupled direction. Educational organizations have been expected to adopt the model of the "new managerialism", with an emphasis on organizational effectiveness, strategy-oriented control, standardization, and accountability (Meyer 2002; Moos 2009). Furthermore, the organizations are expected to confront change strategically and proactively, and to implement a succession of externally suggested reforms. For teachers this has meant that they are expected to co-operate closely with each other, with different professional groups, and with

different levels of administration. At the same time, their work has become increasingly monitored and externally evaluated (Meyer 2002; Moos 2005). A view has gained ground, to the effect that professional development will be best served by strong strategy-oriented control and external suggestions, rather than by professional autonomy. Hargreaves (2000) has described this shift from traditional models of education to recent strategy-oriented models, and has argued that teachers' professionalism and professional development has reached a crossroads. One possibility is a process of diminishing professionalism through ever-tightening administration, while another is an enhancement of teachers' professional learning, based on the teachers' own participation.

The Finnish context of teacher education. As a socio-historical context for teacher education, Finnish teacher education is unique on the global scale. Within Finnish teacher education the education of primary and secondary school teachers has been organized at university level since 1971. In 1979, it was decided that the education programmes for teachers would take 4–5 years to complete, and that the basic qualification for both primary and secondary school teachers would be the Master's degree (Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2006). By contrast, in almost the whole of Europe, the majority of teacher education programmes are graded at a lower (Bachelor's) level. One fairly common pattern is for the teaching qualification for lower secondary education to be at the Bachelor's level, with the Master's level required only for upper secondary education. Besides Finland, only Portugal requires all teacher education to be at Master's level (Snoek & Zogla 2009).

In parallel with the above, one important feature of Finnish teacher education has been the strong emphasis on a research-based teacher education curriculum. In the teacher education curriculum, the study of research methods and the writing of the Master's thesis are seen as pivotal for the professional competencies of prospective teachers. Furthermore, all the courses in the programme are integrated with research. Prospective primary school teachers have educational sciences as their major subject, and teacher education studies also give direct access to Doctoral studies (Kansanen 2007; Krokfors 2007). The research-based elements of teacher education have been regarded as among the best elements of primary school teacher education in Finland (Niemi 2002; Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2006). These features are highly appreciated by student teachers. Evaluations have shown that the higher the level of teacher education studies, and the more stringent the demands they impose, the more highly they are regarded by student teachers (Niemi 2002; Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2006).

Thus, for several decades, the objective of Finnish teacher education has been to develop an academically high standard of education for prospective teachers. This approach – with its strong research emphasis – has aimed at educating autonomous and reflective teachers who will be capable of adopting a research-oriented attitude towards their work. Teachers are thus expected to take an analytical approach to their work, and to develop their teaching and

learning environments in a systematic way (Husso, Korpinen & Asunta 2006; Korpinen & Hyvärinen 2003; Krokfors, Jyrhämä, Kynäslahti, Toom, Maaranen & Kansanen 2006; Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2006). All in all, teachers are seen as professionals who are responsible not only for the learning of their pupils and students, but also for their own professional development during their career (Kosunen & Mikkola 2002). This also means that, as professionals, teachers have been expected to take an active role in decisions affecting education, and not merely to implement decisions made by others (Aloni 2002; Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2006).

The strong academic orientation of teacher education is reflected also in the status of teachers in comprehensive education. In Finland, teachers are highly regarded, and the teaching profession attracts talented young people. Indeed, the profession of a class teacher (for grades 1–6) has, for many years, been one of the most-desired professions among students leaving upper secondary education. On a global scale, an unusual feature of teacher education in Finland has been the large number of people applying for courses in teacher education and the toughness of the competition. Only about 10–15 per cent of all applicants are accepted for teacher education programmes, and this applies to class teachers in particular. This increases the likelihood that student teachers will be suitable for the profession, that their motivation will be strong, and that their academic skills will be at a relatively high level (Kansanen 2007; Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2006). The academically-based teacher education described above has imposed high standards on teacher educators. They are considered to be academic professionals; thus (for example) to be appointed as a senior lecturer one must have a Doctoral degree and a high level of pedagogical competence. Given that in Finland research-based teacher education has been practised longer than in any other country, the Finnish system offers an interesting context to examine the professional learning and identities of teacher educators, in relation to teacher education practices, discourses, and cultures.

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3   THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In this section I shall discuss the theoretical starting points and main concepts used in the study. The intention is to position the study within the educational research field. Thus, I shall first outline the central premises of sociocultural theory (3.1.1), and then review the current understanding of learning at work (3.1.2) and organizational development (3.1.3) through sociocultural lenses. Secondly, I shall review the concepts of professional identity (3.2) and agency (3.3), considering how these are connected with recent views on professional development. Within this framework I shall introduce perspectives connected to teacher education and the work of teacher educators.

3.1 Teacher educators' professional development and the working context of teacher education

In this subsection I introduce aspects of teacher educators' professional development and their working contexts, and consider the relationship between them. I begin with an outline of the sociocultural approach, which provided a general framework for the whole study.

3.1.1 Aspects of sociocultural theory

In the last few decades, the processes of learning and development have frequently been examined through sociocultural theory. Recent conceptualizations of sociocultural theory draw largely on the work of Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), whose work has been widely recognized as constructing the foundations of the theory. Although in Vygotsky's studies the focus was mainly on children and their learning and development, his ideas have been applied by scholars in diverse fields and in other domains of learning (e.g. adult education, vocational education and training, and workplace learning).

Sociocultural theory emphasizes the idea of a unified system and dialectical relationship between the individual and the social spheres, in such a way that the two require each other in order to be constituted (van Huizen et al. 2005; Prawat 2002). The fundamental premise of Vygotsky's theory is that learning is basically social in nature and best conceived as participation in a social practice rather than as an individual phenomenon (Herrenkohl & Wertsch 1999; Säljö 2004; Vygotsky 1978). Development, too, is seen as social, since it requires other people, and manifests aspects shared by a collective group and by society as a whole (Litowitz 1993). This means that individual development and learning cannot be understood by studying merely the individual; instead, one must examine the interrelatedness between the social context and individual actors.

According to Wertsch (1991), in Vygotsky's work there are three major themes which run through his writings and which illustrate the interrelationship between individual and social processes within learning: (1) a reliance on developmental analysis, (2) the claim that higher mental functioning in the individual derives from social life, and (3) the claim that human action, on both the social and individual planes, is mediated by tools and signs. The first theme – involving the notion of developmental analysis – means that it is possible to understand the functioning of individuals only through understanding their origin, and the transitions they have undergone. This stresses the importance of history and also the need to study human functions within a process of change (Wertsch 1991). The emphasis on developmental methods underlines the need to address qualitative transformations rather than quantitative increments. Thus, higher mental processes such as learning are not to be understood simply as quantitative improvements in terms of speed or efficiency, but rather as processes of qualitative transformation (Wertsch 2007).

The second main theme, the idea that the individual derives from the social, emphasizes that individual development has its origins in social sources. This idea is best represented in Vygotsky's "genetic law of development" (e.g. Vygotsky 1997). According to this law, learning appears on two planes: first it is mediated on the interpsychological plane, between an individual and other people and/or cultural artefacts, and then appropriated by the individual on the intrapsychological plane. This means that when individuals engage in joint activities they learn by acquiring and internalizing new strategies and new knowledge of the world and culture (Lee 2000; Vygotsky 1997).

The third main theme in Vygotsky's writings is that human action is always mediated by tools and signs. Scholars have suggested that this notion of mediation could be the most pivotal concept of sociocultural theory (e.g. Fernandez, Ritchie & Barker 2008; Lantolf 2000; Wertsch 1991; 2007). Mediation means that individuals do not act directly on the physical world; rather, they rely on cultural tools and artefacts which allow them to mediate and regulate their relationships with others and with the world. To understand learning, it is thus necessary to examine how people employ for thinking and acting tools and artefacts that exist in a given historical and cultural setting (Wertsch 1991). These cultural tools can be seen as mediational means which provide the link

between actions carried out by individuals and groups on the one hand, and historical, cultural, and institutional settings on the other (Lantolf 2000; Wertsch, del Rio & Alvarez 1995). Indeed, all shared activity requires the use of tools in order to coordinate participants' actions and to construct their mutual understandings of the activity at hand (Wells & Claxton 2002). Furthermore, individuals internalize forms of mediation provided by historical, cultural, and institutional forces in such a way that their mental functioning is socioculturally situated (Wertsch 2007). Cultural tools are developed over time and are made available to subsequent generations, which can develop these artefacts before passing them on to future generations. Each generation modifies its cultural inheritance to meet the needs of its individuals and communities (Lantolf 2000).

Cultural tools can be either psychological or physical in nature. Physical tools are artefacts or technical tools which are created by human cultures over time, in order to help people to accomplish different activities. Such physical or material tools include, for example, computers, machines, and buildings. However, Vygotsky's innovative contribution was the idea of the mediational power of psychological tools. These psychological tools, sometimes referred as signs or symbolic tools, involve mental tools that are resources for thinking and acting (Säljö 2004). According to Wertsch (1991) Vygotsky's main contribution resulted particularly from his focus on psychological as opposed to physical tools. As Vygotsky saw it, our sense of the world is shaped by psychological tools acquired in the course of education and learning, and the tools and sign systems form part of and also mediate human action. Thus, individual development is understood in terms of intellectual tools, such as numbers, arithmetic systems, music, art, and above all, language (Wertsch 1991; Wells & Claxton 2002). In the sociocultural approach, language has been seen as being mainly important as a mediational mental tool (e.g. Edwards 2005; Lee 2000). In fact, the importance of language as a prime mediational tool is obvious; after all, language carries the concepts that people use while acting and trying to make sense of the world (Edwards 2005). Languages are also continuously reshaped and developed by their users to serve their particular communicative and psychological needs (Lantolf 2000).

In support of these ideas, and as a tool or metaphor for observing and understanding the mediational nature of human development, Vygotsky (1978) introduced the construct of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD). This concept has been seen as of prime importance in Vygotsky's scientific work (Chaiklin 2003; Wells & Claxton 2002). The main idea of the concept is that the ZPD represents the difference between what an individual is capable of when working alone and what the same individual can achieve when interacting with someone else and/or cultural artefacts (Chaiklin 2003; Lantolf 2000). With the help of other people or cultural artefacts, the learner is able to reach the limits of the zone and to move beyond it, into a higher level. After that there are always new zones to reach, implying continuous possibilities for development (Pritchard & Woollard 2010).

Despite the general interest in and wide adoption of the ZPD as a concept, it is argued that it has remained rather poorly understood (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev & Miller 2003). However, it has stimulated a number of studies that have elaborated the basic idea, leading to a wide diversity of interpretations. For example, there are scholars who stress the importance of the interaction between an expert and a novice, or between an adult and a child (e.g. Chaiklin 2003). Development and learning is thus understood to be transformed through social interaction, and the role of a more competent person is emphasized. However, there are also scholars who have called for a broader understanding of the ZPD to include more than purely expert/novice interaction. Lantolf (2000) has argued that the ZPD should be understood more broadly, as a collaborative construction of opportunities for individuals to develop their mental abilities. As he sees it, people working together are able to co-construct contexts in which expertise emerges as a feature of a group.

For many decades Vygotsky's ideas were little known to western researchers, and his theory inspired only a relatively small number of scholars, mainly in Russia and Eastern Europe. During the 20th century, the dominant focus of learning researchers in the west was mainly on cognitive psychology and individual learning (Salomon & Perkins 1998). However, in recent decades the ideas of Vygotsky and his colleagues, and the sociocultural notions springing from them, have been adopted by numerous scholars in a variety of fields. This shift from cognitive theories to a more social understanding of learning has been conceptualized as a move from the "acquisition metaphor" to the "participation metaphor" (Sfard 1998). The former metaphor relies on understanding learning mainly as an individual and cognitive process, while the latter sees learning mainly as a socially shared and collaborative phenomenon. This perspective on learning, sometimes called neo-Vygotskian, suggests that individual development must be studied in the context of participation in sociocultural practices (van Huizen et al. 2005; Wenger 1998; Wertsch et al. 1995). Such an understanding of learning through participation has inspired many researchers to develop their own branches within socioculturally-based theory. Thus, it cannot be said that sociocultural theory is a single coherent construction, since there have been a good many sociocultural approaches developed by scholars in different disciplines. The ideas of socioculturally mediated learning have been utilized widely by scholars researching adult education, organizational development, and learning in the workplace. Thus, below I shall turn to workplace learning and organizational development, and show how the idea of socioculturally mediated learning has been applied in these fields.

3.1.2 Professional learning at work

Learning at work is one element in professional development. Among both teachers and teacher educators, learning at work can be informal, occurring through everyday practices at work, or formal, when teachers take part in professional development courses or other activities with planned aims (Borko

2004; Maaranen 2009). Beckett & Hager (2002) have presented understandings of learning at work, putting forward two competing models: (i) the standard paradigm of learning, and (ii) the emerging paradigm of learning. By the standard paradigm of learning they mean understanding learning as a process where the individual human mind is steadily stocked with new ideas. According to the emerging paradigm, by contrast, learning changes both learners and their environment. This means that learning is not simply a change in the properties of the learner but rather the creation of a new set of relations in an environment. Thus, learning is always situational and contextual, since it continually alters the context in which it occurs (Beckett & Hager 2002; Hager 2004). This definition of learning is broadly in line with Sfard's (1998), who proposed two differing metaphors of learning as acquisition and learning as participation. In recent studies on workplace learning, the emerging paradigm of learning in the workplace has become increasingly popular. Indeed, it can be argued that the participatory perspective (Sfard 1998) has become the dominant metaphor for learning at work. Within this view, learning is understood as a pervasive and on-going process that is realized through everyday working practices. The central issue in learning is thus becoming a practitioner, not learning about practice (Brown & Duguid 2000). This perspective conceptualizes the workplace as an environment which enables employees to learn through collaboration in its practices. Billett (2004), too, has emphasized the importance of understanding learning at work in terms of participatory practices. He argues that such learning involves an interdependence between the participation of individuals and workplace affordances (e.g. workplace activities and guidance). This is realized through a duality comprising how workplaces afford opportunities for individuals to participate in activities and interactions, and how individuals elect to engage with what the workplace affords.

Traditionally, learning within the workplace has been understood as informal, incidental, and natural (e.g. Eraut et al. 1998). This is not surprising, since the primary goal of workplaces is to produce goods and services, not to offer educational services. However, in the last few decades the understanding of workplaces has widened in such a way as to view workplaces as central and legitimate contexts for continuing professional development, and thus as important sites of learning (Billett 2004; Boreham & Morgan 2004; Collin 2005; Eraut 2004). In contrast to the traditional view of learning, many researchers in the fields of adult education have noted that employees are nowadays expected to collaborate, share, coach, and mentor their colleagues and co-workers in relatively structured ways, with the explicit objective of achieving shared and communal learning (Fuller & Unwin 2004). However, organizations differ in the way they create learning environments and the extent to which employees have the opportunities to participate and are encouraged to learn (Fuller & Unwin 2004; Rainbird, Fuller & Munro 2004).

The recent shift from traditional views of workplace learning has, once again, emphasized the importance of participation. The ideas of Lave & Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) concerning situated learning have been seminal in

this shift, and have greatly influenced current views of learning. Situated learning, which is now one of the dominant theories applied to learning at work, was first highlighted in the early work of Lave & Wenger (1991). Their definition of situated learning assumes that learning involves a process of participation in a community of practice, and movement from legitimate participation to central participation in the community. In Wenger's later work (1998), he elaborated the concept of a community of practice, theorizing it as a group of participants who share in a joint enterprise, cohere through mutual engagement, and create a shared repertoire of communal resources that members develop over time. Such local communities of practice play a crucial part in innovation and change processes within organizations (Brown & Duguid 2000; Wenger 1998).

Wenger's (1998) primary concern was how individual workers construct their identities through participation in communities of practice. The primary focus is on understanding learning as social participation. The tension brought about by multi-membership in different communities is a key element in identity construction, because of the multi-faceted and dynamic nature of identity. In workplace learning, this means that the construction of professional identities occurs through participation in authentic, culturally-constituted working-life contexts. Such participation shapes what people do, who they actually are, and how they interpret their experiences (Wenger 1998; 2009).

In communities of practice, boundaries play an important role, as they both create and divide social communities. Boundaries arise as a result of different ways of engaging with other parties, different repertoires, histories, ways of communicating, and capabilities. In learning, boundaries offer major possibilities. They create and connect communities, and offer learning opportunities in their own right. Boundaries are locations where different perspectives meet and new possibilities arise. This gives opportunities for something creative to take place in the meeting of perspectives at the boundaries, when people communicate, listen to each other, and try to solve common problems together. However, boundaries can create divisions and be a source of separation, fragmentation, and misunderstanding (Wenger 1998; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder 2002).

The most recent studies of learning at work have revealed that the prevailing sociocultural approach in understanding workplace learning has still not fully conceptualized the phenomenon. Studies have shown that learning at work is not merely learning about work practices, tasks, tools, rules, and objectives but is also – and importantly – learning about the individual's self and identity (Billett, Harteis & Eteläpelto 2008; Eteläpelto, Collin & Saarinen 2007; Kirpal 2004). The sociocultural approach has not fully encompassed the significance of the individual subject in workplace learning. Recently emerging notions of workplace learning have addressed not only workers' learning about their work tasks, but also their learning about themselves, especially in terms of how they can negotiate their professional identity and promote agency at work (Billett 2008; Eteläpelto 2008; Vähäsantanen, Saarinen & Eteläpelto 2009). Thus,

in order to capture a more complete understanding of learning at work, the relationship between professional identity and learning at work has to be addressed in more detail. The issue of professional identity and its connection to workplace learning will be discussed in subsequent sections, but before that I wish to address the connection between professional learning and organizational development.

3.1.3 Relationship between individual and organizational learning

The relationship between individual and organizational learning is multifaceted and poorly understood. A common and misleading assumption is that there is a causal relationship connecting individual learning to learning at the organizational level (Fuller & Unwin 2004) or that organizational learning arises through a trial-and-error or even random process (Crossan & Berdrow 2003). Just as often – and also misleadingly – it is assumed that individual and organizational learning are separate processes; however, insufficient attention has been paid to the links between these two (Eteläpelto 2008; Spillane & Burch 2006). Recently, the relationship between professional development and organizational learning has been understood to an increasing extent as a many-sided, complex, and mutually interdependent phenomenon (Fuller & Unwin 2004; Gallucci 2008; Gruber & Palonen 2007; Herrenkohl 2008; Knapp 2008).

Originally the term *organizational learning* was introduced in the field of organizational theory and became popular in organization studies during the 1970s (Gherardi 2000). The dominant idea was that whilst organizations are in themselves inanimate and unable to think and learn, it is individuals – who learn from each other and from the group – that are ultimately responsible for facilitating cognitive systems, organizational memory, and an organization's capacity to learn. Thus, organizational change could be seen as an outcome of organizational learning, which, for its part, is an outcome of employees' collective learning inside the organization (Argyris & Schön 1978; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach 1995: Popper & Lipshitz 1998). This definition is, of course, loose and ambiguous, leaving questions that require more detailed examination.

Boreham and Morgan (2004) note that there is extensive literature on organizational learning and a wide variety of disciplines taking an interest in it. However, they believe a core definition of organizational learning is possible. In their words, "Most contemporary researchers define learning as organizational to the extent that it is undertaken by members of an organization to achieve organizational purposes, takes place in teams or other small groups, is distributed widely through the organization and embeds its outcomes in the organization's system, structures and culture" (Boreham & Morgan 2004, 308). In fact, this definition, too, leaves a number of open questions. Nevertheless, since a comprehensive review of research on organizational literature is beyond the scope of the present study I will now focus on organizational learning as seen especially through sociocultural lenses and positioned within educational research.

In the sociocultural approach as broadly understood, the main idea is that learning is embedded in social, cultural, and historical contexts and that it

involves changes in participation in communities, rather that the individual acquisition of abstract concepts divorced from interaction and experience (Engeström 1999; Lave & Wenger 1991; Rogoff et al. 1995). This view implies that there are simultaneous transformations of social and cultural practices and of the individuals who participate in them (Boreham & Morgan 2004; Fuller & Unwin 2004; Hodkinson & Hodkinson 2004). Thus, the sociocultural approach to organizational learning emphasizes the interdependency between individual and organizational learning, such that the social and individual dimensions of learning are mutually constitutive (Boreham & Morgan 2004). This also means that the analysis of collective and organizational learning requires an analysis of participation, interaction, and activity (Engeström 1999; Lave & Wenger 1991; Rogoff 1994).

In the field of sociocultural studies several scholars have developed theories of organizational learning, utilizing the participation metaphor, and understanding learning as a socially negotiated process of change in the ways people participate in cultural practices (Lave & Wenger 1991; Peck et al. 2009). This is the perspective taken by Engeström (e.g. 1999; 2001), who developed his theory of activity systems utilizing Vygotsky's (1978) ideas on mediational learning and Leontiev's (1978) outline of the fundamental structures of activity. Engeström and his colleagues see activity theory mainly as a framework for understanding transformations in collective practices and organizations (e.g. Engeström, Engeström & Suntio 2002). An activity involves a group of people whose orientation to the object of their shared activity is mediated by a division of labour, rules, and cultural artefacts. Boreham and Morgan (2004) argue that the sociocultural approach – and especially Vygotsky's principles concerning the mediational nature of learning – offer a rigorous theoretical framework for understanding organizational learning, bearing in mind that higher psychological functions do not, and cannot, exist outside social practice. Drawing on these principles, they propose a sociocultural model of organizational learning which identifies dialogue as the pivotal process by which organizations learn, and relational practices as constituting the social structure which embeds the dialogue. They identify three relational practices as underpinning organizational learning: (i) opening space for the creation of shared meaning, (ii) reconstituting power relations, and (iii) providing cultural tools to mediate learning. They argue that these three relational practices create the kind of social structure that can promote collaboration in organizations and embed organizational learning.

Wenger (2000) argues that the success of organizations relates to their ability to create themselves as social learning systems and also to their ability to engage in broader learning systems (for example as an industry or a consortium). As constitutive factors in the creation of social systems Wenger defines three elements: (i) communities of practice, (ii) boundary processes among these communities, and (iii) identities as shaped by participation in social learning systems. According to Wenger, for organizational development it is important that organizations should learn to manage themselves as social

learning systems and to develop such a system internally. Furthermore, organizations must learn to participate in broader learning systems with other actors. In order to create such a social learning system Wenger (1998; 2000) underlines the importance of participation and of considering it at different levels. He argues that placing the focus on participation has broad implications for the understanding of learning, and that this should be examined on the following three levels:

- o For individuals, participation means that learning is an issue of finding a dynamic set of communities to belong to and engaging in and contributing to the practices of these communities.
- o For communities, participation means that learning is an issue of refining their practice and ensuring new generations of members.
- o For organizations, participation means that learning is an issue of sustaining the interconnected communities of practice through which an organization knows what it knows – and as a result becomes effective and valuable as an organization (Wenger 1998; 2000).

The three levels are tightly interconnected. In order to support both individual and collective development, these levels should be created, with support given to learning on all of them (Day & Gu 2007). Thus, in this kind of thinking the main principle in individual and organizational learning is (i) individual participation in shared meaning-construction within communities of practice, and (ii) interaction between different communities of practice and their (common) meaning construction, both inside and outside organizational boundaries.

Many studies in organizational contexts have illustrated the value of the sociocultural perspective in understanding learning and organizational change. This approach has been utilized, for example, in studies concerning medical clinics (Engeström 2001), hospital and military organizations (Popper & Lipshitz 1998), and business (Crossan & Berdrow 2003). However, in the field of teacher education, there has not been much research on organizational learning from the sociocultural perspective. Indeed, it is only fairly recently that some researchers have endeavoured to understand teacher education and its development from a sociocultural stance. In a study on organizational learning and program renewal in teacher education, Peck et al. (2009) describe how programmatic changes were constructed out of individual ideas, and how these were negotiated among the members of the program and occasionally adopted as new collective practice. They found that in significant programmatic changes, the locus of innovation in the practice could be traced to the initiative of individual staff members. However, these programmatic changes could be realized only through collective negotiation and action. This finding highlighted the importance of local communities of practice and of the contextualized knowledge of practice possessed by the members of the teacher education department and the faculty. As a conclusion, Peck et al. (2009) suggest that the sociocultural perspective offers new potentials for understanding individual and organizational development, and that this approach should be given more detailed consideration in studies aimed at

supporting renewal efforts in teacher education. In addition, Korthagen (2010) has recently expressed the view that the potentials of the sociocultural approach, and especially the idea of situated learning, have hardly been utilized in teaching and teacher education.

Understanding organizational development and change via a sociocultural approach implies focusing on interaction, and on individuals' participation in local communities. It means that in analysing both individual and organizational development, one should examine the intertwining of individual and social aspects of learning, and seek to understand those social processes through which individual and collective learning and development are negotiated (Herrenkohl 2008; Peck et al. 2009). Furthermore, it implies that learning cannot be regarded merely as a cognitive activity, but should be recognized more as a process of individuals' identity construction within local communities of practice. Communities of practice are powerful sites of learning, offering resources to individuals whereby they can engage in learning those practices that are important to the continuity of the community or organization in question (Eteläpelto 2008; Wenger 1998).

The importance of the concept of identity has emerged recently in many fields of study. Thus, in organizational studies, identity work and the construction of individuals' professional selves within organizational settings is seen as crucial (see e.g. Handley, Sturdy, Fincham & Clark 2006; Watson 2008; Ybema et al. 2009). Similarly, in educational studies, identity construction is often seen as inseparable from learning (e.g. Billett & Somerville 2004; Eteläpelto & Saarinen 2006; Fenwick 2006; Fenwick & Somerville 2006; Kirpal 2004; Sfard & Prusak 2005). In the subsection below, I shall address the concept of identity and especially the question of professional identity, considering how this is connected to learning in general, workplace learning, and organizational development.

3.2 Professional identity and learning at work

In this study I am interested in the intertwined relationship between individual teacher educators and the teacher education department as a working context. The concept of professional identity offers a valuable frame for understanding this connection. Moreover, recent studies in workplace learning, organizational learning, and professional development have highlighted the importance of identity construction and negotiation for professional learning and development (Eteläpelto 2008; Billett 2007; Billett & Somerville 2004; Watson 2008). It has been argued that identity is the "missing link" between learning and its sociocultural context (Sfard & Prusak 2005). In this subsection I shall first introduce the concept of identity in general and then focus on how professional identity has recently been understood. Finally, I shall introduce recent conceptions on teachers' and teacher educators' identity.

The concept of identity has recently emerged as a key concept in many fields, including sociology, psychology, social-psychology, anthropology, history, and cultural studies. However, there is no coherent or shared understanding of what the concept of identity actually means, and it has been defined in several different ways. Despite this, two broad conceptualizations can be identified. The first of these can be traced to Georg Herbert von Mead, who in the early twentieth century presented concepts of identity drawn from sociological and anthropological theories. His ideas about identity emphasized identity as having a relationship with the concept of the self. He was of the opinion that the self can arise only in social settings where there is social communication. He made a distinction between personal and social identity, and emphasized the role of language in combining these different aspects of identity (Mead 1983).

The second broad conception can be linked to Erik Erikson, who is considered to have made the concept of identity generally known, both in psychological and in public domains, during the 1950s. Erikson focused on identity formation in social contexts, and on the developmental stages people pass through during their life-span. According to Erikson (1968), biological and psychological maturation at each stage has its own characteristics in terms of the individual's interaction with the environment. Erikson saw identity as having chronological characteristics and as changing: thus identity is not something one has, but rather something that develops during one's life course (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop 2004). The Eriksonian theory of identity involves achieving (as the individual moves towards adulthood) a coherent and consistent identity that continues over the course of adulthood. Thus, in identity formation the question is one of possibilities and obstacles involved in achieving an integrated, stable, and consistent identity in social settings (Holland & Lachicotte Jr. 2007).

In current studies on identity, the self has increasingly been seen in Meadian terms. Hall (2001) has suggested that our postmodern era has given rise to the postmodern subject, conceptualized as having no permanent identity. Identity is thus defined as being formed and transformed continuously, in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems in which we engage. The idea of the self as the relatively stable core of an individual's personality has given way to a much more dynamic view of the self: the self is seen as having no fixed, essential, or permanent core identity, and as constantly being reconstructed and renegotiated through everyday practices and interactions (Beijaard et al. 2004; Hall 2001). Individuals are seen as constantly engaged in discursive practices and processes, both with the self and with the surrounding social and cultural world; it is these processes that serve to shape people's identities (Ropo 2009; Ropo & Gustafsson 2006). Thus, discourses and the ways people communicate and tell others – and themselves – who they are, are what constitutes identity (Gee 2001; Holland, Lachicotte Jr., Skinner & Cain 1998; Sfard & Prusak 2005).

As has been pointed out in previous sections, recent understandings of learning at work highlight the interdependency between learning and professional identity (Billett & Somerville 2004; Kirpal 2004; Watson 2008). Work and workplaces are influential contexts for individuals' professional identity construction, since they offer (concurrently) social suggestions and possibilities for participating in social practices, and thus for achieving an identity. Billett (2007) defines work and workplaces as offering social suggestions that can both help and hinder professional identity negotiations. Social suggestions include structural issues, such as organizational conditions, cultural practices, and discourses, while also including situational demands, constraints, and opportunities. According to Wenger (1998), communities of practice are the most important contexts for constructing professional identities, meaning that identities are constructed through participation in authentic, culturally-constituted working-life contexts, and through becoming a member of a professional community. All this would suggest that participation in social practices, professional identity negotiations, and learning are closely connected, due to the fact that learning changes people as individuals (Wenger 1998).

The contextual factors mentioned above have importance in understanding professional identity, but obviously, personal issues will have at least commensurate importance. Personal life history, plus how the individual perceives himself/herself as a professional actor, can be seen as shaping the construction of professional identity. In addition, the individual's future expectations and perceptions about the kind of professional actor he/she desires to be, are aspects that help to shape professional identity (Beijaard et al. 2004; Billett & Pavlova 2005; Eteläpelto & Vähäsantanen 2006). Professional identity is thus based on those elements which give a sense of meaning and which commit individuals to their work (Eteläpelto 2007; Kirpal 2004). These personal aspects of professional identity are understood to be related to social and contextual factors. Professional identities are constructed in a close interaction between individuals' personal experiences and the sociocultural context in which they act on a daily basis (Day & Kington 2008; Eteläpelto & Vähäsantanen 2006; Helleve 2010; Sutherland, Howard & Markauskaite 2010). Professional identities are thus negotiated in complex processes operating between work processes and settings, and conjoined with personal objectives, commitments, orientations, and values (Beijaard et al. 2004; Kirpal 2004). Furthermore, the relationship between the personal and social aspects of professional identity negotiations is reciprocal, since professional identity negotiation also has effects at the social and organizational level. Studies have shown that professional identity is connected with individuals' willingness to develop their working practices and to implement innovations within changing professional contexts; thus, these are also aspects which affect organizational matters (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermut 2000; Cohen 2010; Watson 2008).

Professional identity has become particularly prominent with respect to human-centred and creative work (Eteläpelto 2007) because in such work personal commitment is a fundamental element for learning and professional

development. Teaching is undoubtedly such a profession. Furthermore, among teachers, professional learning and development comprise demanding tasks, due to the fact that the work includes fundamental moral, ethical, and instrumental purposes (Day & Gu 2007). Professional learning and development in teachers' work thus often requires entering into deep-level transformations of the professional self. This means that the work of teachers demands continuous negotiation of a person's professional identity including commitment to the profession, values, and moral issues related to education, and to the teacher's own values and interests (Beijaard et al. 2004; Day, Elliot & Kington 2005; Day & Gu 2007; Hargreaves 1998). Based on a review study on teachers' professional identity, Beijaard and his colleagues (2004) have identified four features that they see as particularly essential for teachers' professional identity:

- o Professional identity is dynamic, not stable or fixed, and it is an on-going process of interpretation and re-interpretation of past and present experiences and future expectations.
- o Professional identity implies both a person and a context.
- o Professional identity consists of sub-identities out of which some can be seen as comprising core identity, while others may be more peripheral.
- o Teachers are required to be active in the process of professional development, and thus agency is an important element of professional identity.

The above means that that professional identity is not something teachers have, but something they use in order to make sense of who they are as teachers (Beijaard et al. 2004). This implies that identity is a learning process in which individuals construct interpretations of themselves as having a relationship with the activities they participate in (Geijsel & Meijers 2005). Learning to participate in such social and cultural practices is assumed to be pivotal for developing, and for negotiating one's professional identity as a teacher (ten Dam & Blom 2006). Overall, then, becoming a teacher means developing a professional identity and committing oneself to on-going negotiation and renegotiation of one's professional identity. This will involve taking on commitments, orientations, and goals, with objectives related to the work now and in the future.

The literature on teacher identity that has emerged over the last decade has enriched current understanding of the work of teachers (e.g. Beijaard et al. 2004; Cohen 2010; Day et al. 2005). However, relatively little attention has been paid to what is actually involved in teacher educators' professional identity. Until recently, teacher educators were a poorly understood professional group (Korthagen et al. 2005; Murray 2008). Nevertheless, a recent upsurge of interest in their work has brought with it recognition of the need to understand their professional identity construction as a key element of their professional development. No doubt there are many issues in common in teachers' and teacher educators' professional identity negotiations. However, the teacher educators' profession, which is that of an academic scholar, has many special features affecting professional identity negotiation. These issues are closely

related to the complex and multifaceted social demands set on teacher educators, as discussed in Section 2.

A central requirement in the renegotiation of professional identity and learning at work is the capacity of individuals to exercise agency (e.g. Beijaard et al. 2004; Billett 2006a). Agency is required in order to be able to take part in the shared practices and discourses of the work community and to negotiate and renegotiate professional identity.

3.3 Professional agency

Recent studies have demonstrated the interdependence between workplace learning, work identities, and perceived agency. In identity negotiation the practice of agency is an important aspect affecting how employees perceive their possibilities for workplace learning and participation in work communities (Billett, Harteis & Eteläpelto 2008; Fenwick & Somerville 2006; Hodkinson et al. 2004; Kirpal 2004). Recent changes in societies and in work have made more immediate the question of how individuals can negotiate and renegotiate their professional identities. Indeed, the concept of agency is emphasized on the grounds that individual agency is fundamental in the renegotiation of professional identities, and that it is particularly relevant to the practices and discourses of current turbulent workplace settings (Billett & Smith 2006; Eteläpelto 2008; Watson 2008; Ybema et al. 2009).Workplaces have also been recognized as highly appropriate settings for the study of identity construction and agency, offering as they do certain socially shared resources – and also constraints – within which individuals negotiate who they are and who they might become as professional actors (Billett 2006a; Watson 2009).

As a scientific concept *agency* is a complex and multifaceted notion, and one that has been described in various ways. In the *social sciences* the concept of agency has long been a central topic of interest. Agency has been fundamentally conceptualized as a relationship between the individual actor and the social context (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Giddens 1984). Different theoretical approaches have stressed different issues within this relationship. Some approaches emphasize the importance of the social context and of structural factors, as seen for example, in structuralist and early Foucaldian perspectives; others have focused rather on the freedom of the individual actor, an aspect prominent in the humanistic tradition (Billett 2007). The structuralist approach (e.g. Foucault 1979) denies individual agency, seeing individual actors as produced within power structures, discourses, and social forces. The opposite way of understanding agency would be to see it as a matter of the individual's free will or freedom to act (Segal 1991). Giddens (1979; 1984) is regarded as the theorist who has been pre-eminent in conceptualizing the *relationship* between social structures and human action, and popularizing the concept of agency. He sees agency and human action as always connected with structural factors such as rules and resources. Hence, the structure is always both constraining and enabling. Within such structural factors,

individual agency refers to the intentions that people have, and also to their capability to do things (Giddens 1984).

The sociocultural approach, broadly understood, also conceptualizes the interplay between individual actors and the social context. In this approach, however, the emphasis is on the cultural aspects of human development, and the main concern is with the social context and the cultural tools that shape the development of human understanding and ways of acting (Vygotsky 1962). Human understanding and acting is perceived as always shaped by cultural, historical, and social structures (Lasky 2005; Wertsch 1991). Individual actions are thus always afforded and constrained by the social context, and provided through mediational means (Wertsch, Tulviste & Hagstrom 1993). This means that in the sociocultural approach, agency is seen as an ongoing process that is contextual, historical, occasional and relational (Lipponen & Kumpulainen 2011). At the same time, agency involves the idea of an "active" agent – an individual who is able to act on and influence the social context (Ahearn 2001). Focusing on context, Lasky (2005) sees individual agency as the capacity to change a context, manifested when people act in such a way as to affect their immediate settings through resources that are culturally, socially, and historically developed.

Most recent approaches share the aim of understanding how individual agency and social context are intertwined and mutually constitutive. However, they offer different guidelines for understanding this relationship, and differing emphases on how individuals embedded within particular contexts are to be theorized. One trend in recent discussions concerning agency has been criticism of the prevalent sociocultural framework on the grounds that it neglects the active role of individual subjects (e.g. Billett 2006b; Eteläpelto 2008) and pays insufficient attention to power relations (e.g. Lewis, Enciso & Moje 2007). Thus, there has arisen a need to reframe sociocultural theory, taking a more critical perspective, and addressing in particular the intertwined nature of identity, agency, and power. This interest has led many scholars to turn to post-structural and discourse theories, seeing these as enabling a broader understanding of the social, cultural, and political aspects of reality, and of how these shape/are shaped by individuals in particular cultural contexts (Lewis et al. 2007).

Broadly speaking, it can be said that the discursive approach emphasizes the ways in which language, talk, and texts are used to perform actions. The discursive approach aims to make visible the ways in which discourses are central to action, and the ways in which they are used to constitute identities (Edley & Wetherell 1997; Potter & Wetherell 1994). However, the discursive approach offers a large number of partially contrasting guidelines for understanding the concept of agency. In the field of discursive psychology it has been commonplace to distinguish between a theoretical approach influenced by conversation analysis and a more global form of analysis derived from post-structuralism (Wetherell & Edley 1999). *Critical discursive psychology* offers a "synthetic approach" (Wetherell 1998) and strives to combine these two frameworks. In this approach people's talk is seen as reflecting not only the

local meanings of a particular context but also broader and more global patterns in collective sense-making and understanding (Wetherell & Edley 1999). Individual actors are understood as embedded in relationally constructed flows of practices, partly subjected to discursive resources, but continuously utilizing and renegotiating these resources (Taylor & Littleton 2008; Wetherell 1998; 2005). The emphasis is on social and cultural resources as sources for individual meaning-construction, with individual agency and social practices seen as intertwined. The aim in this regard is to understand the ways in which agency and social structure become practical issues for people engaged in their local communities. Thus, agency is seen as a discursive resource rather than as a state or essence. The interest then lies in investigating when people invoke agency, and when they invoke external determinants (Wetherell 2005).

3.4 Recent critiques, and efforts to reframe the sociocultural approach

Despite the current dominance of the sociocultural approach to professional learning and organizational development, it has been challenged by many researchers in recent years. There has been criticism regarding the lack of attention to unequal power relations (Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson & Unwin 2005), and also in relation to the risk of seeing only the social aspects and paying insufficient attention to the complex relations between individuals and communities (Linehan & McCarthy 2001). Lewis, Enciso and Moje (2007) argue that many strands of sociocultural theory (e.g. activity theory, situated cognition, communities of practice) do not adequately conceptualize the importance of language or how subjects are produced through talk and discourses. This criticism sees sociocultural theories as placing the main emphasis on how individual identities are constructed within a process of becoming a member of a community of practice, whereas, (it is argued) the focus should be on how individuals shape their identities in relation to the conflicting discourses that are constantly present in such communities (O'Connor 2001; Lewis, et al. 2007). Hence, it has been suggested that there is a need to reframe sociocultural research to give it a more critical bent and to focus on the central role of language, discourse, and the individual actor; or as Moje and Lewis (2007) put it, there is a need to develop *critical sociocultural theory*. Consequently, many researchers have tried to move outwards from sociocultural theory, turning to post-structural, cultural, feminist, and discourse theories to gain an understanding of social, cultural, mental, physical, and political aspects of reality (Lewis et al. 2007).

Another emerging strand among scholars seeking to reconceptualize sociocultural theory is what can be termed a *subject-centred sociocultural approach*. This approach emphasizes in particular the notion of active subjects, including how these subjects negotiate and construct their identities through the practice

of agency (Billett & Smith 2006; Eteläpelto 2008; Fenwick 2006; Fenwick & Somerville 2006). In this way of thinking, social and contextual factors are seen as mutually constituting individual identity construction. Individuals are seen as intertwined with the social practice of work, but also as playing a central role in negotiating and renegotiating their professional selves. Thus, this approach stresses individual agency and seeks to understand how individuals are active and self-creative in social practices and discourses (Billett 2006a; Eteläpelto 2008; Fenwick 2006; Vähäsantanen, Saarinen & Eteläpelto 2009).

In the present study I see the sociocultural approach as offering a powerful way of understanding how teacher education develops. However, my aim is also to take into account the criticism directed at (certain forms of) sociocultural theory, and to incorporate certain of the critical notions in question. In this study the concepts of professional agency and identity are pivotal starting points (see subsections 3.2 and 3.3). Within the study I also apply a discursive approach, understanding teacher educators' talk about their work as emerging in the context of social and cultural resources and discourses. In so doing, I utilize the concepts of an *interpretative repertoire* and a *subject position,* as developed by critical discursive psychologists (Wetherell & Edley 1998; Wetherell & Potter 1988). I see socioculturally constructed possibilities as being available for teacher educators when they talk about their work, workplace learning, and organization; these possibilities are concretely and recognizably produced in societal formations – in this case in research interviews. The issues connected with this are gone into more deeply in the Methods section, and especially in subsection 5.3.

3.5   Summarizing the theoretical framework

In teacher education studies, sociocultural theory has rarely been applied. Thus, one can say that sociocultural theory has not been used explicitly or consistently in order to grasp the social nature of teacher education, or the intertwining of the individual and the social (van Huizen et al. 2005; Peck et al. 2009). In the present study, therefore, the starting point was to focus on the multiple relations between individual teacher educators and the working context of teacher education. The underlying idea was to apply the sociocultural approach in such a way as to move beyond any strict division between the individual and the social. I draw mainly on Vygotsky's notions concerning development; hence I understand learning and change primarily in terms of socially and culturally mediated meaning-construction, taking place through participation in shared communities of practice (Herrenkohl & Wertsch 1999; van Huizen et al. 2005; Säljö 2004; Vygotsky 1978). Here it should be borne in mind that the Vygotskian approach to learning sees individuals as actors who both shape and are shaped by the social situations of their development (Edwards 2010).

In choosing sociocultural theory as a framing approach, my aim has been to examine how, among teacher educators, the interactions and participations

situated in the social and cultural context of a teacher education department support (i) teacher educators' professional learning, and (ii) the organizational development of the department. The sociocultural approach analyses human action as mediated by language and other symbolic systems within cultural contexts; hence priority is given to the social context and cultural tools that shape the construction of human understanding and human actions. It will be recalled (see subsection 3.1.1) that what individuals believe and how they act can be seen as shaped by historical, cultural, and social conditions that are reflected in mediational tools (e.g. Rogoff 2003; Wertsch 1991; Wertsch, del Rio & Alvarez 1995; Wertsch et al. 1993). As a pre-eminent mediational tool, language is highlighted as being of paramount importance.

This study adopt the main principles of sociocultural theory, in the sense that it focuses on participation within socioculturally constructed situational practices as a key factor in professional learning and also in organizational development (Boreham & Morgan 2004; Brown & Duguid 2000; Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). Effective professional learning is understood to require conditions which can develop a dialectical relationship between professional and organizational development (Day & Gu 2007). The present study adopts the idea that individual and organizational developments are intertwined and that these issues should be studied as mutually constitutive. Moreover, workplace learning involves an interdependence between the participation of individuals and workplace affordances (e.g. workplace activities, resources) (Billett 2004). Thus, the focus is on examining the multiple relations between the individual and social aspects of learning, and on understanding those social processes through which individual and collective learning and development are constructed (Herrenkohl 2008; Peck et al. 2009).

In this intertwining of elements, communities of practice are seen as powerful sites of learning, since they offer resources to individuals who commit themselves to learning practices that are important to the continuity of the community and organization (Eteläpelto 2008; Wenger 1998). Hence, *participation* in learning is highlighted at the individual, the communal, and the organizational level. For individuals, participation means engaging in and contributing to communities of practice, and for the organization, participation means the interconnection of the communities through which shared knowledge is produced. All this implies that individual and organizational learning will involve, pre-eminently, (i) individual participation in shared meaning-construction within communities of practice, and (ii) interaction between different communities of practice, and their common meaning-construction both within and outside organizational boundaries (Wenger 1998). In the present study, organizational development thus means developing ways of implementing teacher education that will support the continuous learning and reforming of teacher education practices and education. This is closely related to the idea that if teacher education institutions are to function effectively, they need to support a culture of continuous learning and reform of their practices – not least in order to promote such a culture among their

students (Margolin 2007; Matusov 2001). To put it briefly, in this study organizational development is understood in terms of how an organization supports (i) the growth of professionals within the organization, (ii) communal practices and collective meaning construction, and (iii) the renewal of organizational practices (see also Gallucci 2008).

Although these premises (derived from sociocultural theorizing) outline the basic theoretical layers of the study, the study also takes into account recent criticisms of sociocultural theory. Thus, as indicated above (subsections 3.2, 3.3), I aim to widen the perspective, seeing learning as not only determined by social and structural factors but also as an issue of professional identity construction, manifested by individuals' practice of agency. In dealing with *professional identity*, this study utilizes the idea of identity as an on-going, socioculturally situated, and renegotiated process that is negotiated in a mutually constitutive relationship between the individual actor and the social context (Beijaard et al. 2004; Lasky 2005; Sfard & Prusak 2005). This negotiation is a dynamic process, one that intertwines external suggestions coming from the social context with individuals' internal expectations as they work, in such a way that those concerned make sense of themselves as professionals and their work (Beijaard et al. 2004; Cohen 2010). Professional identity encompasses individuals' commitments, orientations, values, and identifications. In brief, professional identity involves what individuals understand as most important in their work.

Professional identities are seen as constructed by participation in the practices and discourses of work organizations. Within this process, organizational norms and instructions may be appropriated, adopted, ignored, or resisted (Wells 2007). This acting and negotiating requires the practice of agency. Consequently, the concept of *professional agency* is understood as closely intertwined with individuals' professional identities, and as fundamental in renegotiating these. Agency, one can say, is located within transformative practices and discourses, and opportunities for the practice of agency may well occur in rapidly-changing workplace settings (Billett & Smith 2006; Eteläpelto 2008; Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto 2011; Watson 2008; Ybema et al. 2009). Workplaces have also been recognized as highly appropriate settings for the study of identity construction and agency, offering as they do certain socially shared resources – and also constraints – within which individuals negotiate who they are and who they might become as professional actors (Billett 2006a; Watson 2009).

In this study professional agency is elaborated through two theoretical foundations which are seen as complementary to each other. Firstly, since this study falls within an overall sociocultural approach, the concept of agency is understood as socially shared, culturally, historically, and socially shaped, and provided through mediational means (Lasky 2005; Wertsch et al. 1993). Hence, agency is seen as the individual's capacity to act in socioculturally mediated contexts (Ahearn 2001). This acting involves the capacity to make intentional choices concerning work, to operate according to these choices within workplace settings, and to negotiate professional identity (Fenwick 2006; Lewis et al. 2007). As a second main characteristic, this study adopts a discursive

approach, in the sense of multiple discourses being seen to frame the social context in which individuals exercise their agency within their local workplace practices. These multiple discourses make possible certain socially available professional identities, which are utilized in renegotiating identity. Thus, I see the educators' professional agency as involving the capacity to meaningfully construct and display their professional identity within socially defined contexts, meaning in this case their capacity to negotiate and renegotiate professional identities within their local work practices. In the renegotiating processes, the importance of language is emphasized, since it enters into a reciprocal relationship: the accounts belonging to language construct the world, and the language itself reflects and is constructed by the world (Potter 1996).

To sum up, the theoretical framework of the study has three main pillars, involving notions of (i) sociocultural conditions for participation in shared practices and meaning-construction in the workplace, (ii) professional identity, and (iii) the practice of agency. The study is thus informed by a sociocultural approach, by a community-of-practice metaphor, and by an understanding of professional identity as a fundamental aspect of learning, and as constantly renegotiated in socioculturally constituted contexts. In these negotiations, agency is seen as having fundamental importance. Figure 1 summarizes the theoretical framework and the main concepts of the study.
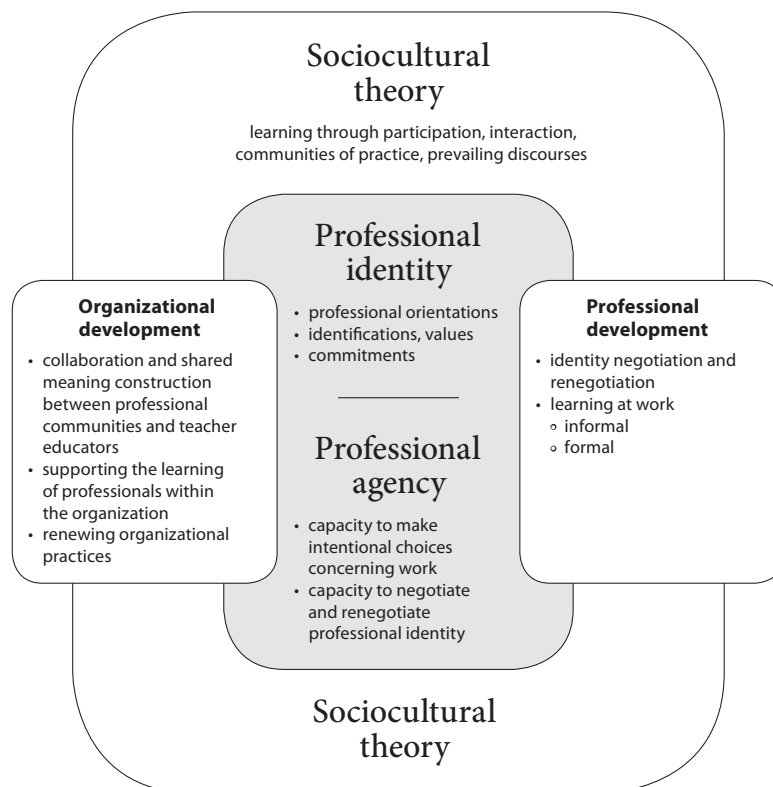
FIGURE 1   Theoretical framework and main concepts of the study

4   RESEARCH TASK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Despite increasing recognition of the importance of teacher education, there is a lack of theoretical or empirical investigation of how teacher education organizations promote teacher educators' professional development, and how such organizations can develop and change. There appears to be a need for research on teacher educators' work, their professional identity construction, and the challenges they face in their professional development. With this in mind, the present study investigates the intertwined and complex relationships between a teacher education department and the teacher educators who work in it.

In embarking on this research, the overall purpose was to gain a better understanding of how teacher educators can learn at work – that is, learn in such a way as to develop their work, and at the same time, develop their department as a work community and organization. The research task was to understand the possibilities and obstacles pertaining to teacher educators' professional development, and how these may be related to organizational development and change. These issues were seen as involving teacher educators' professional identity negotiations within the teacher education department; this in turn was seen as bound up with their professional agency, and with their participation in shared practices and meaning-construction.

In this study, I sought to go beyond existing research and theoretical notions. I saw it as necessary to understand the relationships between the social context of the department and the individual agency of the teacher educators, and – importantly – to look into the interdependency between these two. The overarching research questions were defined within this general framework.

The first research question addresses the professional development of teacher educators. Here the main emphasis is on the social context and the affordances it offers for teacher educators' learning at work. The research question was formulated as follows:

1. Considering the teacher education department as a context for professional development, what kinds of resources does the department offer teacher educators, and what obstacles does it create?

The second research question aimed to investigate in particular teacher educators' agency, and the intertwined relationship between the social suggestions of the working context and the professional identity of the educators. This research question was framed as follows:

2. How can teacher educators exercise agency within their working contexts, and how is this related to their professional identity negotiations?

The third research question focused particularly on the community-based learning of teacher educators, and on the development of the teacher education department. This question was defined as follows:

3. What kinds of community-based and organizational development exist within a teacher education department?

All the four empirical sub-studies, with their own specific aims and research questions (reported in the four attached articles), deal with issues related to teacher educators' work, and with the social and cultural conditions in which they operate. Each sub-study utilizes (mainly) the same main research data, collected from the teacher education department. Thus, the reader will observe a certain degree of overlap in the description of the theoretical, methodological, and empirical underpinnings of the sub-studies. However, each of these sub-studies seeks to elaborate the main research task from a different point of view, in order to gain a holistic picture of the overall research topic. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between the overall research task and the four sub-studies. Note that the three general research questions (above) will be answered on the basis of these sub-studies.

The first article, *Teacher educators' workplace learning. The interdependency between individual agency and social context* (Article I), describes the interdependency between individual teacher educators and the social context of the teacher education department, with a focus on the aspects promoting or hindering workplace learning. The article examines the teacher educators' experiences of the affordances for participation offered by their workplaces, and looks at how these affordances are utilized. Since it was the initial article of the whole research project, the article is descriptive in nature, laying a foundation for the subsequent research and analyses. The second article *Teachers' professional identity negotiations in two different work organizations* (Article II*)* seeks to gain an understanding of teachers' professional identity negotiations, through an examination of two different educational organizations, representing (i) a *tightly*, and (ii) a *loosely coupled* organization. The teacher education department in question was categorized as representing a loosely

coupled organization. The third article aimed to contribute to an understanding of teacher education through a focus on teacher educators' discourses concerning curriculum development. The title of the article is *Recent tensions and challenges in teacher education as manifested in curriculum discourse* (Article III). This article also discusses alternative options for developing teacher education. Here the process of curriculum development is understood as implicating the social and cultural factors connected to the implementation of teacher education as a whole. The fourth article, *The agency of teacher educators amid academic discourses* (Article IV) focuses on the agency of teacher educators. It investigates their locally expressed agency in the context of more global and socially shared discourses, and discusses in particular the challenges teacher educators face in their work as researchers.

Article I	Article II
Workplace learning	Identity negotiations
Challenges in developing teacher education	
Article IV	Article III
Professional agency	Curriculum discourses
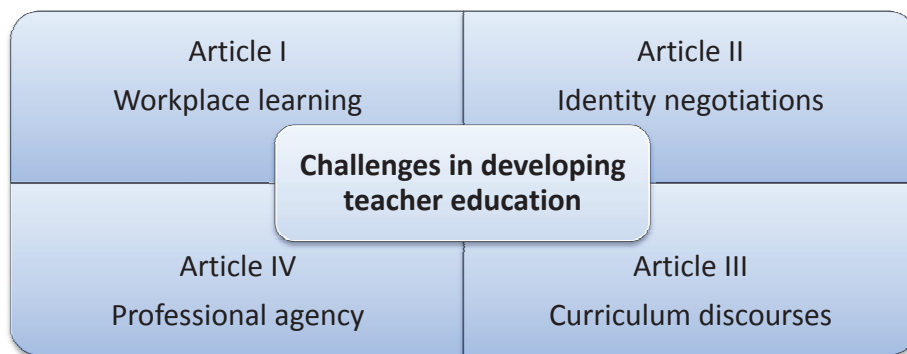
FIGURE 2   The relationship between the overall research task and the four sub-studies

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5 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES USED IN THE STUDY

In this section I introduce the methodological approaches used throughout the study. Because the methodological choices and the implementation of the study are closely intertwined, the structure of this section is based on both these elements. The main emphasis is on how the methodological choices and analyses have been driven by the research questions, and also by the broader theoretical assumptions guiding the study. The stages in conducting the study are presented in Figure 3. At the end of the section, I describe how ethical issues have been dealt with throughout the research process.

5.1 The position of the researcher: a dual role as practitioner and researcher

The starting point of this study can be traced to the year 2002. That year marked the start of the project called *Promoting collaboration-based teacher education* (Yhteisöllisyyden kehittämisprojekti) in the Department of Teacher Education. The aim of this project was to develop new kinds of collaborative and communal working methods within teacher education, and to enhance shared working practices among teacher educators. The Teacher Education Department in question belongs to a large multidisciplinary Finnish university, and it has the longest history of teacher education in the country. The department has an excellent reputation. It is staffed by approximately 80 teacher educators and 30 other employees, and thus it is one of the biggest teacher education departments in Finland. The department educates class teachers, subject teachers, and study-counsellors.

One important characteristic of this study is that that the teacher education department in question is my own professional community. When the project referred to above started at the department, I was working there as a departmental coordinator. I had been appointed to this post in 2001, and I was

thus a relatively new employee. Before this post, I had worked for seven years at the Open University of Jyväskylä, which was at this time going through extensive growth in terms of employees, students, subjects taught, and pedagogical development and innovation. The transition from the innovative and active working context of the Open University to a traditional university department gave me the opportunity to observe intriguing differences in working cultures – for example in terms of communication, decision making, collaboration, and general atmosphere. Thus, I was very enthusiastic about the collaboration-based project when coordination of this project was defined as one of my working duties. The coordination included participation in planning meetings, implementation and evaluation of the project, communication with personnel, and dissemination of information.

During this development process I also started to compile my own research diary, and to document notions, experiences, and observations concerning the work of the department in general, with particular reference to the progress of the development project. The research diary offered me a valuable resource for critical reflections during the entire research process, and in particular during the analysis of the data. This involvement aroused my interest more broadly concerning issues related to teacher education, teacher educators, and the development of teacher education systems. During this process I also started to familiarize myself with studies on teacher education.

The initial motivation for choosing this research topic emerged from my observations on the teacher education development project, and from my own observations and experiences during my work at the Department of Teacher Education. At first, my intention was to focus on collaboration and shared knowledge-building among teacher educators. However, my own experiences of the practices and culture of teacher education raised questions about *problems* in collaboration. It seemed that projects to create new forms of teacher education faced obstacles. From looking at studies on teacher education I also become aware that teacher education has not been given much scholarly attention. In particular, it seemed that teacher educators and their professional learning had not been greatly studied.

My dual position as a practitioner and researcher is an issue that I shall return to later. At this point, it is worth emphasizing that it has been both a challenge and a resource. It has required continuous critical reflection during the entire research process, and especially in analysing the data. However, this position has been favourable, in that it has provided a high degree of access, allowing me to look closely at the implementation of teacher education. This familiarity has helped me in understanding the culture of the teacher education department and in defining the aspects that seemed most worthy of study. The issue of my own position at the department and its possible effects on study – including the trustworthiness of my findings – will be discussed in more detail in Section 7. Figure 3 gives an overview of the process I myself went through in conducting the study.

FIGURE 3   The process of conducting the study

5.2   Methodological commitments of the study

This study is based on social constructionist principles for understanding the nature of the world and the possibilities to obtain knowledge of it. Constructionist ideas on the nature of reality have gained ground in the human sciences since the 1960s. These main ideas can be condensed as follows: social constructionism (i) takes a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge, (ii) sees the understanding of the word as historically and culturally relative, (iii) recognizes that knowledge is constructed and sustained by social processes and

Pre-existing understanding of the research topic
• own work experience at Open University and Teacher Education department
• participation in project "promoting collaboration based teacher education"

Preliminary study question

Theoretical steps
• conceptualizing the phenomena
• sociocultural theory and its critique
• ontological and epistemological principles

critical reflections

Empirical steps
• collecting the data
   ○ research diary
   ○ in-depth interviews
• analysing the data

ethical considerations

Article I
Article II
Article III
Article IV

Overarching study questions

Overarching study questions

Findings of the study

Discussion
• theoretical and practical conclusions
• future challenges
• methodological reflections

FIGURE 3   The process of conducting the study

5.2   Methodological commitments of the study

This study is based on social constructionist principles for understanding the nature of the world and the possibilities to obtain knowledge of it. Constructionist ideas on the nature of reality have gained ground in the human sciences since the 1960s. These main ideas can be condensed as follows: social constructionism (i) takes a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge, (ii) sees the understanding of the word as historically and culturally relative, (iii) recognizes that knowledge is constructed and sustained by social processes and

through daily interactions between people, and (iv) sees that knowledge and social action go together (Burr 2004). This means that the world and the place of people in it are not self-evidently "there" for participants; rather, participants actively construct the world of their everyday life. Thus, knowledge is seen as political, ideological, and bound up with values. Furthermore, since knowledge of the world is constructed through social interaction, the importance of language is emphasized (Burr 2004; Gubrium & Holstein 2008; Schwandt 2000).

In general, there have been long-standing debates between two main schools that differ from each other in their understanding of the nature of reality. Thus, a *realist* ontology takes the world as consisting ultimately of objective facts, with this "real" world being held to exist independently of human consciousness (Alston 2001; Puolimatka 2002). By contrast, an *idealist* understanding of reality argues that reality always depends on human minds and perceptions. This means that reality is not fixed or universal, but is rather the result of the actions of perception and meaning-construction (Burr 2004; Gergen 1985). A social constructionist understanding of reality is thus connected with an idealist ontology, in the sense that social reality is not seen as existing independently of human consciousness, being always the result of human perception and meaning-construction.

In fact, within socioconstructionist lines of thinking there are various traditions that differ from each other in terms of their understanding of the nature of reality. Radical or strong socio-constructionist thinking begins with the premise that language is embedded in the social practices of life, and that reality is to be understood as existing *only* in language (Gergen 1994; Schwandt 2000). This means that the world and the real exist only through human discourses and meaning-construction. A weak or moderate interpretation of constructionist tradition – representing also a more common way to understand reality – engages more sympathetically with the realist understanding of reality, seeing that at least part of the world and the phenomena within it exist independently of human perceptions and meaning-construction (Cromby & Nightingale 1999; Hacking 2009).

The present study is based on the moderate tradition of socio-constructionism, in that I understand reality as existing irrespective of human perceptions. I thus agree with Miles and Huberman (1994) who take the view that "social phenomena exist not only in the mind but also in the objective world – and some lawful and reasonably stable relationships are to be found among them". I have approached the teacher education department and its culture and practices as a reality of the objective world, and as something that exists at least partly irrespective of human perceptions. However, my epistemological assumptions rely on the socioconstructionist approach, in the sense that I understand knowledge as socially constructed, contextual, historical, and relative (Burr 2004; Nikander 2008; Schwandt 2000). I see teacher educators' accounts of working at the teacher education department as constructed within a certain socio-historical context and time, and thus as reflecting what one can call the reality of the department. At the same time I understand these accounts

as also *creating* that "reality". From these accounts, and through applying scientific methods, I have established a construction of that reality. Thus, the findings and conclusions of this study can be seen as one representation and interpretation of teacher education culture. The findings are, in this sense, not objective "facts"; nevertheless, they function as descriptions aiming to give a deeper understanding of the culture of teacher education.

Since in this study my aim was to *understand* and *interpret* the challenges in developing teacher education, the foundation for understanding this phenomenon lies also within the hermeneutic tradition. At the heart of the hermeneutic approach is the claim that the human sciences differ fundamentally in nature and purpose from the natural sciences, and that human sciences aim to understand human action. This means that – due to the creative, meaningful, and complex nature of social and human life – human actions and social life cannot be explained by natural laws, and can be approached only through an interpretive understanding (Gadamer 1975; Schwandt 2000). Thus, in studying social and human life, hermeneutic thinking emphasizes the importance of an interpretative understanding, rejecting the idea of understanding as an objective or compartmentalized activity of human beings.

In fact, understanding can be seen as a basic structure of people's experience of life, and hence as a condition of being human. In striving to reach a deeper understanding of social life, one central idea is that of a dialogue between people with different sociocultural inheritances (Gadamer 1975). In studying human action and social life, hermeneutics provides a framework for interpretive understanding, with special attention to context. The notion of context is understood as implying that what something means depends on the cultural context in which it was originally *created* – and also, the cultural context within which it is *interpreted* (Gadamer 1975; Patton 2002). Connected to the emphasis on context, the researcher's pre-existing personal experiences are also stressed in the hermeneutic approach. Personal notions and experiences are not eliminated; rather they are accepted as an important element in the understanding and interpretation of the phenomena under study. Sociohistorically inherited biases, traditions, and prejudgements are not seen as something external and objective, or as something from which a researcher can free or distance her/himself. Instead, sociohistorical traditions are seen as a living force which enters into all understanding, and which shapes what people are and how they understand the world (Gadamer 1975; Gallagher 1992; Schwandt 2000). This means that striving for an interpretation and understanding is not a question of the researcher setting aside his/her biases. In fact, understanding requires the *engagement* of one's biases (Schwandt 2000). Awareness of pre-existing personal perspectives can help the researcher to see the phenomenon under study from a contrary point of view, and thus learn from that experience (Koski 1995).

In order to achieve a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study, a *hermeneutic circle* offers an analytical process aimed at enhancing understanding; it places a particular emphasis on qualitative analyses by which

parts are related to wholes and wholes to parts. This involves a continuous back and forth movement between the parts and the whole. At a general level, hermeneutics foregrounds the interpretive core of qualitative inquiry, underlining the importance of context, and the dynamic whole-part interrelations of a holistic perspective (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009; Patton 2002). Thus, the hermeneutic circle comprises a dialogue between the participants, the researcher, and the sociohistorically inherited tradition (Gadamer 1975; Koski 1995). In this study, the hermeneutic approach seemed to offer a way to utilize my own pre-existing experiences and notions related to the teacher education department in question. By applying hermeneutic principles I aimed to be critically aware of my own preconceptions concerning the research topic (Gadamer 1975; Schwandt 2000), to learn about my own biases (Koski 1995), and to engage in a dialogue with the data, the theoretical starting points, and my own experiences and notions (Bernstein 1983; Gadamer 1975).

5.3 Data and data collection

The main data for this study were gathered through in-depth, open-ended interviews with eight teacher educators. Because the focus was on socially shared issues in the work context, in-depth interviews were chosen as the main form of data. As the name implies, *in-depth interviews* seek deep information and understanding. According to Johnson (2002), the notion of depth in research interviews means that researchers should ideally achieve the same level of knowledge and understanding of some everyday activity, event, or place as the members or participants within the researched context. This kind of deep understanding begins with the common-sense understanding of some lived cultural experience, and aims to explore the contextual boundaries of that experience, in such a way as to uncover what is commonly hidden or tacit. A deep understanding will allow one to grasp and articulate multiple perspectives; it will reveal how common-sense assumptions, practices, and ways of talking partly constitute people's interests, and how these interests are understood (Johnson 2002).

In this study, the interviews were *open-ended*, the aim being to remain as open and as flexible as possible to the participants' perceptions. As a qualitative data-gathering method, the "openness" of open-ended interviews can vary from a flexible to a more structured form. In its most flexible version, open-ended interviews are as informal and conversational as possible, and no predetermined questions are asked. Open-ended interviews can also be conducted through a more standardized format, with the same open-ended questions being put to all the interviewees (Patton 2002). However, the present study combined aspects of these forms. The interviews can be described as having been conducted through an interview guide (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009; Patton 2002). An interview guide is a script that lists the questions that are to be talked through in the course of an interview, more or less strictly. It thus

provides topics within which the interviewer is free to ask questions that will illuminate the topic under study. Hence, the interviewer is free to build a conversation, but at the same time remains focused on a particular predetermined research topic (Hoffmann 2007; Patton 2002).

In this study I planned a research guide that included four main themes: (i) reasons for becoming a teacher educator, (ii) teacher educators' experiences of working at the department, (iii) possibilities for developing as a teacher educator, and (iv) future expectations concerning the work. Within these four overarching themes there were several questions that were intended to open up the conversation and guide the interview, in case the conversation was slipping into issues that did not form part of the research interest. As Rapley (2007) reminds us, interviewing is never "just conversation", even though it may be conversational, given that the interviewer must maintain some level of control. However, I utilized the interview guide flexibly, and always with a bias towards conversation. During the interviews I also noticed that at the end of each interview the question, "Is there still something you would like to add or bring up?" was fruitful; it brought up many interesting issues that had not been discussed during the interview up to this point. The interview guide is presented in Appendix 1.

The analysis of qualitative data is time-consuming and labour-intensive. Thus, in qualitative studies the research sample tends to be relatively small. Nonetheless, the data can be designed to be as broad and inclusive as possible (Taylor 2001). In this study I wanted to collect wide-ranging data and have as wide a variety of teacher educators' accounts as possible; hence I formulated beforehand certain profiles of different kinds of teacher educators that I would wish to have as interviewees. This kind of purposive sampling aims to find the best participants for information on the phenomenon under study (Denzin & Lincoln 2000; Silverman 2005). Johnson (2002) takes the view that in interview studies the best informants are those who have been thoroughly enculturated in the setting or community, have recent membership participation, have some provisional interest in assisting the interviewer, and have adequate time and resources to take part in the interviews. Thus, I wished to have representatives of different categories of age, sex, academic status, subject taught, and length of work history in the department. Based on my own experience in the department and familiarity with the personnel I was able to decide on certain teacher educators as key informants, in terms of representing different categories. The selection of the participants was such that, in my opinion – having given the matter extensive consideration – the accounts and language constructed in the interviews were likely to reflect the knowledge and perceptions of other teacher educators in the department. Thus, a relatively small sample of data was seen as justifiable. In qualitative studies and in the discursive approach in particular, it is commonly assumed that the patterns revealed in interviews indicate knowledge which is shared by other members of the culture (Taylor 2001).

The interviews took place during 2005, when the extensive curriculum reform connected with the Bologna process was actively under way. At the same time, the university was going through salary restructuring and quality assurance processes. Thus, the teacher educators were in the midst of many new demands and suggestions coming from the administration. In concrete terms, the first step to in gathering the data was to inform the staff of the department about my research, at a departmental meeting in May 2005. I presented my study interest, my prospective approach, and introduced my plans for collecting the data. I requested that any teacher educators who would be interested in contributing to the study and taking part in individual interviews would contact me. After the meeting, four teacher educators contacted me and expressed their interest in participating in the interviews. It was fortunate that these four persons represented key informants, belonging to the categories that I had wished to include. After that I phoned four other teacher educators whom I wished to include in the study. Two of them expressed an interest in contributing. One educator said at first that (s)he would participate, but after a few days (s)he contacted me, having had second thoughts, and withdrew. Another educator asked for time to think when I first called, but called me back the following day to refuse, giving his/her reasons. Thus, I had six informants in total, and I started to arrange suitable times for conducting the interviews. During this time all the personnel of the department, including myself, were extremely busy with the on-going curriculum reform, the salary reform, and the initial quality assurance process. Thus, I was able to complete only these six interviews during the spring and summer semester. The following autumn I contacted two more teacher educators and conducted interviews with them during the autumn semester.

As indicated above, it was intended that the informants would represent different categories of age, sex, academic status, subject taught, and length of work history in the department. There was at least one representative from all the professional groups in the department: assistants, university teachers, lecturers, and professors. There were also representatives of persons filling a permanent appointment and persons with temporary employment. In order to secure the anonymity of the interviewees, I am not able to give a more precise description of the informants. The interviewees were able to choose the location of the interviews. Six of them wanted the interviews to be conducted in my own office. In two cases the interviews were conducted in the informant's office. In one case the interview went on so late that the informant and I decided to continue it the following day.

Interviews are, by their very nature, social actions in which participants collaborate in producing accounts or versions of their actions, experiences, feelings, and thoughts (Rapley 2007). Thus, interviewing is an active process where the participant and the interviewer, through their mutual relationship, produce knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). Johnson (2002) has suggested that to be effective and useful, in-depth interviews must be developed and build on intimacy, and that they can sometimes even take a form that resembles

friendship. In this study the interviews had an in-depth and open-ended nature, and the manner of the interviews was mostly informal and conversational. The main reason for the informal nature of the interviews was the fact that I knew all the interviewees as colleagues, at least to some extent. In this study the interviews did not resemble conversations between friends. However, it can be argued that the interviews were more like conversations between two persons working in the same workplace than study-interviews in their traditional form. Utilizing the interviewing guide provided a way to have satisfactory control in the conduct of the interviews (Patton 2002; Rapley 2007). The individual interviews lasted from approximately one and a half hours to two and a half hours. The overall duration of all the interviews was fourteen hours. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. The overall length of the transcribed interview material was 187 pages (A4, single spaced).

The interviews also included a task in which the participants were asked to draw *two diagrams of their work*. In the first diagram I asked them to draw their own place, as they saw and experienced it, in the department and in the university. In the second diagram I asked them to draw every significant team and workgroup of which they were a member, both at the departmental (i.e. teacher education department) level and the organizational (i.e. university) level. Thus, I was given eight drawings representing the teacher educators' position as they experienced it, in the department and in the university, and eight drawings representing the educators' significant professional groups inside and outside the university. These drawings were discussed at the interviews, and the discussions concerning the diagrams were also tape-recorded. The diagram template is presented in Appendix 2.

I collected the *research diary* material between May 2002 and June 2006. During this period I wrote up my own observations, experiences, and ideas about being a member of the teacher education department and working there. At first the main focus was on the collaboration development project (Yhteisöllisyyden kehittämisprojekti). I compiled the diary material by writing about the meetings of the planning group, and also about the various meetings and development days that involved all persons connected to that project. In addition, I gradually started to make notes and write up my perceptions about other and more general issues connected with working in the department. My observations were mainly related to shared events such as departmental meetings and work group meetings, but I also wrote up my experiences and observations concerning occasional events, and conversations with teacher educators in different contexts and situations. As mentioned above, the department was at this time undergoing a major curriculum reform connected with the Bologna process. The changes required a lot of effort from the whole staff. Thus, my experiences and observations connected to the planning and negotiation of the new curriculum were given a good deal of emphasis in the diary material. The overall length of the diary material amounted to 28 pages (A4, single spaced).

5.4   Qualitative methods applied in the study

Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. It is a situated activity which locates the researcher in the world and which consists of a set of interpretive and material practices that make the world visible (Denzin & Lincoln 2000). In qualitative research, methodological decisions taken throughout the research process are seen as pragmatic strategies aimed at obtaining the most appropriate methods to describe the phenomenon under study (Mayan 2009; Patton 2002). In this study I chose a qualitative approach in order to acquire an overall understanding of the intertwined relationship between teacher educators and their working context. The aim was to obtain in-depth knowledge of specific topics, but also to note issues that could emerge from the data. The choices I made during the research process were directed at achieving a better response to the theoretical assumptions and questions pertaining to each sub-study. In subsections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 below I shall introduce the methodological choices and analyses I applied throughout the research process, including the general methodological approaches that were utilized. I shall describe the precise analytical procedure in subsection 5.5.

5.4.1 Qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis

My aim was to interpret the challenges in developing teacher education. Hence I found a foundation for understanding this phenomenon within the hermeneutical tradition. However, the hermeneutical approach does not offer any step-by step method; rather, it is an explication of general principles in the tradition of interpretation (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). Thus, there was a need to address certain methodological implications if I was to analyse the data adequately. Within the hermeneutical approach I used qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis as methods of data analysis in seeking to answer the questions set for the first two sub-studies of the research.

Qualitative content analysis is a method which aims to capture the core consistencies and meanings of qualitative data and to provide an understanding of the phenomenon under study (Hsieh & Shannon 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann 2009; Patton 2002). This method examines the characteristics of language as communication, focusing on the content or contextual meanings of text data (Tesch 1990). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) have identified three distinct approaches which can be categorized as qualitative content analysis, i.e. *conventional, direct*, and *summative*. In this study I utilized conventional content analysis. This is recognized as a data-driven method, in contrast to theory-driven analysis (Miles & Huberman 1994; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2006).

In conventional content analysis, coding categories are derived directly from the text data with a view to describing the phenomenon under study. Pre-existing theories and categories are avoided, and the focus is on allowing the categories to emerge from the data (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). This kind of

analysis is based on the researcher's interpretation and deductions: the researcher moves through empirical data towards a more conceptual understanding of the phenomenon (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2006). As a process, conventional analysis includes the following phases: reading all the data repeatedly, deriving codes, making notes of first impressions and labelling the codes, sorting the codes into categories and sub-categories, and developing definitions for each code, sub-category, and category (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). Finally, in conventional content analysis, the theoretical notions and/or previous research findings are addressed in the Discussion section of the study. The aim is to contribute to an area of research interest, through, for example, comparing and contrasting the findings with prevailing theory (Hsieh & Shannon 2005).

Thematic analysis is a qualitative method that is widely used, but rarely acknowledged. In general, thematic analysis is a process of determining the core meanings of the data through content analysis (Patton 2002). This means that thematic analysis is based on categorization, and that the theming can be seen as a process of determining how the different categories are related (Mayan 2009). Recently, Braun and Clarke (2006) have sought to outline the theory, application, and evaluation of thematic analysis and to present a rigorous description of it, giving support to it as a theoretically and methodologically sound analytical method. They argue that thematic analysis offers a useful and flexible method for qualitative researchers, and that it should be seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis. Characteristic of thematic analysis as a theoretically free and diverse method is the element of flexibility. Thematic analysis can be applied within particular theoretically and methodologically oriented frameworks (e.g. conversation analysis or grounded theory); it is also a method that can be applied in studies which are essentially independent of any particular theory or epistemology. Furthermore, thematic analysis is compatible with both essentialist and constructionist paradigms (Braun & Clarke 2006).

In thematic analysis, the core question is what counts as a theme. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions. It also represents some level of patterned meaning within the data set. Patterns can be described as referring to descriptive findings, while a theme takes a more categorical or topical form (Patton 2002). In defining what counts as a theme, the role of the researcher is significant. This means that certain themes will not emerge or be discovered passively from the data; instead they will be defined through the researcher's active work in identifying patterns, and in selecting which of them are important (Taylor & Ussher 2001). In defining themes that will capture patterned responses in relation to the research questions, the question arises as to the "size" that the theme needs to be. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasize that in determining a theme, the question is one of prevalence in terms of the space within each data item, and of prevalence across the entire data set. However, one cannot strictly define what proportion of the data set needs to

display evidence of the theme for it to be regarded as a theme. A theme can be given significant space in some data items, and little or none in others. It is also possible that what is judged to be a theme might not take up a large proportion of the entire data set, i.e. that actual quantifiable measures will not be seen as applicable. Overall, what counts in defining a theme is the researcher's judgement as to whether it captures something important in relation to the research questions that have been posed (Braun & Clarke 2006).

The actual process of doing thematic analysis is flexible in nature, and it is always applied to fit the research questions. The analytical process involves continually moving back and forward between the entire data set, the coded extracts, and the on-going analysis of the data. This is not a linear process of merely moving from one phase to the next, but more a recursive process, in which moving back and forward is needed throughout the whole research process (Braun & Clarke 2006; Patton 2002). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the process of doing thematic analysis consists of the following six phases: familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finally producing the report. However, these phases are not to be taken as rigid rules; they are rather basic precepts that need to be applied flexibly to fit the research questions and data (Braun & Clarke 2006; Patton 2002).

5.4.2 The discursive approach

In this study (Articles III and IV) I also applied a discursive approach, and especially critical discursive psychology (Edley 2001; Wetherell 1998; 2007). The discursive approach was chosen in order to respond to three separate demands. First of all, the aim was to find a method that would make it possible to understand in more detail the intertwining relationship between teacher educators and their working context. Secondly, the discursive approach offered a method that would help in analysing collective meaning-construction on a socially shared level. Finally, the discursive approach was preferred because it offered a way to examine collective and shared accounts in an ethically sound way. This was based on an assumption that the discursive approach concentrates on socially shared discourses and talk, and not on individual experiences.

In general, the discursive approach emphasizes the study of language, talk, and texts, and how they are used to perform actions. The starting point is that language does not transparently represent the world, or some "reality"; nor does it reflect a pre-existing meaning in the manner of a mirror. Rather, language is seen as a site where meanings are constructed through text and talk in social action (Nikander 2008; Wetherell 2007). Thus, language is seen as entering into a reciprocal relationship: the descriptions and accounts belonging to language construct the world, and the language itself reflects and is constructed by the surrounding world (Potter 1996). The discursive approach is not a single coherent and consistent way of thinking; rather it offers a large number of mostly contrasting guidelines for research. Indeed, there are various

types of discursive approaches, deriving from different methodological principles and involving different conceptions of the role of the researcher and of the relationships between language and the social world (De Fina, Schiffrin & Bamberg 2006; Potter 2004).

Discursive psychology can be seen as one further manifestation of the general turn to language, culture, and discourse found across the social sciences (Wetherell, 2007). The focus has moved away from the individual mind to processes of social and societal action in and through talk (Hepburn & Wiggins 2005; Potter 2005). Discursive psychology was first introduced as an alternative to cognitive psychology, placing a new emphasis on the variability, inconsistency, and unreliability in people's talk. Such variability became understandable when talk was examined in the contexts of its occurrence, and examined functionally and indexically (Edwards 2005). Thus, this approach aims to make visible the ways in which discourse is central to action (Potter 2004). It strives to analyse the strategies by which people can rationalize social practices, and to show how patterns of language sustain and recreate social reality. The focus is on the broader patterns of meaning-making that are resources for social actions. A characteristic of this approach is that it operates on more of a macro-level than some other discursive methodologies (Stubbe et al. 2003).

In recent years, discursive psychology has developed in different directions, with two different orientations coming to the fore: one sustained by scholars working within the frame of conversation analysis and the other advocated by those working within the framework of *critical discursive psychology* (Wetherell 2007). Critical discursive psychology pays attention to micro-level details which are supplemented with a macro-level layer of analysis, the focus being on historical, social, and political contexts (Benwell & Stokoe 2006). This approach emphasizes the significance of social and cultural resources as sources for individual meaning construction and subject positions. Individual actors are understood to be already positioned within larger social formations, but at the same time able, within constraints, to position themselves and to negotiate new subject positions (Taylor & Littleton 2008; Wetherell 1998; 2005). This line of research moves away from attempts to categorize and label individuals and phenomena, towards an understanding of the functions of statements in discourses for the individual speaker – these discourses, and the speaker, being embedded in wider social and ideological contexts (Abell & Myers 2008).

According to Potter and Wetherell (1987) interpretative repertoires are "basically a lexicon or register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterize and evaluate actions and events". Hence, interpretative repertoires provide a basis for a shared social understanding, and they can be described as the community's common sense resources that can be utilized in the course of everyday social interaction. Repertoires offer internally coherent ways of talking about and understanding objects and events, and making them understandable in a particular community. These understandings create internally coherent ways of making sense of the content of a discourse and of

how that content is organized (Edley 2001; Potter & Wetherell 1987). This means that when people talk or think they invariably apply terms already provided to them by history. Talk can be original, but it is usually made up of a patchwork of quotations from various interpretative repertoires (Edley 2001; Reynolds, Wetherell & Taylor 2007). The repertoires create various images of teacher educators as actors in the community, while at the same time locating them in a particular subject position. In critical discursive psychology, the concept of a subject position implies the existence of different identities; these are made available by discourses that connect dominant cultural storylines to the construction of particular selves (Edley 2001).

In order to understand the different kinds of *interpretative repertoires* that are available in certain cultural contexts, several analytical tools can be utilized. In this study I have used as analytical tools the concepts of (i) function, (ii) context, and (iii) subject position. The concept of *function* implies that people use language in order to *do* things – there is always a purpose in the talk. However, function cannot be understood in a mechanical way, since people do not always use language explicitly. Thus, in order to understand the function of the talk there is always a need to consider the talk within a particular time and space, that is, in its *context* (Potter & Wetherell 1987). The *subject position* identifies how a particular actor is positioned within a particular interpretative repertoire. It also illustrates the opportunities, constraints, demands, and responsibilities operating on the actor thus positioned (Edley 2001).

5.5   The analysis of the data

In subsection 5.4 I described the general principles of the methodological approach used in the study. In this section I shall introduce the analysis that was actually implemented in each sub-study. The data for the first two sub-studies (Articles I and II) were analysed in accordance with data-driven qualitative approaches, applying qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006; Hsieh & Shannon 2005; Mayan 2009; Patton 2002). In the analysis I focused on the teacher educators' individual perceptions and experiences. However, I looked for common elements occurring across different interviews, aiming to produce general characterizations from the interview data. The two subsequent sub-studies were analysed via discursive analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006; Edley 2001; Potter & Wetherell 1987). The analyses of all the sub-studies were performed on a cross-case basis. Doing cross-case analysis means grouping together answers from different people to common questions, or analysing different perspectives on central issues (Patton 2002). My analyses focused on the educators' experiences or accounts on a general and collectively shared level, rather than, for example, individual biographies or dispositions. This was also necessary for ethical reasons, to ensure the anonymity of the persons interviewed. I shall report the analytical

processes of the sub-studies individually, since each of them was conducted with different analytical methods.

The first sub-study (Article I) aimed to give a general description of the research data as a whole. Thus, a data-driven qualitative approach was used in order to obtain an overall understanding of the teacher educators' accounts concerning their work at the department, and the professional learning taking place in this workplace. Because my aim was to provide a rich description of the entire data corpus, the data were analysed in accordance with the principles of data-driven qualitative content analysis, utilizing a hermeneutical approach (Gadamer 1975). Because I had been working in the teacher education department I could use my own personal experiences as a resource in interpreting the teacher educators' experiences and perceptions of working at the department. Thus, to attain a more elaborated understanding of an educator's learning at work, I used research diary material in parallel with the in-depth interviews. However, this required continuing critical reflection on my own pre-existing experiences, notions, and interpretations.

The qualitative content analysis was conventional in nature (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). It aimed to describe the data, allowing new insights to emerge and categories to flow from the data. In this first sub-study my purpose was to provide a rich thematic description of the data, and the analytical process was based on the entire data corpus. The analysis was inductive to the extent that it emphasized the significance of the teacher educators' own experiences and perceptions concerning their work – though strictly speaking one could say that the process was partly *abductive* (Hobbs 2006; Mayan 2009). In abductive reasoning, after collecting the data, the researcher generates hypotheses and tries to find an overall plausible interpretation through guesses, speculations, and conjectures about why the data are the way they are. Thus, abduction is bound up with the very way in which qualitative studies are conducted, relying on cognitive processes that combine inductive and deductive reasoning (Mayan 2009). The analysis in this study was abductive in the sense that certain theoretical notions of workplace learning, professional identity, and agency were directed at the analysis, and helped to guide the interpretation process – but were not used as pre-existing coding frames or categories for the data. In fact, the notions in question were modified in the course of and in the light of the emerging data. In addition, since the epistemological assumptions of abductive research understand scientific knowledge as being derived from socially constructed mutual knowledge (Blaikie 2005), the analytical process was aimed at grasping the educators' socially constructed meanings.

To begin with, I read and re-read the whole data corpus a few times in order to get an overall picture of the data. I also listened to the transcribed audiotapes once through, and corrected and supplemented the transcriptions. In parallel with this correcting process I started to make my own notes, setting out my first impressions and notions. As this process continued I was able to identify certain codes that appeared to capture key thoughts within the data set. These codes were then sorted into main categories. Concurrently with the

analysing process I formulated the final research questions. Two of the research questions were shaped according to the two main categories identified, and one question was based on how these two main categories might be related, and the possible consequences of their relationship. When I reported the findings I also identified and presented examples of the data connected with each main category.

The second sub-study (Article II) was conducted in collaboration with my colleague, Katja Vähäsantanen. We each had our own research data, which we analysed utilizing thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006; Patton 2002). The idea was to analyse each data corpus separately, partly due to ethical issues, but to collaborate actively and compare findings, from the preliminary coding to the final stages of reporting the findings. The first phase of the analysis was to read through all the interviews and familiarize ourselves with the data, taking notes and sketching out preliminary ideas and impressions. Next, we focused on research question 1, identifying at a general level how teachers (including the teacher educators in my research) described the social suggestions of their own work organizations (a vocational institution and a teacher education department), and looking at how these suggestions were related to the teachers' agency. This phase was realized through the production of initial codes from each data corpus (Braun & Clarke 2006). Through comparing the data corpuses, and from a holistic reading, we noticed that the teachers from the two organizations described their organizations in two different ways. A more specific comparative process involved more discussion between the researchers, re-reading the interviews and finding similarities and differences in the teachers' accounts. This process included searching for initial themes, reviewing and discussing themes, and defining and naming themes (Braun & Clarke 2006). By thematizing we were able to define certain more specific aspects which illustrated the social suggestions of the work organizations. We grouped these aspects and placed them on three levels: the *work organization level,* the *professional community level*, and the *individual level.*

In the second phase, relating to research question 2, we analysed and interpreted what the teachers said was important to them in their work, including the tasks that were experienced as meaningful to them. From the accounts given, we identified and constructed four orientations to the profession. At the final stage of the analysis we examined how the teachers' differing orientations towards their profession were related to the social suggestions of their work organizations. In reporting the findings, we selected data extracts to represent the themes we found on the three levels (see above) within each educational organization.

The third sub-study (Article III) utilized critical discursive psychology (Edley 2001; Wetherell 2007; Wetherell & Potter 1988) as its main methodological approach. In this study I was interested in the interpretative repertoires (Potter & Wetherell 1987) of curriculum development as they are constructed in teacher educators' talk. The focus was not on linguistic issues but rather on language in use, i.e. how the curriculum was described (its meaning

and its nature) and how the positions of teacher educators were argued. In addition the focus was not on particular teacher educators' identities as constructed within different discourses; the aim was rather to understand the kinds of subject positions that are constructed in general, within different interpretative repertoires.

The analysis of the teacher educators' curriculum talk was conducted on a cross-case basis, meaning that patterns in the data were searched for both *within* and *across* interviews. This was because in critical discursive psychology the unit of analysis is usually a *discursive practice* – rather than an individual actor, or for example, a biographical narrative (Wetherell 2007). The cross-case analysis was also carried out for ethical reasons, to ensure the anonymity of the persons interviewed. Because the main objective of this study was to analyse the kinds of interpretative repertoires used by teacher-educators in their talk (and not to look at the detailed construction of talk), the more accurate transcription methods that are common in many discursive approaches (e.g. conversation analysis) were not needed.

Analysis necessitates familiarity with the data and repeated readings of transcripts. Gradually, by reading and re-reading different patterns across people's talk, certain images, metaphors, and figures of speech start to emerge (Edley 2001). In this study, the analysis involved close reading of the transcriptions and consequently all the sections which included curriculum-talk were extracted. Thereafter, the data were coded and thematized. This process was in many respects the same as in other types of qualitative analysis (especially thematic analysis) in which the purpose is to recognize the prevailing patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke 2006). In this preliminary stage I was able to identify fifteen preliminary themes from the data. I coded the whole data corpus according to these fifteen themes. Within this process I utilized quantitative grouping, counting the number of times each identified theme occurred in the data; this was to ensure systematic and careful sorting, and also to ensure that all the research material was considered. This process was not linear in nature but iterative, and it involved constant moving back and forward over the entire data set. Next, I elaborated the preliminary themes, and the conformity or inconsistency between them. In an analysis of interpretative repertoires these can signal the boundaries of different repertoires (Taylor 2001). From this phase, I was able to identify six interpretative repertoires.

In the next phase, the data extracts were grouped together as representing a number of preliminary repertoires. These were compared using the analytical tools decided upon, i.e. according to (i) function, (ii) the context of the preliminary repertoire, and (iii) the subject positions of the teacher educator. The aim here was to examine the boundaries between the various tentative interpretative schemes. In this analytical process the boundaries between two preliminary repertoires were found to be overlapping; hence these could be reconstituted as a single interpretative repertoire. Thus, in total, five repertoires could be identified as representing differently organized ways of talking about the curriculum development of the teacher education department. After

identifying these five repertoires, I still wanted to condense the findings further; I wished to analyse them in the context of the curriculum reform and of demands for change. For this purpose, the five repertoires were further categorized into two broad *meta-repertoires,* representing different ways of talking about the changes taking place, and about the development of the curriculum in the future.

The fourth sub-study (Article IV) also utilized a discursive approach, and it applied in particular thematic discursive analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006; Potter & Wetherell 1987). In this study I focused on socially shared patterns of talk concerning teacher educators' manifestations of agency in their work as teachers and researchers. Thus, the analysis of this study was also conducted on a cross-case basis, meaning that patterns were searched for and analysed both *within* and *across* individual interviews, rather than being regarded as an expression of individual identity. In order to analyse the educators' accounts in detail and at a practical level, I considered two different aspects in the analytical process. Taylor and Littleton (2006) take the view that in analysing discursive data such different elements are not "stages": the analytical process is not so much sequential as iterative – although systematic in the sense that it involves careful sorting to ensure that all the research material is considered.

As a first task, after reading and re-reading the whole data set, the transcriptions were thematized according to the educators' teacher- and researcher-talk at different levels of local practices. As different levels I considered the *individual* level, the *work community* level (subject-matter groups), the *departmental* level, and the *organizational* level (the university). The aim here was to understand how agency is manifested within the social context of practical and local communities. After that, the thematized accounts were coded according to the educators' explicit expressions concerning (i) the exercise of agency, and (ii) the obstacles that subjugated their professional identity negotiation and work. Within this quantitative process, I counted the number of times each identified theme occurred in the data, in order to ensure systematic and careful sorting and to make sure that all the research material was considered. Once again, this process was not linear in nature but iterative, and it involved continually moving back and forward over the entire data set. Through the coding process I was able to identify the prevailing patterns that the interviewees used when describing their work as educators.

As the second task in the data analysis I compared the various identity accounts I had noted during the first task, focusing on the most prominent tensions and conflicting patterns of talk. At this point I paid particular attention to the educators' individual accounts within the unique context of their talk. I elaborated when they invoked agency, and when they invoked external determinants in referring to different levels of their practices. However, rather than focusing on individual variations in identity negotiations and agency, I paid particular attention to collectively shared elements, i.e. aspects that could be taken as commonalities of the educators' talk. In so doing, my aim was to explore especially the social resources available to the educators in their identity negotiations. An

overview of the specific research questions, the data, and the analysis applied in each sub-study is presented in Table 1, at the end of this section.

5.6 Ethical considerations relating to the study

The fact that in this study I have examined my own workplace involves a good many ethical issues. This was especially case in a situation in which, due to my own position, it was impossible to maintain the anonymity of the teacher education department under study. Furthermore, utilizing in-depth interviews meant a requirement for caution and ethical awareness, due to the fact that in-depth interviewing usually elicits highly personal information concerning specific individuals, and that this information may include participants' personal reflections, plus their perceptions of others (Johnson 2002). The main ethical principles and imperatives are that the researcher must tell the truth (Johnson 2002), and that the study must not cause any distress to the community, or to the individual persons who have participated in the study (Hallamaa, Sorvali, Launis & Lötjönen 2006; Kuula 2006; Kvale & Brinkmann 2009; Taylor 2001). Thus, ethical issues have directed the conduct of this study, from the beginning of the whole process to the reporting of the study.

One basic issue related to ethical principles involves the consent of the researched organization and/or participating individuals. All research subjects need to be aware that they are studied, the participation in the study must be voluntary, they need to know the intentions of the researcher, and they must have the possibility to withdraw whenever they want (Ryen 2007; Silverman 2001; 2005; Taylor 2001). Before I started collecting the data in the spring of 2005, I negotiated with the Head of the Teacher Education Department. I informed him of my plans concerning the research, and asked permission to conduct the study and to collect the data. During the data collection the Head of the Department changed; hence I also informed the new head. They both saw the topic of the research as important and gave permission to continue and conduct the study at the department. After I obtained permission to proceed with my study I informed the personnel of the department, at a department meeting in the spring of 2005. This information was also provided to the staff, through a memo on the intended meetings.

The implementation of the interviews was also a phase that required careful consideration of ethical issues. It is fundamental that the researcher should openly and honestly inform participants regarding the principles of the study (Kuula 2006). At the beginning of each interview I explained my own ethical commitments and described how I would handle and analyse the data collected. The main principles were that only I would analyse and read the interview material, and that the analysing and reporting of the findings should be implemented in a manner that would secure the anonymity of the interviewees. Before I started the interview I promised that the data would be analysed on a cross-case basis. This means that I promised to analyse the data and report the

findings in relation to shared and common features; hence, individual aspects and characteristics that might identify particular interviewees would not appear.

After I collected the research data, the material was available to me and to no-one else. The recorded interviews were copied onto compact discs (CDs) and I deposited them in a locked filing cabinet in my office. I have been the only person to read and process the research data. The supervisors of the PhD project do not know who has participated in the study, and they have seen only a few extracts from the interview material, not the entire transcribed interviews. In the second sub-study, which was carried out in collaboration with my colleague Katja Vähäsantanen, we did not see or read each other's research data. We compared our experiences of interviewing and talked about some general features of the accounts. However, these discussions remained general in nature, and we were careful to use only phrases that would not reveal any details of the persons we interviewed.

One of the most critical ethical issues is protection of the anonymity of the participants (Ryen 2007). As indicated previously, in order to secure the anonymity of the informants, my analysis involved only a search for shared meanings, and not an analysis of individual narratives. Indeed, in the initial stages of the analysis I had to remove some extracts from the data because the participants, the occasions, or the events in question were so obviously recognizable. Before disseminating and reporting the results of each sub-study I sent the manuscripts to the interviewees, asking them to read the texts carefully and check if there was anything in their opinion might compromise their anonymity. In particular, I asked them to check the data extracts used. In using these data extracts it was essential to consider carefully which extracts to include within the final report. In each of the extracts I have, of course, been careful to remove all names and also references to subjects taught. In three sub-studies I used authentic data-extracts, attaching numbers to indicate the interviewees. In these three sub-studies the order of the numbering has been switched round as necessary, in order to secure anonymity.

After sending each article to the interviewees, and asking for feedback, plus possible comments or complaints about the articles (and especially about the authentic data extracts contained in them), I received a few contacts and comments. These concerned mainly the findings and the substance of the study. There were no comments connected with threats to anonymity. In some emails the interviewees commented specifically that the findings and the data extracts were reported in a manner that did not threaten anonymity.

I have presented the findings of the sub-studies at national and international conferences. I have also participated in a research development seminar that was organized at the department under study. In this seminar the idea was to present various research projects that were currently in progress at the department. At that seminar I presented my general framework for the study, plus the main findings, to the personnel of the department. In these and subsequent presentations I have tried to give information about the findings, prior to the publication here in my doctoral thesis.

These, then, are the ways in which ethical issues have affected the process and the implementation of the study. I shall continue consideration of the ethical issues in Section 7, where I discuss how ethical issues affected my *methodological* choices, and how these choices might be thought to have implications for the trustworthiness of the study.

TABLE 1   Overview of the specific research questions, the data, and the analysis applied in each sub-study

Research questions	The data	Analysis	Sub-study
1. What kinds of possibilities and obstacles do teacher educators experience in participating in their workplaces' social communities? 2. How do educators identify with their work, and can they exercise their agency in the work community? 3. From the perspective of workplace learning, how can we characterize the interdependence between the social communities of a teacher education department and the individual educators?	In-depth open-ended interviews with eight teacher educators Research-diary material (compiled during 2002–2006) Educators' drawings portraying their position in the department and every significant workgroup they belonged to (total of 16 diagrams)	Qualitative content analysis	Article I Teacher educators' workplace learning; The interdependency between individual agency and social context (2008)
1. How do teachers perceive the social suggestions of their work organizations, and how are these related to their agency? 2. How do teachers describe their orientations towards the profession, and how are these related to the various social suggestions of their work organisations?	In-depth open-ended interviews with 24 teachers working in a vocational institution and a university department of teacher education	Thematic analysis	Article II Teachers' professional identity negotiations in two different work organizations (2008)
1. What kinds of interpretative repertoires did teacher educators construct when speaking about curriculum reform? 2. What kinds of meta-repertoires do these interpretive repertoires reflect in the context of curriculum reform?	In-depth open-ended interviews with eight teacher educators	Critical discursive psychology – interpretive repertoire analysis	Article III Recent tensions and challenges in teacher education as manifested in curriculum discourse (2010)
1. How do the teacher educators exercise agency in terms of their teacher- and researcher-identity at individual, work-community, and organizational levels? 2. What kind of relationships are there between teacher- and researcher-identities in the manifestation of agency?	In-depth open-ended interviews with eight teacher educators Educators' drawings portraying their position in the department and every significant workgroup they belonged to (total 16 diagrams)	Thematic discourse analysis	Article IV The professional agency of teacher educators amid academic discourses (2012)

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6   FINDINGS: ELABORATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER EDUCATORS AND THEIR WORKING CONTEXT

The main aim of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between teacher educators and the teacher education department as a context for work. The focus was on the resources and obstacles affecting teacher educators' professional development and also how these were related to organizational development and change. These issues were investigated in terms of teacher educators' professional identity negotiations, their professional agency, and the possibilities and obstacles affecting participation in shared practices and meaning-construction. In this section I shall summarize the findings of the four sub-studies which were published during this research. I shall also elaborate the findings in relation to the three main research questions (subsections 6.2-6.4).

6.1   Summarizing the findings of the empirical sub-studies

The following subsections (6.1.1 – 6.1.4) present summaries of the four sub-studies (Articles I-IV).

6.1.1 Teacher educators' workplace learning (Article I)

The article was based on teacher educators' accounts of their work, professional identity negotiations, and possibilities for workplace learning. The analysis was conducted in a manner that would allow a general description of the entire research data (see Braun & Clarke 2006). Consequently, the purpose of this initial phase was also to build a foundation for the subsequent research questions and analyses. The interview data were analysed using a hermeneutical qualitative approach and applying qualitative content analysis. In the analysis the aim was to look for common elements occurring across

different interviews, seeking thus to produce general characterizations from the interview data.

In this article the *community of practice metaphor* (Wenger 1998) was taken as a starting point in understanding teacher educators' possibilities for workplace learning. All the educators reported being a member of several different reference groups, analogous to communities of practice. For most of those interviewed, their own subject matter (i.e. discipline) group was reported as the most important community of practice. Many subject-matter groups were described as highly cohesive, collaborating intensively on a daily basis. An exception to this finding was the Educational Science group in which no identifiable community of practice existed. Basically, the teaching of Educational Science was conducted independently, without negotiation, a shared repertoire of resources, or mutual engagement among those who taught it.

Although the collaboration *within* these subject groups was mostly described as active and important for educators, collaboration between *different* subject groups, and between the groups and the teachers of Educational Science, was rare. The few attempts that were made to promote collaboration between groups were described as fragile and as involving mainly isolated projects, based on individual efforts. The lack of collaboration between different groups was described as complicating the implementation of the curriculum, jeopardizing the quality of the education, and hindering the development of the teacher education department as a whole. Nevertheless, although collaboration within the department was rare, the educators reported that they were active participants in local, national, and international networks, and that they were able to form connections and networks very independently.

The culture of the department provided rich learning opportunities for the educators. It offered them possibilities to focus on matters that served their workplace learning, so that they could implement and develop their teaching. The department allowed them to exercise agency by committing themselves to their teaching, their practice of teaching, and their subject. The educators reported that learning at work was closely connected with their own professional development, and that this development was advanced through the planning and implementation of their teaching, their various development projects, and their research. They were also satisfied with the opportunities for formal education offered by the department, which gave them the resources for their own education, training, and development projects.

Nevertheless, it appeared that the interdependency between the social context of separated communities of practice and the realization of the individuals' own agency as autonomous educators created a dilemma. The educators' agency in their teaching and learning at work was strong. However, it seemed that this led to a situation in which an individualistic work culture could not easily be developed towards a more collaborative one. The strong structure of the communities of practice created barriers to mutual collaboration, and the boundaries between groups did not create new opportunities for learning; rather, they underlined the differences between the communities of

practice. The educators would have liked to remake the culture of the department, moving it towards a more collaborative model, i.e. one that would give them the chance to share meanings with colleagues, make new connections, and learn from each other. However, having been offered so many opportunities to practise their agency by concentrating on their own teaching and learning, there was neither enough individual willingness nor enough social pressure to change the dominating culture. Putting the matter in its starkest terms, one could say that the social context supported the educators' own learning in relation to their subject matter and teachership, but that it hindered the development and learning of the work organization as a whole. Overall, the findings suggest that individual learning at work is unlikely to promote organizational development if the structure and social context do not afford enough opportunities for individuals to share meanings with each other or to collaborate. Furthermore, strong individual agency may well promote an individualistic working culture and hinder organizational change.

This study raised many questions which required more detailed attention in further studies. On the basis of this initial phase of the research it seemed important to focus more deeply on teacher educators' professional identity and how it can be negotiated in the context of a teacher education department. Since I was working in a research project in which there were other researchers examining the same themes (but in other contexts), interesting opportunities were available. In our research group we saw that it would be interesting to study teachers' identity construction by comparing the data-sets which were collected from different educational organizations. Thus, the next sub-study was conducted as a shared project with my colleague, Katja Vähäsantanen, whose own PhD study concerned the identity negotiations and agency of vocational teachers amid changing work practices.

6.1.2 Teacher educators' professional identity negotiations – an organizational perspective (Article II)

The aim of this sub-study was to understand better the interdependence between educational work organizations and teachers' identity negotiations. This understanding was sought through an examination of two different educational organizations, looking at the opportunities they offered for teachers' professional identity negotiations. The special emphasis in this sub-study was on organizational-level affordances for teachers' identity negotiation. The organizations analysed were a vocational institution and a university teacher education department. These organizations differed from each other in the type of management culture practised and the amount of space allowed for individual agency. The organizations could be described as (i) a tightly coupled organization, and (ii) a loosely coupled organization (Meyer 2002; Meyer & Rowan 1977; Moos 2005; Weick 1976). The comparative research frame made it possible to focus on the advantages and disadvantages of different management cultures for professional identity negotiations and for organizational change. The study examined professional identity negotiations in terms of how different

organizational contexts create constraints and possibilities for teachers, in terms of the practice of their agency, orientations towards the profession, and commitment to the work organization. In this summary I shall report mainly the findings that concerned the teacher education department and teacher educators. The findings were divided into two sections (i) the educators' accounts of social suggestions within their work organizations, and how these were related to their agency, and (ii) how the educators perceived their orientations towards the profession, including also how these orientations were related to the various social suggestions of the work organizations. These issues were investigated at different levels of social practices: the individual level, the work community level, and the work organizational level.

Teacher educators' accounts of social suggestions within their work organizations, and the relationship of these suggestions with their agency. At *the individual level* the teacher educators experienced strong autonomy related to their core work. They reported they could work independently and develop their work as they wished. They described themselves as being able to determine their teaching practices and to develop their work according to their own visions. On *the work community level*, the professional groups had a genuine role to play in issues concerning educational practices, and the autonomy of the various groups appeared to be strong in the department. Connected to *the work organizational level* accounts, the teacher educators experienced the recent national and organizational reforms as having an effect on their work. However, they felt that their core work was not under threat and that they could influence their work and the changes involved. They had confidence in the continuity of their work organization and they did not see the reforms as a threat to their work. The teacher educators experienced that they had the opportunity to negotiate and to oppose the directions laid down by the administration, if they believed that these were threatening their core work. They also reported that they were able to influence decision-making and other shared issues pertaining to their work organization. In general, compared with the vocational teachers' accounts, the teacher educators' experienced strong agency, and did not see themselves as hemmed in by administrative structures.

Teacher educators' orientations towards their profession, and the relationships of the orientations to the social suggestions of the work organizations. From the analysis, four types of orientations towards the profession were identified: (i) an *educational* orientation, (ii) a *subject-matter* orientation, (iii) a *network* orientation, and (iv) a *research and development* orientation. The orientations should not be understood as unchanging or exclusive, but rather as dynamic, overlapping, and renegotiable. The data suggested that teacher educators were able to negotiate and work meaningfully, regardless of their orientations toward the profession. They thus experienced a balance between their orientations towards the profession and the social suggestions provided by the work organization.

The teacher educators were also very committed to their work and to developing it, and they expected to continue to work in the organization in the future. The comparative findings implied that a loosely coupled organization

(i.e. one that emphasized the autonomy of the teaching profession) and a "flat" management culture promoted the educators' commitment to their work organization and to teachership. However, in the teacher education department, in which teachers and professional groups were autonomous, and in which relationships between professional groups were relatively weak, the different groups did not share experiences and knowledge. This implies that strong autonomy and agency among educators – when it exists within a loosely coupled organization containing self-governing work groups – tends to prevent organizational change. By contrast, the vocational institution studied, which was described as a tightly coupled organization, seemed to limit the teachers' practice of their professional orientations and inhibit their development; nevertheless, the culture seemed to be compatible with the continuous transformation of the organization.

This sub-study shed light on teacher educators' professional identity negotiations, and on the teacher education department as a resource for those negotiations, bearing in mind that the department could be seen as a loosely coupled organization (Meyer 2002; Weick 1976). The emphasis was on organizational resources and the social suggestions offered by the organizational context. However, there was still a gap in terms of understanding the intertwined relationship between teacher educators and the social context of the department. Thus, the next sub-study sought to examine shared discourses in teacher education, and especially the interconnection between the social context and individual teacher educators. In order to capture the socially shared meanings and cultural factors, a discursive approach was applied as a methodological framework.

6.1.3 Recent tensions and challenges in teacher education as manifested in curriculum discourse (Article III)

In order to investigate the intertwined relationship between teacher educators and the social context of the teacher education department, the process of curriculum development was chosen as the focal issue for analysis. The curriculum process was understood as the most pivotal shared practice within teacher education, on the grounds that it combines a number of elements: political and societal ideals, socially shared practices and discourses, and principles in implementing teacher education. Thus, it integrates the actual, local implementation of education with discourses on education that are more public and global, and it defines what is taught and how prospective teachers are educated (Connelly & Xu 2007; Linden 2006; Pinar 2004). In broad terms, the aim in this third sub-study was to contribute to the understanding and development of teacher education by focusing on teacher educators' discourses concerning curriculum development. It was decided that the issues could be fruitfully examined via critical discursive psychology (Edley 2001; Wetherell 2005). The curriculum process was understood as a major mediating practice between teacher educators and the social context of teacher education. Thus, the curriculum discourses in question were seen as framing interpretations that

were likely to direct and construct the implementation of teacher education as a whole. In order to gain a better understanding of these discourses the specific research question guiding the analysis was formulated as: *What kinds of interpretative repertoires do teacher educators construct when speaking about curriculum reform?* Furthermore, the study sought to identify the kinds of *meta-repertoires* that these interpretative repertoires appeared to reflect in the context of curriculum reform.

From my analysis, I was able to identify five diverse interpretative repertoires. *The competition repertoire* represented the most common way – the hegemonic way, one could say – of talking about the curriculum development process. Typically, the educators used it as a natural and self-evident matter, one that did not require explanation or definition. This repertoire portrays the curriculum process as a battleground, with the planning processes of the curriculum described as a quarrel, and the interaction between teacher educators seen as contested. The contested and contentious nature of curriculum development emerged especially with regard to school subject studies. Within this repertoire, teacher educators were positioned as *combatants and protectors of their own subject-matter.*

The practical knowledge repertoire portrays one of the central objectives of teacher education as being to teach practical skills to teacher students. The use of this repertoire emphasized the importance of school subject studies in teacher education. It also underlined the need for plenty of contact lessons in teacher education. In this repertoire the relationship between educational sciences and school subject studies was described as problematic. The practical knowledge repertoire emerged as a hostile critique of the curriculum reform that was taking place, and especially of the plans for the integration of school subject studies as part of the reform. There was a concern that the on-going curriculum development, and the way in which school subject studies would be integrated within it, would reduce the number of face-to-face teaching lessons. This, it was thought, could threaten the quality of teacher education as a whole. The practical knowledge repertoire positioned teacher educators as *subject teachers.*

Thirdly, an interpretative repertoire was identified in which curriculum development was discussed as an interdisciplinary enterprise implemented by teacher educators, working along with teachers from the teacher training school (where teaching practice takes place), plus academic teachers from other departments. This repertoire was named as *the collaboration repertoire.* It described collaboration as a central aspect of curriculum development. The objective of the on-going curriculum development process was seen as improving possibilities for collaborative teacher education, both at the planning and the implementation stage. This repertoire emerged when teacher educators described their work with partners (working in the teacher training school and in academic departments) but especially when educators talked about their hopes for the future. Collaboration was seen as rare, at least in relation to the recent implementation of teacher education within the teacher education department. However, there were high hopes for better collaboration in the

future. The position of teacher educators was described as *bridge builders* between various groups and participants inside the department, and between the partners identified and other stakeholders.

The research-based knowledge repertoire represents accounts in which teacher education was described using traditional academic discourse. The main objective of teacher education was seen as producing new knowledge and as conducting research-based teacher education. In addition, the objective of the curriculum was portrayed as developing the teacher education department towards an academic research community, with an emphasis on building stronger links between theory and practice. The research-based knowledge repertoire underlined the scientific and academic nature of teacher education. This was seen as a prerequisite for promoting competencies that would allow teachers to face the diverse reality of schooling, and to solve the diverse problems that teacher students will face in their professional career. The subject position was that of the teacher educator as *researcher.*

The break with tradition repertoire represented a highly critical way of talking about the current implementation of teacher education. Teacher education (as currently practised) was criticized as fostering an out-dated "teacher training college spirit" linked to traditional teacher education. The traditional way of doing things was seen as a behaviourist enterprise in which the emphasis was on content knowledge, skills, and teaching techniques. This repertoire also voiced criticism in defining the current subject-matter oriented position of teacher educators. Teacher educators were regarded as traditional face-to-face teachers aiming to secure their role as individual possessors of knowledge. This criticism of the way teacher education was conducted had the aim of reforming the curriculum of teacher education. Thus, within this repertoire, teacher educators were positioned as *traditional face-to-face teachers* aiming to secure their role as individual possessors of knowledge.

Two meta-repertoires. It was possible to identify certain shared aspects in the repertoires described above. I categorized these different (and partly contrasting) repertoires as forming two competing and over-arching meta-repertoires. The competition repertoire and the practical knowledge repertoire were categorized within the *accommodation* meta-repertoire. The common characteristic of the accommodation meta-repertoire was the notion that teacher education had to respond to societal changes, and that the curriculum of teacher education must be developed in line with curriculum development in the schools. Following this line of thinking, the Bologna process, which was actively in progress during the data-collection for the study, was described as an external set of regulations which required teacher educators to make local adjustments and to adopt ideas that had been produced by external actors. The *reform* meta-repertoire included the collaboration repertoire, the research-based knowledge repertoire, and the break with tradition repertoire. The common characteristic of the reform meta–repertoire was that teacher education was regarded as playing an important role in the development of schools and of society as a whole. The objective of the teacher education curriculum was

described as supporting societal development and social innovation. The Bologna process was explained as an important and welcome opportunity for local curriculum reform. This study demonstrated the multi-voiced, tensioned, and complex process in which curriculum reform is negotiated in the context of one Finnish teacher education department. It also shed light on the intertwining relationship between individual teacher educators and the social context, by analysing curriculum talk as a pre-eminent mediating practice in teacher education.

On completing the analysis of the three sub-studies outlined above, I was broadly satisfied with the findings concerning the resources and obstacles offered for teacher educators' professional development, and educational and organizational change. However, the studies did not go far enough in clarifying the teacher educators' agency at work, especially with regard to (what had emerged as) the pivotal issue of teacher educators' agency in their identity-negotiations as academic scholars. Thus, the next sub-study was framed to get a better understanding of teacher educators' agency, looking especially at researcher-identity negotiation, as compared to the negotiation of teacher-identity.

6.1.4 The agency of teacher educators as teachers and researchers (Article IV)

In this study the aim was to examine in more detail some critical aspects concerning the interplay between (i) social context and (ii) the opportunities/obstacles offered regarding teacher educators' exercise of agency in their identity construction and work. The particular focus of the investigation was on teacher educators' locally manifested agency amid more global discourses – i.e. discourses concerning the social identity of the educators as "teachers" and "researchers". To examine how teacher educators manifest agency in practical and local communities, their accounts were analysed at four different levels, i.e. (i) the *individual* level, (ii) the *work community* level (subject-matter groups), (iii) the *departmental* level, and (iv) the *organizational* level.

The findings showed some pivotal regularities and contradictions in the resources available for teacher educators to account for their professional selves. As manifested in their talk, the teacher educators' agency was generally very strong in the construction of teacher-identity at *individual* and *work-community* level. The accounts of the educators reflected plentiful possibilities for professional identity negotiation and for acting within the local community. *Organizational* level accounts, too, mainly reflected strong agency. However, when participants described their working practices at the *departmental* level the most prevalent pattern concerned categorization and cliques. This usually meant being labelled according to one's subject matter. It was often described as leading to distinct camps within the department. This implies that at the departmental level, professional identity construction is subjugated: educators are seen mainly as representatives of their own subject group, and as having the voice of the subject teacher. The prevailing pattern of talking about departmental work reflected a kind of externally defined "frozen" identity. In

addition, the educators commonly indicated that at departmental level they could not safely share all their expertise and knowledge with their colleagues.

When I compared teacher educators' accounts of their work as teachers and researchers, the patterns they used varied considerably. While teacher-talk reflected plenty of possibilities and resources for agency, researcher-talk was quantifiably less abundant, and it also reflected social and contextual constraints at work. The accounts reflected a lack of agency, with minor resources for identity construction or for working as a researcher. In fact, the prevailing pattern in talking about working as a researcher reflected a lack of agency, with only minor resources for research at every level of practice. For example, subject-matter groups (which were described as having major importance in teacher -identity construction) were not mentioned at all as a resource in researcher-identity construction. Moreover, teaching and researching were mainly described as two separate functions, or else research was seen as a resource to develop one's own teaching rather that as a value in itself.

These findings raised questions about teacher educators' problematic position as scholars. As members of academia they are expected to be producers of new knowledge and research. The findings here seem to indicate that the university context requires teacher educators to work as academic scholars but offers only limited resources for them to practise their agency as researchers, or to exercise agency in researcher-identity negotiations.

The four sub-studies presented above were framed in order to answer the main research questions of this study. Next, I shall turn to the main research questions themselves. In what follows I shall elaborate the three overarching questions in the light of the empirical findings of the study, recent studies, and theoretical considerations. Table 2 (end of this section) gives a summary of the main findings.

6.2 Teacher educators' professional development – resources and obstacles

The first overarching research question focused on the resources and obstacles affecting educators' professional development and participation in professional communities. Teacher educators' professional development is an insufficiently researched area. It has been argued that there are few systematic routes to teacher educators' professional development, and that most professional development is likely to be spontaneous and individual, and thus unnoticed even by the educators themselves (Smith 2003). One consequence of this situation is that the professional development of teacher educators is weakly conceptualized, being concerned with what to teach to prospective teachers more that how to teach, or why (Berry & Scheele 2007). The findings of this study supported the notion of teacher educators' spontaneous professional

development through their work; however, it also implied that teacher educators were very well aware of this spontaneously-occurring learning as an integral aspect of their everyday work. As a main finding, one can stress that teacher educators' professional development was very closely connected to their on-going and everyday work practices. The educators indicated that learning at work was very much part of their work, and that they were free to develop their work, their working practices, and their teaching as they wished (Article I). Professional development was realized through the planning and implementation of teaching and various development projects. The teacher educators were also very satisfied with the resources for formal education offered by the department and the university, which gave them opportunities for their own education and projects. The managers and administration of the department and university were seen as offering resources for professional learning. Furthermore, the educators were able to pursue active involvement with local, national, and international networks, and to form connections and networks very independently. This possibility to participate in different networks and groups was highlighted as an important resource for professional learning.

The profession of a teacher educator is very complex and demanding, requiring continuous professional learning and participation in on-going learning processes (Helleve 2010; Smith 2003). In these learning processes, work contexts should give opportunities for engaging in multiple and overlapping communities of practice, both within and beyond the workplace (Fuller & Unwin 2004). The teacher educators in this study were able to participate in several different reference groups, analogous to communities of practice (Boreham & Morgan 2004; Wenger 1998). For most of the educators interviewed, their own subject-matter group was the most important community of practice. The data suggest that for many teacher educators, the subject-matter group afforded a safe and natural community of practice in which they could professionally bond and feel a sense of identification. These communities offered resources for participation and served as contexts for professional development as integrated aspects of daily work practices. Most of the educators experienced this way of working as emotionally satisfying and rewarding. However, the findings also showed that subject-matter groups differed from each other; furthermore, the main subject in class-teacher education – Educational Science – did not have its own active subject-matter group.

One of the most important and rewarding aspects of working as a teacher educator at the department was precisely these plentiful resources and opportunities for professional development. These notions of teacher educators' professional development support the understanding of workplace learning as an on-going process, one that is realized through everyday working practices (see Beckett & Hager 2002; Sfard 1998). The teacher educators in the study regarded their work as a central context for continuing professional development and as an important site of learning (see Billett 2001; Eraut 2004).

It should also be noted that the educators' accounts concerning the ample opportunities for formal education are important in relation to studies that have shown (e.g. Harrison & McKeon 2008) that "learning by participation" alone is not enough to secure all the competencies that teacher educators are required to master.

All in all, the findings of this study supported certain emerging notions of professional development and learning at work as an integrated part of on-going participation and everyday work practices (Billett 2001; Hager 2004; Helleve 2010). In human-centred creative professions, such as the academic professions or teaching, where the work demands personal commitment and continuous learning, these issues have seen as especially central (Eteläpelto 2007). Furthermore, the professional development of teacher educators can be seen as beneficial to the whole field of teacher education and to education in general. Continuing learning is likely to enhance growth and to maintain professional interest (Smith 2003). The findings of this study gave a number of clear indications of this. First of all, the teacher educators were strongly interested in their work and also in developing it. Moreover, the findings indicated that resources and possibilities for continuous professional learning have a strong influence on the educators' commitment to their work. In fact, the aspect of having ample resources for professional development was considered to be one of the most rewarding aspects of the teacher educators' work, and an important factor contributing to their commitment to their work (Article II).

However, the picture of teacher educators' professional development was not totally supportive or inclusive of possibilities for learning. In a number of studies, time has been documented as a prime obstacle in teacher educators' professional development (e.g. Smith 2003; Smith & Tillema 2001). Yet, despite the fact that in the present study the lack of time was described as problematic, it was not emphasized as a pre-eminent problem in professional development – probably due to the strong intertwining of the educators' professional development with their everyday work. Instead, as a main obstacle for professional development, the educators highlighted the issue of scarce or even non-existent collaboration between educators within the department itself. This aspect involved, in particular, barriers to collaboration between different subject-matter groups, and between subject-matter groups and Educational Science. In sociocultural studies, boundaries between communities of practice are considered to be powerful sites for learning precisely because they offer locations where different perspectives meet; thus new possibilities arise, creating and connecting communities, and offering learning opportunities in their own right (Wenger 1998; Wenger et al. 2002). According to the findings of this study, however, the boundaries did not create opportunities for learning; rather, they underlined the differences between communities of practice. The boundaries between subject-matter groups were very clearly marked. They created barriers to mutual collaboration, and in so doing inhibited shared practices and meaning-construction, and thus, learning.

The findings revealed the educators' strong desire for collaboration, negotiation, and exchanges of ideas with colleagues within the department (Article I). Every interviewee would have liked more collaboration among the educators. Nevertheless, the findings showed that the educators were unable to apply their own expertise for the benefit of the department, i.e. were unable to share it safely with others. It seemed that the educators tended to shelter their own ideas from the rest of the organization because they were afraid of these ideas being shot down. The findings reveal a situation running counter to recent notions of the importance of shared practices and meaning-construction as a prerequisite for professional learning (e.g. Fuller & Unwin 2004; Wenger 1998).

6.3 Teacher educators' professional agency and its connection with their professional identity

The second overarching research question involved the agency of teacher educators and how it is connected to their professional identity negotiations. In this study I have approached the agency of teacher educators through an analysis of their talk about working as a teacher educator within different local work contexts. Articles I and II utilized qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. In these articles agency was understood as the educators' capacity to make intentional choices concerning their work and to act on these choices within their workplace. Articles III and IV utilized a discursive approach, conceptualizing agency as the negotiation of professional identity amid multiple discourses (with the identity being either supported or constricted by global and local discourses).

The professional identities of teachers and teacher educators are constructed as part of an interaction between their personal experiences and the sociocultural context in which they practise and act on a daily basis (Day & Kington 2008; Helleve 2010; Sutherland et al. 2010). This study showed that teacher educators identified very strongly with their roles and mission as teachers (Articles I, IV). This finding is in line with some other recent studies concerning teacher educators' identity. For example, Robinson and McMillan (2006) noticed that teacher educators were extremely committed to their teaching mission and pedagogical roles. When teacher educators were given more flexibility and time they would often prefer to use that time to protect their teaching duties rather than (for example) to undertake research. Similarly, Leslie (2002) showed that university staff often favours teaching, even when the rewards are higher for those involved in research. In addition to demonstrating commitment to the teaching mission, the present study showed that teacher educators identified very strongly with the subject matter they taught. They mostly described their prime professional challenge or mission as being the development of their own subject and its pedagogics, and establishing its

relevance to their students, along with the skills required to implement the goals of the discipline in question.

Due to recent rapid changes in the university sector and in society, teacher educators are required to continuously learn new competencies and to renegotiate their professional identities. Learning at work and the renegotiation of professional identity both require the practice of agency (Billett 2006a). The present study (Articles I and II) indicates that the teacher educators' agency in relation to their core work was strong. They made it clear that they could plan, develop, and implement their own teaching according to their own intentions and wishes. This was manifested as the opportunity for them to practise their individual professional orientations, to negotiate the contents of their work, and to influence community and organizational issues. Such matters were also seen as a natural part of being an academic professional. At the organizational level, the teacher educators' agency was strong in terms of acting on and influencing shared issues within the department. However, this influence required familiarity with prevailing practices and discourses. The teacher educators had the chance to negotiate over and even to outmanoeuvre the social suggestions offered by the central administration of the university, if these suggestions threatened the implementation of their teaching work. In this study, the teacher educators' strong agency was manifested mainly as protecting their own autonomy, so that they could implement their teaching according to their own intentions and interests. This finding once again underlines the notion that the teacher educators were very committed to their teaching mission (also cf. Robinson & McMillan 2006); the educators wished to secure reasonable resources to educate the prospective teachers in the skills and knowledge they saw as primarily important.

In teacher education studies globally, the issue of educators as researchers has been raised and their dual role as practitioners and academic scholars highlighted (e.g. Cochran-Smith 2005; Murray et al. 2009). In Article IV, I focused on the negotiation of teacher and researcher identities in Finnish academically-based teacher education. The findings showed that teacher educators' agency within researcher-identity negotiations was contested and weak. Furthermore, the connection between teacher- and researcher-identity seemed to be fragile, and teaching and researching were mainly described as two separate functions. Chetty and Lubben (2010) have recently presented parallel findings, indicating that teacher educators often see the role of researcher as unfamiliar, and sometimes unnecessary or even threatening. Similarly, Murray et al.'s (2011) study showed that teacher educators may resist the idea of research engagement and of having an identity as an academic. Thus, teacher educators tend to identify themselves first and foremost as teachers rather than as academic scholars (e.g. Beck & Young 2005; Sikes 2006). However, this finding is somewhat surprising in the context of Finnish teacher education, where the discourse of academic and research-based teacher education has prevailed for decades (Krokfors 2007; Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2006).

Recent studies (e.g. Harrison & McKeon 2010; Murray & Male 2005; Swennen et al. 2009) have shown that in many countries the transition from school teacher to teacher educator is a demanding task, requiring deep-level transitions and the negotiation of professional identity. The construction of a researcher-identity has been observed to be especially troublesome (Robinson & McMillan 2006). In the Finnish context, this issue has not received much attention since teacher educators are mainly recruited from the field of higher education, and the issue of the induction of newly-recruited teacher educators has been neglected. It has been thought that teacher educators will quite easily adopt the identity and responsibilities of being an academic scholar and researcher. However, the findings of this study imply that in the Finnish context, too, attention should be paid to the induction of new teacher educators into their demanding academic profession.

In addition to the weak agency in researcher-identity negotiations, the findings of all the sub-studies suggest that the teacher educators' agency was subjugated and weak at work-community level; and further, that there were obstacles in terms of participation and identity negotiation. The findings of Articles I and II implied that the teacher educators' negotiation of professional identity was problematic due to the labels put on them by other teacher educators and by the social community. At the work-community level it was difficult or even impossible to be seen as anything other than representing predetermined positions. These positions were usually determined by the subject matter taught by the educator in question. The stable positions noted here were closely related to problems in sharing with other teacher educators one's own expertise and knowledge within the community. Article III, too, supports the notion of teacher educators' contested agency at the work-community level. The study here showed teacher educators to be positioned strictly as protectors of their own subject-matter, according to a hegemonic discourse of curriculum development as a matter of internal competition. These positions seemed to be quite widely prevalent. Along similar lines, sub-study IV revealed categorizations and labelling according to subject-matter. This kind of labelling was consistent with the finding that the teacher educators had more or less stable subject positions within the work-community, and difficulties in (re-) negotiating their professional identity.

6.4 Community-based learning and organizational development in the teacher education department

The third main research question related to how the teacher education community and the organization as a whole can develop. According to Meyer (2002) educational organizations are required to change from within, rather than to wait for coercion from outside. In addition, they need to learn how to change continuously and oppose the tradition of long periods of stability

punctuated by short bursts of crisis and change. In the present study, organizational development was considered in terms of (i) the organization becoming better able to support the continuous learning of the professional teacher educators working in it, and (ii) the reform of teacher education practices and education (cf. Gallucci 2008). This type of development was understood to be tightly interwoven with the enhancement of the curriculum. Several scholars (e.g. Gorodetsky et al. 2007; Korthagen et al. 2006; Niemi 2002) have reported that in teacher education, it is hard to achieve changes in practices or organizational development. Article II showed that compared with teachers working at a vocational institution, teacher educators found organizational development to be a slow and difficult process. There was a strong discrepancy between the teacher educators' own professional learning and how they perceived organizational learning: the department was thought to offer plentiful resources for personal professional development, but the department itself was seen as stuck in its traditional ways and almost impossible to change. These findings are in line with the seminal arguments of Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), who suggested that if individuals confine themselves only to developing their own competence separately from their organization, organizational learning can be hindered. Recent studies concerning workplace learning and organizational development have argued that the main obstacle to learning and development is a lack of time and space for shared practices and informal social interaction (e.g. Collin & Paloniemi 2008; Peck et al. 2009). The present study gave support to these notions, but also pointed to deeper elements, socioculturally constructed over time, that can affect learning in the workplace and also organizational change.

In sub-study II, the teacher education department was described as a loosely coupled organization, with weak control over teacher educators' work, and permitting strong individual agency. In a study concerning organizational learning among school teachers, Millward and Timperley (2010) found that loose coupling hindered organizational development: change required strong instructional leadership, boundary-spanning practices across the entire organization, and the development of a more tightly coupled system. They emphasize that the individual learning of teachers must be transformed into organizational learning through shared mental models focused on improving the learning of the *students*. These findings are in line with the findings of the present study, implying that in educational organizations, loosely coupled management, with an emphasis on teachers as autonomous developers of their work (cf. Hargreaves 2000), does not guarantee the optimal development of an educational organization. A particularly interesting aspect of the study by Millward and Timperley (2010) is that they found that organizational change led to substantial improvements in the learning outcomes of students. Thus, they emphasize that a more tightly coupled system in an educational organization can enhance not only organizational development but also, and most importantly, student learning.

The importance of collaboration in developing the quality of higher education is emphasized by many scholars. In higher education, recent studies

have addressed the importance of collaboration, boundary-crossing, and interdisciplinary approaches in teaching and learning (e.g. Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2006; Savin-Baden & Major 2007; Woods 2007). The present study found that strong barriers between different subject-matter groups appeared to hinder collaboration and boundary-crossing; thus they impeded shared meaning-construction between these groups, and between teacher educators generally (Articles I, II). Furthermore, strong individual agency impeded organizational development and community learning due to the fact that strong individual agency was mainly manifested as securing one's own autonomy, and implementing teaching according to one's own intentions and interests. According to the findings of this study, then, "interdisciplinary" should mean crossing boundaries between different subject matter groups within the teacher education department itself.

Studies elsewhere have similarly shown that collaboration and shared practices between educators are important not only in enhancing education but also for organizational development. Thus, Peck et al. (2009) showed that collective negotiation and interaction is crucial in attempting organizational or programmatic change within teacher education: changes could be realized only through collective negotiation and action. The present study indicated that collective negotiations and actions between teacher educators and between different subject-matter groups were rare. Instead, teacher education was implemented through a strongly individualistic model. As noted earlier, the boundaries between different subject matter groups (and also other groups) were strong and there was little collaboration with other groups. In addition, there was competition between subject-matter groups for resources, for study credits within the curriculum, for teaching resources, and for contact lessons. All this hampered collaboration and collective negotiation between groups.

The present study indicated that one reason for the difficulties in organizational development in teacher education could lie in prevailing discourses. It appears that these may impede changes and maintain traditional ways of understanding and implementing education. In this study, curriculum development was described as the most important collaborative and shared practice within the department, and the curriculum was seen as framing the interpretations that directed the implementation of teacher education as a whole. Article III showed that the *accommodation meta-repertoire* was the prevailing pattern for talking about the curriculum development process. This discourse described the curriculum process as involving competition between different subject-matter groups. Furthermore, curriculum development was talked about mainly in terms of adopting and responding to external demands (e.g. changes in the school curriculum, or the Bologna process). This can be seen as an indicator of the slowness of change in teacher education and of opposition to radical reforms (Korthagen et al. 2006). The common usage of this meta-repertoire may also indicate that curriculum development can easily remain superficial – a matter of mere "window dressing". This means that although the written curriculum may be changed, the lived and realized curriculum will

continue to be implemented much as before. However, when the teacher educators described their future expectations and hopes concerning teacher education, the prevailing pattern was drawn from the *reform repertoire*. This pattern underlined the teacher educators' active role in developing schools and society as a whole, through research-based education. It would thus appear that there is indeed a readiness for fundamental reforms in teacher education.

In developing educational organizations the question is not how to design a new programme or how to adopt a new kind of pedagogy. Rather, the question is about the implicit values and assumptions of one's culture, and about ensuring that the objectives, tasks, and discourses of pedagogy are consonant with the dispositions that the culture wishes to develop (Claxton 2002; Wells 2002). Thus, the teacher educators' own awareness of the assumptions (often hidden) within practices and discourses is fundamental in developing teacher education. It seems that one critical concern is how to achieve a balance between external demands for change and the teacher educators' own (contrasting) perceptions of the essential principles that should underlie the development and implementation of teacher education.

TABLE 2   Summary of the main findings in relation to the research questions

Resources and obstacles affecting professional development (Articles I and II)	Professional identity negotiation and agency (Articles I, II , III and IV)	Community-based learning and organizational development (Articles I, II and III)
Resources Professional learning as integral part of everyday work	*Strong agency* In teacher-identity negotiations	Community-based learning abundant, but connections between groups limited
Management and administration supportive for professional development	In securing and protecting own core work	Strong barriers between subject-matter groups – no collaboration between them
		Internal competition for resources between subject-matter groups
Subject-matter groups as resource for learning and identification		Organizational development slow
Local, national and international networks		
Obstacles No collaboration between subject-matter groups	*Weak agency* In researcher-identity negotiations	
Limited possibilities to share own expertise with other educators in the department	In negotiations at work-community level	

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7   DISCUSSION – SEEKING NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

In education studies it has been widely agreed that teacher education is in urgent need of development and of new conceptualizations concerning teacher educators' work (Korthagen et al. 2005; Niemi 2002; Swennen & van der Klink 2009). However, national contexts, traditions, and societies create varying expectations concerning this reconceptualization. It is therefore important to study teacher education as it is embedded in particular social and cultural settings, and to understand the challenges as they relate to particular sociocultural contexts. In this study the sociocultural context was that of university-based Finnish teacher education, and the focus was on developing teacher education and teacher educators' work specifically as an academic profession.

In the present study, my aim was to examine the possibilities and challenges affecting teacher educators' professional development in the Finnish context, and to see how these are related to organizational development and change. In this last section of the report I shall discuss these challenges on the basis of my own empirical findings and those of the current research field. While the previous section introduced brief summaries of the sub-studies (Articles I-IV) and discussed the findings in relation to the three main research questions, in this section I wish to comment on the findings from a more general perspective. I shall discuss what the study has revealed about teacher education, and how the findings can contribute the development of teacher education; in so doing I shall point out aspects that appear relevant to current challenges in teacher education.

The points presented here are to be read as suggestions for developing teacher education. They aim to offer new perspectives particularly on the question raised at the beginning of this research project, namely: *Why do changes in teacher education occur so slowly, and why are they so difficult to implement?* (cf. e.g. Arreman 2005; Fullan 2001; Gorodetsky et al. 2007; Grangeat & Gray 2008; Korthagen et al. 2006; Margolin 2007; Niemi 2002). I shall argue that the

following four themes should be considered in striving to develop university-based teacher education:

- o obstacles in renegotiating professional identity
- o a lack of boundary-crossing inside the department
- o internal competition between subject-matter groups
- o a discrepancy between individual agency and organizational development.

These four themes are not to be seen as exhaustive; rather they are emerging issues that could shed light on the difficulties in developing teacher education. In the subsections below I shall also present (i) some theoretical conclusions, and how the findings can promote a theoretical understanding of the relationship between professional and organizational development, and (ii) what these four themes may imply for the development of teacher education, in terms of practical implications and future research. At the end of this section I shall also discuss the trustworthiness of the study.

7.1 Challenges in developing teacher education

In these subsections I shall sum up the challenges in developing teacher education that can be identified from the findings of the study.

7.1.1 Obstacles in renegotiating professional identity

In general, professional identity is constructed in an intertwining relationship between the social context, the individual's interaction with others, and his/her interpretations of these experiences (Gee 2001; Geijsel & Meijers 2005; Sutherland et al. 2010). The findings of this study suggest that there is an imbalance between teacher educators' professional identity and the social demands imposed on them. Teacher educators have recently experienced growing pressures caused by changes in the university sector and in society, requiring the continuous renegotiation of their professional identity. However, it seems that they are still mainly committed to their teacher-identity and to the protection of their own teaching mission and subject-matter. They showed strong commitment to and identification with the subject matter they taught. The educators' agency was also strong in negotiating a teacher-identity, and in protecting their own pedagogical power and resources. By contrast, the negotiation of the researcher-identity was contested and weak. Furthermore, socioculturally evolved aspects of teacher education seemed to limit the renegotiation of the educators' professional identity construction at the communal level. The findings suggested that the working community did not offer resources for the renegotiation of professional identity; on the contrary, it positioned teacher educators within fairly stable – but narrow – positions, mainly according to the subject-matter the teacher taught.

Article IV revealed that the hegemonic discourse of the department was a *competition* discourse, one that positioned teacher educators as combatants and protectors of their own subject. This, too, seemed to constrain the renegotiation of professional identities among the educators. All this suggests that there are indeed obstacles in renegotiating professional identities among teacher educators. However, for the development of teacher education it is crucially important that the teacher educators should be able to look at themselves and their identities as teacher educators, and furthermore, be able to renegotiate their professional identities (Korthagen 2005).

7.1.2 A lack of boundary-crossing within the department

Recent rapid changes in society and workplaces have highlighted the importance of boundary-crossing. Today's problems are so complex that there is an increasing need for solutions that are not confined to any one practice or group, or even to a single organization. For organizational development, it is important that communities should be able to form links, both within and beyond the organization (Wenger 2009; Wenger et al. 2002). Organizations are required to create themselves as social learning systems and also to engage in broader learning systems if they are to be successful in their practices (Wenger 1998; Wenger 2000). Studies have shown that in teacher education there is a need to strengthen networking opportunities and collaboration with other partners and stakeholders (e.g. Autio & Ropo 2005; Grangeat & Gray 2008; Murray et al. 2009). A lack of collaboration has been seen as a threat, and as tending to diminish the quality of teacher education (e.g. Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2006). However, this study emphasizes the importance of collaboration among teacher educators *inside* the teacher education department. One major obstacle for individual and also organizational development appeared to be the striking lack of collaboration between different subject-matter groups, and between subject-matter groups and Educational Science, within the department. Collaboration between subject-matter groups and between teacher educators is a potential resource for individual learning and for organizational development. Boundary-crossing could offer major possibilities for learning and development, giving opportunities to communicate, share perspectives, and construct meanings (Wenger et al. 2000). However, it seems that this potential has not been exploited in teacher education so far.

7.1.3 Internal competition between subject-matter groups

Going beyond the mere lack of boundary-crossing between different subject-matter groups, it appeared that the relations between the subject-matter groups were actually competitive in nature. This competition can be seen as result of the limited resources available for teacher education; there are always certain structures, resources, and limits within which teacher education has to be implemented. One major structure controlling teacher education is the

curriculum, since it incorporates various ideals (political and societal), resources, socially shared practices, discourses, and principles, and thus defines how prospective teachers are to be educated (Linden 2006; Pinar 2004). Curriculum development is connected to aspects of values and prestige: it involves the essential elements, qualities, competencies, and subjects needed in educating future teachers for the society in question. The internal competition for resources and for appreciation can be seen as strengthening the barriers between subject-matter groups and hindering collaboration. Internal competition between the subject-matter groups (and the educators belonging to them) created obstacles to shared practices and common knowledge-creation, and thus to learning at both the individual and organizational level.

7.1.4 Tensions between individual agency and organizational development

Sub-study II showed that different organizations created different opportunities for exercising individual agency. The teacher education department as a working context offered possibilities for educators to exert strong agency in their core work. The educators' strong individual agency was manifested as the opportunity to negotiate the content of their work and to influence community and organizational issues. Nevertheless, it seems that strong individual agency – manifested as the protection of one's own core work – created a dilemma in organizational development: the educators' strong commitment to their subject matter and their strong agency in teacher identity negotiations seemed to create powerful obstacles to collaboration and boundary-crossing between subject-matter groups, and to shared meaning-construction.

In contrast to this situation, recent pleas for reforms in teacher education have highlighted the importance of collaborative models in implementing teacher education (e.g. Margolin 2007; Murray et al. 2009; Niemi 2002). The development of collaborative models and shared practices in teacher education requires that teacher educators should be willing to partially renounce their individual ways of implementing education and to move towards shared meaning-construction with other educators. This means that they may have to bring their own professional identities in line with new ideas about teacher education – a change which will involve taking risks and expanding their personal comfort zones (Korthagen 2005; Russell 2005). It seems that to change the culture of strong individual agency in teaching into a culture of collaborative implementation will be a major challenge in teacher education. One can see the conflicting elements here: strong individual agency seemed to be used to protect individual teaching resources, but this in turn hindered collaboration between teacher educators and subject-matter groups, and thus impeded organizational development. Overall, it seems that in order to enhance both professional learning and organizational change, a new kind of agency – more collective in nature – will be needed.

7.2   Theoretical conclusions of the study

In understanding the relationship between social and individual learning, sociocultural approaches have frequently been adopted in recent literature and research (Boreham & Morgan 2004; Peck et al. 2009; Rogoff 1995; Van Huizen et al. 2005; Wenger 1998). Sociocultural notions were also chosen as the main theoretical starting point of the present study. However, the sociocultural approach (broadly considered) has been challenged by several scholars as understanding learning too narrowly, through an over-emphasis on social and contextual factors (e.g. Billett 2006a; Eteläpelto 2008; Hodkinson & Hodkinson 2004). In fairly recent years, the sociocultural approach has been criticized also for paying insufficient attention to issues of power and power relations (e.g. Lewis et al. 2007; Niewolny & Wilson 2009). Furthermore, the main principle of the sociocultural approach has been seen as problematic in terms of conflating the individual and the social. Some scholars (e.g. Archer 1995; Sawyer 2002) have seen a need to reject the supposed inseparability of the individual and the social and to accept an analytic dualism. According to these scholars, individual and social issues should be studied separately, and with different premises included.

These recent critical notions have highlighted the inadequate understanding of context in learning. In fact, the sociocultural approach does not seem to have an adequate theory of social structure or of how it constrains and enables individuals (Archer 1995; Sawyer 2002). Furthermore, the sociocultural approach has not fully understood the dialectical nature of learning *in* and *with* the context. Thus, there is a need to move beyond a tightly constricted conceptualization of learning in context, so as to make visible the ways in which learning is culturally constituted through socially structured relations of power (Niewolny & Wilson 2009).

In attempting to take these recent criticisms into account, this study did not focus particularly on issues of power; instead it applied a discursive approach in order to supplement a sociocultural understanding of the intertwined relationship between individual and organizational learning. Discourses were seen as social and cultural resources, and as a source for individual and collective meaning-construction and subject positions. Individuals were seen as positioned within social and cultural formations, but simultaneously able to position themselves and negotiate new subject positions – that is, to practice agency (Potter & Wetherell 1987; Taylor & Littleton 2008; Wetherell 2005). The findings of this study showed that prevailing and hegemonic discourses of work organizations can create severe obstacles for the individual renegotiation of professional identities, and thus hinder professional development. In addition, hegemonic discourses can create powerful obstacles for organizational change, by watering down and resisting reform suggestions and organizational development. In educational organizations understanding and being aware of these discourses is important, given that teachers are the

main actors in developing their work practices and education as a whole. This means that if teachers are aware of these discourses, and of the subject positions the discourses construct, there may be benefits in terms of promoting teachers' collective agency and thus also educational and organizational change (see also Yrjänäinen 2011).

From these considerations it can be argued that the theorizing of the connection between professional development and organizational change should be reshaped. The findings of this study indicated that the discursive approach provided a valuable framework for understanding this relationship more fully. In the present study the discursive approach offered the possibility to identify certain hidden, culturally embedded, and historically evolved patterns of talk that positioned individuals and hindered organizational change. The discursive approach provided one way to understand contextual factors in relation to social structures, and to grasp how these enable and restrict individual and social learning.

Since this study aimed to understand the relationship between individual and organizational development, the findings raised another theoretical issue. In recent studies the concept of agency has been seen as crucial in professional development and identity negotiations (Billett 2006a; Eteläpelto 2008). There is evidence that when employees have strong professional agency they are more committed to their work, and participate more in the development and sharing of work practices (e.g. Billett & Pavlova 2005; Vähäsantanen, Saarinen & Eteläpelto 2009). The findings of this study partly supported these results, and underlined the ways in which strong individual agency can support professional development and workplace learning (Articles I and II). However, the findings revealed another facet of strong individual agency. It appeared that strong individual agency can in fact limit collaborative practices, impeding cultural change, and thus hampering organizational learning. In this study, the teacher educators' hopes for organizational changes were strong, especially with regard to developing the curriculum and implementing teacher education. This was shown in the educators' strong expectations for collective and shared work practices (Article I) and in the reform discourse as an interpretative meta-repertoire (Article III). However, socioculturally-developed structural and institutional practices and discourses have been so strong that they have subjugated the agency of those teacher educators who hoped for reforms in teacher education. This discrepancy between strong individual agency and slow changes at the organizational level cannot be fully understood through recent theorization concerning agency. The findings also supported notions from recent studies emphasizing the relationship between individual development and organizational learning as a many-sided phenomenon of mutual interdependence (cf. Fuller & Unwin 2004; Gallucci 2008; Gruber & Palonen 2007).

All this means that when one looks at the relationship between individual and organizational development, one can see that agency has not been adequately conceptualized. Recent theories have conceptualized agency as

embedded within individual actions and practices. Agency has mostly been seen as related to individual level practices, manifested (for example) in the individual's power to make a difference (Giddens 1984), or in terms of subjectivity and individual identity negotiation (Billett 2006a; 2006b), or in relation to individual ontogenesis and life histories (Biesta & Tedder 2007; Emirbayer & Mische 1998). The present study suggests that in order to understand the intertwining relationship between individual development and organizational change there is a need to reconceptualize the concept of agency, not just as something embedded within the individual actor, but also as a collective and shared phenomenon. Thus, the argument overall is that a new kind of theoretical understanding of collective agency is needed. Such an approach would be likely to produce a better understanding of current changes in society and in the university sector. Furthermore, a new theorization of collective agency is needed in order to develop the collaborative implementation of teacher education and put into practice the reforms that are required.

In addition to the need to understand professional agency more as a collective phenomenon, this study suggests that agency should be understood as occurring at different levels. In workplace contexts it is not enough to see agency as the individual's capacity to act on individual-level practices and negotiations. Agency should be understood also as involving both individual and collective actions at community and organizational levels. This means that at individual level, agency should be examined through individuals' decisions concerning their own work and commitments. At the collective level, agency should be examined as a communal and organizational phenomenon. Thus, attention should be given to working conditions, negotiations between colleagues and administration, boundary-crossing between different groups, and ways of influencing shared practices and decision-making.

7.3 Challenges for future research and practical conclusions

The findings of this study raised several issues that may be worth addressing in the future. Many of these issues are closely related to the practical conclusions of the study, since theoretical development and practical implications can be seen as intertwined in enhancing teacher education. Thus, I shall here introduce both the challenges for the future research and the practical conclusions. First of all, I shall categorize the challenges for future research into two main themes: (i) questions that emerged from the findings of this study, and (ii) questions that can be asked due to recent changes in society in general, and the university sector in particular.

The findings of this study supported the notion that changes in teacher education are hard to achieve (e.g. Gorodetsky et al. 2007; Korthagen et al. 2006; Margolin 2007). Prevailing discourses, stable subject positions, and strong individual agency can create obstacles for community learning and

organizational change. Prevailing patterns of talk seem to be deep-rooted and they also seem to position teacher educators within rigid subject positions. Thus, the challenge lies in how to shake out prevailing discourses and practices and how to promote collective agency and change through interventions. It seems that there is a need to find new ways to enhance collective agency within teacher education, in order to promote professional learning and also organizational change.

The second theme in directions for future research also derives from recent changes in the university sector. The main data for this study were collected in 2005. Since this period the field of teacher education and the challenges faced by teacher educators have changed considerably. The most dramatic and concrete change has been the new University Act, passed by the Finnish Parliament in June 2009. According to this Act, Finnish universities are to function as independent corporations under public law, or as foundations under private law, and their operations are to be based on the freedom of education and research, and university autonomy (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010). In addition, over many years, the development of the administration of the university sector could be described as having moved from a loosely coupled system to a more tightly coupled one (Vanhalakka-Ruoho 2006; Weick 1976). This tightening of the administration has been implemented in line with the adoption of new public management principles, and has been brought about largely through demanding accountability, and setting up strategy-oriented management (Julkunen 2007; Rinne & Koivula 2005). The adoption of new public management principles has led to increased control over teachers' work and the erosion of academic professionalism (e.g. Murray 2008; Saarinen 2007). Thus, one important question for future studies will be how the new managerial models may tend to influence teacher educators' agency in their professional identity negotiations and in their work.

In addition to these changes in the university sector, challenges outside the university have affected the work of teacher educators. As indicated in Section 2, there are societal pressures resulting, for example, from pupils' decreased well-being, and multicultural issues. All these pressures have posed new challenges in developing teacher education, and also for the teacher educators themselves. In particular, they have affected the identities of teacher educators, raising questions of how to promote teacher educators' identity negotiation, boundary-crossing and, collaboration, and thereby achieve positive effects on teacher education practices, and organization. Moreover, recent studies (e.g. Vähäsantanen, Saarinen & Eteläpelto 2009) have shown that professional agency changes over different conditions and time, and thus that agency should be investigated *temporally*, utilizing longitudinal research methods. Bearing in mind the changes that have taken place since the present study was conducted, one can envisage that such longitudinal research would make a comparative study with reference to the *current* situation, including the discourses, practices, and identity positions existing among teacher educators.

Overall, it appears that at the present time, teacher education is poised between two different cultures. According to this study, teacher education contains certain discourses and practices that are socioculturally evolved, traditional, and deep-rooted; these continue to remain strong in teacher educators' accounts. A competition discourse emerged as the prevailing way of talking about the implementation of teacher education. This discourse is bound up with a traditional way of implementing teacher education, which was named as the accommodation model (Article III). Nevertheless, this model is not working optimally within current turbulent societal and university settings, and new forms of boundary-crossing and collaboration among educators are needed. Concurrently with the hegemonic competition discourse, it was possible to identify a strong reform discourse (Article III), giving promise of a more collaborative implementation of teacher education (Article I).

On the basis of these findings I would suggest that the aim should be for teacher education to be transformed from a subject-matter centred culture of internal resource competition to a culture of collaborative teacher education (Figure 4). This transformation will require support to be given to teacher educators' individual and collective agency at different levels of their local practices. Such a new model could also mean implementing teacher education more through phenomena-based practices than through strict division into different subject-matters. The challenge lies in understanding (i) how to achieve a balance between the social demands placed on the teacher educators and their individual perspectives, and (ii) how to support the individual and collective agency of teacher educators, in order to strengthen and promote processes of organizational change and professional development.

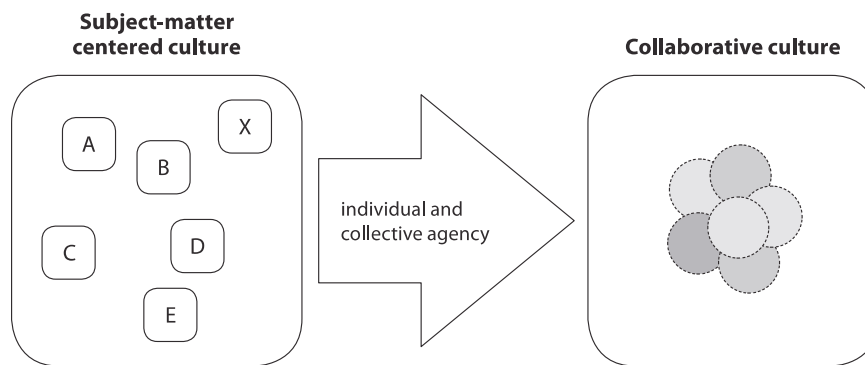FIGURE 4   Concluding suggestion: The Teacher Education Department: moving from a subject-matter centred culture of internal competition to collaborative teacher education

This being so, as a practical conclusion I would suggest that in order to attain a balance between the demands on teacher educators and the resources they can utilize in renegotiating their professional identities, one should seek to promote

teacher educators' agency, both individual and collective, at different levels of their local practices. At the *individual* level this could mean promoting individual agency, for example, through different narrative interventions at work (e.g. Hänninen & Eteläpelto 2008; Mahlakaarto 2010). At the *work community* level, boundary-crossing between different subject-matter groups should be promoted. Furthermore, different subject-matter groups could be seen not only as resources for developing pedagogical practices and knowledge, but also as resources for shared research efforts and as providing spaces for research-identity negotiations. Boundary-crossing between different subject matter groups, and shared practices within the department, are crucial for communal learning and for organizational development.

From the above, then, it can be suggested that at the *departmental* level it is important to support and create different structures for boundary-crossing between subject-matter groups, and shared spaces and practices for common research activities. At the *organizational* level the question of supporting teacher educators' agency is more multi-dimensional and complex, including as it does administrative and legislative issues. In promoting both professional learning and organizational change, new forms of management are required. It seems that loosely-coupled management does not offer sufficient support for organizational change, even though it does appear to give support to teacher educators' individual professional learning and development. The findings of this study further suggest that the new management culture recently adopted in educational organizations (with its "tight coupling") cannot respond sufficiently well to recent challenges, since it hinders implementation of teachers' professional orientations and professional development (Article II). Furthermore, recent studies have shown that the implementation of certain managerial practices within educational organizations can indeed lead to decreased well-being (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto 2011).

These findings, in conjunction with the present study, imply that a new kind of management is needed. This could mean adoption, for example, of a "tangled coupling" management culture (Rowan 2002); in such a culture organizations would be seen as multidimensional networks in which different actors, communities, and organizational levels interact in a close relationship. In tangled coupling, management action is based on good quality communication and strong collaboration between actors (Rowan 2002; Vanhalakka-Ruoho 2006). This kind of management culture can support shared knowledge-building and can thus offer one way to promote both professional learning and organizational change (Hökkä, Vähäsantanen & Saarinen 2010). One additional step towards communicative management would involve *subject-centred coupling management* (Hökkä & Vähäsantanen 2012); in this model one would seek to combine the best characteristics of both tightly and loosely coupling management systems. Subject-centred coupling management means giving systematic support to the couplings between different systems within the organization, while at the same time emphasizing that it is nevertheless always people and their actions and practices that are actually coupled. Thus, in

managing educational organizations the focus should be on people and their relationships, learning, and agency, rather than structures and managerial leadership (Hökkä & Vähäsantanen 2012; see also Goldspink 2007).

In this study, the relationship between teacher educators' professional development and organizational change was examined via a qualitative approach. It was suggested (subsection 5.6) that various limitations need to be considered in evaluating the trustworthiness of the study. However, certain aspects remain to be addressed. In this study I examined agency and professional identity negotiations of teacher educators through *shared* patterns of their talk in relation to the social context (with its opportunities and constraints). This means that this study has not shed light on the situated variability, different dispositions, or rich spectrum of individual identity negotiations among teacher educators. Furthermore, the study focused mainly on questions related to professional life and workplace issues. Thus, aspects of the teacher educators' life *outside* the professional context were not touched on. However, when the issue of identity is considered, it is obvious that many issues outside professional life – such as family, hobbies, political interests, and so on will affect the individual's identity, and thus also her/his professional identity (see e.g. Ropo & Gustafsson 2006). Overall, then, one can say that the study does not shed light on situational or individual variations, involving for example variations in a subject's positions or interpersonal power relations. It thus seems that there is a need for further in-depth studies of teacher educators' agency and identity construction in order to theorize more fully the interrelated nature of individual agency among teacher educators and the working context of teacher education, within the framework of recent societal challenges and changing work conditions.

7.4   Methodological reflections – the trustworthiness of the study

The concepts used for estimating truth and trustworthiness differ between quantitative and the qualitative research traditions. In qualitative research the traditional ways of assessing the trustworthiness of the research in terms of validity, reliability, and replicability have been challenged, being replaced by the concepts such as credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability; the aim in this has been to respond better to the underlying epistemological and ontological ideas of the qualitative tradition (Denzin & Lincoln 2000; Lincoln & Cuba 1985; Miles & Huberman 1994; Patton 2002; Shenton 2004). However, these concepts do not constitute rigorous or widely-accepted criteria for evaluating the value of qualitative research and they are inevitably open to criticism. Thus, it is necessary for the researcher to present an argument for the value of the analysis and to explain the criteria for evaluation (Taylor 2001).

The quality and the trustworthiness of the study rest on the coherence and cohesion of the overall research process. These aspects of qualitative research

can be seen as closely related to the methodological choices made by the researcher throughout the process, including the purpose of the research, the selection of participants, the research procedure, the schedule, the analytical processes, and ethical considerations (Mayan 2009; Patton 2002). In qualitative studies the researcher is required to make the research process, epistemologies, methodological decisions, and arguments as open and visible as possible to the readers (Koro-Ljungberg et al. 2009). All this implies that the issues of trustworthiness should be addressed throughout the research process when one is reporting how the study was carried out. In previous sections I have discussed the methodological choices made in the study. However, in this section I aim to highlight some important issues that are particularly relevant in evaluating trustworthiness and quality, with reference to the notions (mentioned above) of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. These notions are not universally accepted as valid criteria, but they are nevertheless now well established (see below) for the purposes of evaluating the quality of qualitative research.

Credibility is an overarching concept and it includes several different aspects. Patton (2002) asserts that the credibility and quality of the study are connected, and that judgments of quality constitute the foundation for an understanding of credibility. This means recognizing that there are certain philosophical foundations or theoretical orientations for qualitative research that create (different) criteria for judging quality and credibility (Patton 2002). In qualitative research the question of credibility refers to whether the findings of the study make any sense, and whether they are credible for the participants and the readers of the study (Miles & Huberman 1994). According to Lincoln and Cuba (1985), who have widely discussed the issue of credibility, the researcher is responsible for carrying out the study in such a way as to enhance the probability that the findings will be found to be credible. In order to achieve that goal they mention *prolonged engagement*, *persistent observation*, *triangulation,* and *member checking* as major activities.

Prolonged engagement refers to the researcher's investment of sufficient time to achieve an understanding of the culture of the context under study, testing for misinformation introduced by distortions (created either by the researcher her/himself or by the participants), and building trust. The purpose of persistent observations is to identify those critical characteristics and elements in the research process that are most relevant to the topics being investigated, and to focus on them in detail. Prolonged engagement is closely related to persistent observation, with the former adding scope and the latter depth to the research process (Lincoln & Cuba 1985). In this study the process of engaging with and observing the research context was characterized by the fact that I was studying my own work community. Thus, its practices and discourses were familiar to me and I could use this familiarity as a resource in understanding the prevailing culture, and defining the relevant topics for study. However, this familiarity also constituted a risk, namely that my own pre-existing understandings would guide the analysis and make me blind to the

richness of the data. As Taylor (2001) reminds researchers, "insider status" can be an attractive claim for the quality of the interpretation, but has certain pitfalls. Thus, critical reflection throughout the whole research process was of paramount importance. In critically reflecting on my own notions, the research diary offered an important mirror for analysing my own experiences and ideas. I noticed that my own experiences had been relatively negative and critical at the beginning of my career in the department. Thus, analysing the data was a demanding and time-consuming process, since I wanted to test my interpretations and findings carefully, and with critical awareness of my own pre-existing experiences and thoughts. I utilized the research diary as reflective material, especially when analysing sub-studies I and II. In sub-studies III and IV I used discursive methods; thus the analytical processes differed from those in the previous two studies, since in the discursive analysis the emphasis was on talk and discourses, not on the participants' experiences and perceptions. Nevertheless, in these latter studies also, the research diary and my own experiences served as sources for prolonged engagement and persistent observations (Lincoln & Cuba 1985), in that they helped me to identify critical issues, and to define the aims and research questions for these studies.

Triangulation is a widely used concept in securing quality and credibility. The idea of triangulation is to offer different perspectives and to look at the same phenomenon in diverse ways. Triangulation can be implemented through methods, data sources, theory, and the researchers themselves (Miles & Huberman 1994; Patton 2002). In this study I applied methodological triangulation in analysing mainly the same source of data, making use of qualitative content analysis, thematic analysis, and discursive analysis. Researcher triangulation was applied in the analysis of the data for sub-study II, since this study was conducted collaboratively with my colleague (in a comparison of two separate data sources). Member checking is also one way for the researcher to critically observe and triangulate her/his observations (Lincoln & Cuba 1985; Patton 2002). Member checking means that the research participants are offered the chance to evaluate and comment on the data, the interpretations, and the conclusions. In this study I used member checking mainly as a tool to address ethical issues and to protect the anonymity of the teacher educators interviewed. Before submitting each sub-study I sent the manuscripts to the research participants, asking them to read the text critically and comment on anything that struck them. I asked them in particular to check the authentic data extracts in such a way as to secure anonymity. After sending each manuscript I received a few responses, mainly to the effect that the findings seemed interesting and thought-provoking. There were no comments expressing anxieties concerning the issue of anonymity.

Dependability as an aspect of reliability refers to whether the whole research process is consistent, and whether it has been conducted carefully enough (Miles & Huberman 1994). This means that dependability includes all the methodological choices and decisions that the researcher makes during the data collection and analysis of the data. Lincoln and Cuba (1985) looked at this

issue, taking the view that in order to ensure dependability, attention needs to be given to factors involving (i) instability, and (ii) phenomenal or design-induced change. In previous sections I have illustrated in some detail the conduct of the research and the methodological choices made. However, I shall discuss at this point the issues that might have affected the consistency of the data and the conduct of the study.

The most obvious aspect that might have affected the data collection and the research interviews is the fact that I studied my own work community. Thus, all the research participants were familiar to me, at least to some extent. The fact that we shared the same "language" and discourses helped me in formulating the interview topics and in carrying out the actual interviews. According to my own experience the atmosphere in each interview was fairly relaxed and comfortable. There was no need to spend a long time on setting out the detailed notions of the research, or on a preparatory "warm-up" phase. Indeed, in each interview, taking up the actual study themes occurred naturally throughout the conversation. Furthermore, because I was familiar with the culture and the common discourses of the community, I was able to evaluate the contents and substance of the interviews in terms of how open and parallel they were, as compared to common everyday conversations in both formal contexts (meetings, work groups) and informal contexts (lunch and coffee breaks). According to my own estimation, the interviews were very open in nature. The teacher educators discussed their work and the workings of the department frankly – as far as I could judge – mentioning both negative/problematic issues and positive/constructive issues. At the end of each interview I also inquired about participants' experiences of the interview situation. All the interviewees said that they had felt able to express themselves and their experiences freely and openly.

As I experienced it, having shared practices and discourses with the interviewees was a resource, enabling me to collect valuable data. Nevertheless, it is possible that my own position could have affected the nature of the interviews. It was commonly known in the department that I was a member of a group promoting collaboration in the department (Yhteisöllisyyden kehittämisryhmä). In some of the interviews I felt that the issue of collaboration was continuously highlighted, and that my own position as a member of the group could have been a factor in this. In addition, my own position, being perceived as a representative of the administration of the department, might have had some effect on the interviews. It is possible, for example, that the criticism of the administration could have been stronger if the interviewer had been (for instance) a researcher from outside the department. On the other hand, my familiarity with the culture and discourses of the interviewees could have opened the way to more deep and genuine data. Be that as it may, it has to be recognized that my position as a researcher and practitioner – i.e. as the person responsible for the topic of the research, the data collection, and the analysis the data – should be taken into consideration in evaluating the dependability of the study.

Transferability deals with the extent to which the findings and conclusions of the research can be transferred to other settings and contexts (Miles & Huberman 1994; Silverman 2005). In qualitative approaches it is impossible for the researcher to make precise statements as to whether the findings will hold in some other contexts, or even in the same context at some other time. Whether the findings are transferable to other contexts is an empirical issue, and it will depend upon the similarity between the contexts in question. For transferability to be assessed, there must be maximally thick and rich descriptions in the qualitative analysis and reporting (Patton 2002). The researcher should provide as thick a description as possible, to enable anyone in a (possibly) parallel situation to decide whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility (Lincoln & Cuba 1985). Thick descriptions are clearly a matter of careful and detailed reporting, and the researcher is responsible for ensuring this.

According to Peräkylä (2004) the question of transferability/ generalizability should be approached as an issue of possibility. He argues that in generalizing the findings, the focus should be on the social practices that are possible in particular institutional settings, and that certain practices may be considered generalizable even if the practices are not actualized in precisely similar ways across different settings. In this report I have tried to offer detailed descriptions of the research process in general, and the methodological choices in particular, so that readers can make their judgments on the transferability to other contexts. In addition, I have tried to give sufficiently accurate descriptions of my theoretical orientations and my own experiences and actions during the entire research process.

In Finland the education of all class teachers and most subject teachers takes place in the university sector and is regulated by national legislation. Thus, the structure and implementation of teacher education is broadly similar in every department in the country (unlike the situation in many other countries, where there can be a wide diversity in teacher education organizations and their curricula). This being so, it can be suggested that within Finland, the contexts in which teacher education is conducted share the same kinds of practices and possibilities for transferability (Peräkylä 2004). On this basis, it appears that the findings of this study may be to some degree transferable to other university-based teacher education departments in Finland. Moreover, since teacher education in Finland is mostly conducted in the university sector, some of the findings may have broader resonance within the university sector. For example, the question of university teachers' agency amid recent shifts from loosely coupled to tighter management could be an issue of this kind.

Confirmability refers to issues concerning the neutrality and objectivity of the research. Lincoln and Cuba (1985) suggest that in qualitative research the emphasis on neutrality should be moved from the researcher to the data. This means that the focus should be on the characteristics of the data and on how confirmable it may be. Miles and Huberman (1994) also emphasize the stance of the researcher and how self-aware she/he is concerning personal assumptions, values, and biases. This means ensuring that the research findings are the result

of the experiences and perceptions of the participants, rather that the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Shenton 2004). Thus, in order to achieve confirmability it is important for the researcher to be aware of her/his stance and to give detailed and accurate descriptions of her/his own experiences and personal assumptions. The researcher must also describe in detail the methods, procedures, and data pertaining to the study, reflect on these critically during the research process, and report fully on the overall conduct of the study. According to Lincoln and Cuba (1985), confirmability will be accomplished if credibility and transferability have first been achieved. In the present study, the ontological and epistemological commitment to a constructionist approach has brought with it an understanding of reality as made up of multiple perspectives rather than a single truth. The aim has been to understand in depth specific phenomena within particular contexts, rather than to hypothesize about generalizations that might exist across time and space (Gubrium & Holstein 2008; Patton 2002). Thus, my position as a researcher has not, in the first place, been to explain general features of the phenomena under study; rather, my aim has been to obtain a deeper understanding of them and present them in the form of a report. Obviously, my own perceptions and pre-existing experiences have affected the analysis process – and indeed, the entire conduct of the research – but I have striven to be critically aware of these, and also to make them visible to the reader. I have attempted to achieve this by providing accurate and detailed descriptions, and by reporting on my own pre-existing theoretical and practical notions, my conduct of the study, and my analysis and interpretations.

The four issues presented above are important in judging the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. In addition to these, the *ethical issues* have an important effect on the question of trustworthiness. Since I have presented the ethical considerations related to the study in sub-section 5.6, I will not repeat them here. Instead, I shall discuss how the consideration of ethical issues affected the methodological choices made and how these might have affected the trustworthiness of the study.

Ethical issues had to be considered throughout the entire research process, from the first preliminary formulation of the study task to the final reporting of the study (Kuula 2006; Kvale & Brinkmann 2009; Taylor 2001). This aspect includes securing three closely linked ethical issues: informed consent, confidentiality, and trust. Consent refers to the participants' right to be informed about the nature of the research and the right to withdraw at any time; confidentiality means protecting the participants' identity, and trust refers to the relationship between the researcher and the participants (Ryen 2007). Furthermore, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) emphasize that interview studies are saturated with moral and ethical issues, since the human interaction in the interview affects the interviewees, and the knowledge produced in these studies affects our understanding of the human condition. However, in considering ethical issues the researcher must not slip into excessive self-censorship, since in that case ethics could became an obstacle to the conduct of

the research, for example by producing ambiguous or blurred findings. The researcher also has responsibilities to other researchers, and to science (Koskinen, Alasuutari & Peltonen 2005).

As indicated above, ethical issues affected my methodological choices. At the start of the whole research project my idea was to analyse the research data, utilizing phenomenology and attempting to catch the essence of the lived experience (Husserl 1967; Laine 2001) of the interviewees. However, it soon became clear to me that it would be a very demanding and also ethically critical matter to try to reveal the essence of the lived experiences of my own colleagues. It was necessary to consider how penetratingly the interviews could be analysed (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009), especially in a situation where the anonymity of the organization/context studied could not be sustained and where the interviewees were known, at least to some extent, to the researcher. Thus, when I started to analyse the data for the first sub-studies I changed the analytical method, moving to thematic analysis and qualitative content analysis within a hermeneutical approach. As noted in Section 5, in order to secure the anonymity of the participants I analysed the data on a cross-case basis, meaning that I searched for collective and shared meanings across the entire data corpus and not in individual narratives. In the last two sub-studies (Articles III and IV) the use of discursive methods can be seen as one further manifestation of the ethical issues in the data analysis, aimed at protecting the anonymity of the informants. According to my own experiences, the discursive approach offered an ethically sound way to analyse the data, since I could approach the interview data "merely" as text, and not as expressions of the participants' experiences and perceptions. Furthermore, the discursive approach offered a reasonable way to examine socially shared issues such as the cultural aspects of the workplace. This shift from thematic and qualitative content analysis to discursive analysis also diminished the need for critical reflections on my own pre-existing perceptions, since the focus was not on the interpretation of meanings but on socially shared talk. Thus, on the basis of this study, it can be suggested that in analysing ethically critical data – for example, if the research context cannot be anonymous or if the research participants are familiar to the researcher – a discursive approach offers one ethically justified way to conduct the analysis.

7.5 Concluding remarks

In my concluding remarks I wish to highlight the increasing need for teacher education research and development. During this research I have become keenly aware of the importance of teacher education as one of the most pivotal societal institutions in Finland, as in other countries. What teacher education means, and how future teachers are to be educated, has an impact on all the children living at a given time, and thus on society as a whole. In order to face the challenges of the future, innovative ways of thinking and acting are needed.

Schools need reflexive, collaborative, and creative teachers. Furthermore, at a time when societies are forcing peoples to face increasingly complicated challenges, it is necessary to focus on collaboration, boundary-crossing between disciplines, and shared knowledge creation. For this to happen it is crucial that the teacher educators themselves should be able to provide the model they are expected to pass on to prospective teachers.

The findings of this study suggest that teacher education is conflicted, existing between competing discourses and practices. These can be grouped into two diverse cultures: one (the accommodation culture) that represents the traditional way of understanding teacher education, and the other corresponding to a reform ethos, with a search for new ways of conducting teacher education. The traditional culture is embedded within a strict division of different subject-matter groups, involving resource competition. The reform-culture emphasizes co-operation between different actors across teacher education, and a search for innovative ways to implement education. These two cultures are currently living side by side as discursive resources and practices.

In order to face the future – I would argue – the demands of the accommodation culture must be challenged, and new ways of implementing teacher education supported. In this process, teacher educators will be the prime actors in enhancing the quality of teacher education. Thus, their own efforts to develop, research, and update teacher education will be fundamental. However, these efforts must be resourced and promoted also by the kind of management that will support multidimensional networks, communication, and collaboration between (i) teacher educators inside the department, (ii) teacher educators and other stakeholders and partners across teacher education, and (iii) different professional groups both within and beyond organizational boundaries. This challenge cannot be achieved by drawing on traditional culture and individual ways of implementing education. Hence – in more theoretical terms – the challenge lies in understanding and enhancing the processes of teacher educators' collective agency in (i) the renegotiation of professional identities, and (ii) their working practices, education, and organization.

In developing teacher education, collaboration between teacher educators and among subject-matter groups constitutes a potential that has been underused. Collaboration and shared knowledge-building is now the ultimate challenge, but also the ultimate resource, in enhancing the quality of teacher education. It is intriguing to imagine what teacher education could become, and what kinds of new knowledge, educational development, and organizational change could be created, if this underused potential were ever to be utilized.

YHTEENVETO

Opettajankouluttajat ristiriitaisten vaateiden keskellä: yksilön ja organisaation välisiä jännitteitä

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on syventää ymmärrystä opettajankoulutuksesta ja erityisesti sen kehittämisen ehdoista ja haasteista. Tähän pyritään tarkastelemalla opettajankouluttajien ammatillisen kehittymisen ja organisaation kehittymisen välistä suhdetta. Tutkimuksen taustalla on kansainvälisesti jaettu huoli opettajankoulutuksen laadusta sekä siitä, kuinka opettajankoulutus pystyy vastaamaan monimutkaistuvan yhteiskunnan asettamiin lukuisiin uusiin vaatimuksiin. Tämä huoli on oikeutettu, koska monet tutkimukset osoittavat, että opettajankoulutusta on vaikea muuttaa ja sen muutokset ovat usein hitaita ja heikkoja. Lisäksi opettajankoulutuksesta ja erityisesti opettajankouluttajista tiedetään melko vähän. Kansainvälisesti on todettu, että kasvatustieteen tutkimuksessa opettajankoulutus on yksi vähiten tutkituista alueista. Suomessa opettajankoulutusta on tutkittu jonkin verran. Tutkimus on keskittynyt pääasiassa opettajankoulutuksen rakenteiden tarkasteluun sekä pedagogiseen tietoon tai opetussuunnitelmaan liittyviin tekijöihin. Kuten kansainvälisestä, myös suomalaisesta opettajankoulutustutkimuksesta puuttuu opettajankouluttajien tutkimus, heidän ammatillisen oppimisensa ja identiteettinsä tarkastelu sekä yksilön ja yhteisön välisten yhteyksien tutkimus.

Tämä tutkimus pyrkii vastaamaan edellä mainittuihin puutteisiin ja lisäämään tietoa yksilön ja organisaation välisestä suhteesta. Tätä suhdetta tarkastellaan opettajankouluttajien haastattelujen avulla pyrkien löytämään yhteisiä ja laitoksessa kollektiivisesti jaettuja merkityksiä opettajankouluttajana toimimisen ja opettajankoulutuksen kehittämisen haasteista. Tutkimuksen teoreettiset lähtökohdat ovat sosiokulttuurisessa teoriassa, joka mahdollistaa tutkittavaan ilmiöön liittyvien moninaisten suhteiden tarkastelun. Sosiokulttuurisessa lähestymistavassa lähtökohtana on ajatus siitä, että oppiminen on aina ensisijaisesti sosiaalinen ilmiö, joka tapahtuu ihmisten välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa yksilöiden osallistuessa erilaisten yhteisöjen toimintaan. Tällöin kehittymisen tarkastelu kiinnittyy toimintaympäristöihin, ihmisten väliseen toimintaan ja vuorovaikutukseen, puheeseen, yhteisöissä vallitseviin diskursseihin, jaettuihin käytänteisiin ja merkityksenantoihin. Yksilöiden kehittymisessä on tällöin oleellista se, minkälaisiin sosiaalisiin yhteisöihin yksilö kuuluu ja kuinka hän pystyy näissä yhteisöissä toimimaan. Organisaation kehittyminen ymmärretään organisaation kykynä tukea työntekijöiden ammatillista kehittymistä, yhteisöllistä toimintaa ja eri käytäntöyhteisöjen yhteistyötä sekä uudistaa toimintakäytänteitä.

Sosiokulttuurisen lähestymistavan kehyksessä pääkäsitteet olivat ammatillinen identiteetti, ammatillinen toimijuus ja osallistuminen. Tämän lähestymistavan mukaisesti yksilöiden osallistuminen erilaisiin yhteisöihin, heidän ammatillisen identiteettinsä rakentuminen sekä oppimisensa nähtiin yhteen kietoutuneena ilmiönä. Opettajankouluttajien ammatillista kehittymistä tarkasteltiin pääsääntöisesti heidän mahdollisuuksinaan osallistua eri käytäntöyhtei-

söjen toimintaan ja ammatillisen identiteetin uudelleenneuvotteluihin. Toimijuus määriteltiin tässä tutkimuksessa opettajankouluttajien mahdollisuudeksi osallistua yhteisönsä toimintaan, vaikuttaa omaan työhönsä sekä sitä koskevaan päätöksentekoon. Lisäksi toimijuus määriteltiin mahdollisuutena ammatillisen identiteetin uudelleenneuvotteluun.

Tutkimus muodostuu neljästä kansainvälisestä artikkelista sekä teorian, metodit ja tulokset kokoavasta ja niistä keskustelevasta yhteenvedosta. Tutkimuksen pääaineisto koostuu kahdeksasta avoimesta opettajankouluttajahaastattelusta, jotka toteutettiin lukuvuoden 2005 aikana yhdessä suomalaisessa opettajankoulutuslaitoksessa. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa hyödynnettiin tutkimuspäiväkirjaa, joka oli koottu vuosina 2002−2006 tutkijan työskennellessä kyseessä olevassa opettajankoulutuslaitoksessa. Aineisto analysoitiin käyttämällä laadullista sisällönanalyysia, temaattista analyysiä sekä diskursiivista analyysiä. Aineiston analyysissä ei pyritty kartoittamaan opettajankouluttajien yksittäisten kokemusten tai merkitysten kirjoa, vaan keskityttiin sosiaalisesti jaettujen ja yhteisten merkitysten löytämiseen.

Tutkimuksen pääkysymykset olivat seuraavat:

1. Minkälaisia mahdollisuuksia ja esteitä opettajankoulutuslaitos tarjosi opettajankouluttajien ammatilliseen kehittymiseen?
2. Kuinka opettajankouluttajat harjoittivat toimijuutta työyhteisössään, ja kuinka tämä oli yhteydessä heidän ammatillisen identiteettinsä neuvotteluihin?
3. Minkälaista oli opettajankoulutuslaitoksen yhteisöllinen ja organisaation kehittyminen?

Tutkimus osoitti, että opettajankoulutuslaitos tarjosi erinomaiset mahdollisuudet ja runsaasti resursseja opettajankouluttajien ammatilliseen kehittymiseen, mutta ammatilliselle kehittymiselle oli myös rajoitteita ja esteitä. Opettajankouluttajat kuvasivat, että työ opettajankouluttajana oli hyvin vapaata ja se tarjosi mahdollisuuksia ja resursseja jatkuvaan oman työn kehittämiseen ja omaan ammatilliseen kasvuun. Mahdollisuus oman työn vapaaseen toteuttamiseen ja kehittämiseen vahvisti opettajankouluttajien sitoutumista työhön ja organisaatioon. Keskeisenä ammatillisen kehittymisen esteenä ilmeni opettajankouluttajien vähäinen keskinäinen yhteistyö ja vahvat raja-aidat eri aineryhmien välillä. Nämä raja-aidat estivät eri aineita opettavien opettajankouluttajien yhteistyötä sekä uusien luovien ideoiden syntymistä eri käytäntöyhteisöjen rajapinnoilla.

Tulokset osoittivat, että opettajankouluttajien ammatillinen identiteetti ja sen neuvottelu kiinnittyi vahvasti omaan opettajuuteen ja opetettavaan oppiaineeseen. Ammatillinen toimijuus ilmeni erityisesti yksilöllisenä vahvana toimintana ja vaikuttamisena oman opetuksen kehittämiseen ja oman oppiaineen opetusresurssien turvaamiseen. Ammatillisen identiteetin neuvotteluun liittyi kuitenkin myös huomattavia rajoitteita. Opettajankouluttajien ammatillisen identiteetin neuvottelun ongelmallisuus näyttäytyi erityisesti laitoksen sisäisinä ja kollektiivisesti tuotettuina muuttumattomina ja vakiintuneina positioina. Opettajankouluttajien toimijuus oli rajattua uusien identiteettipositioiden neuvottelussa omassa työyhteisössä organisaation sisällä. Tämä tarkoittaa esimer-

kiksi sitä, että opettajankouluttajat eivät pystyneet jakamaan ja tuomaan esiin kaikkea osaamistaan ja asiantuntijuuttaan organisaation sisällä. Lisäksi ammatillisen identiteetin uudelleenneuvottelun rajoitteena näyttäytyi tutkijaidentiteetin ongelmallisuus. Resurssit ja tilat tutkijaidentiteetin rakentamiseen olivat niukat. Esimerkiksi oppiaineiden aineryhmät, jotka näyttäytyivät keskeisenä resurssina opettajaidentiteetin neuvottelussa, eivät toimineet lainkaan resurssina tutkijaidentiteetin neuvottelussa tai tutkijana toimimisessa.

Opettajankoulutuslaitoksen yhteisöllinen ja organisaation kehittyminen kuvattiin haasteelliseksi. Oma aineryhmä ammatillisena yhteisönä ja ammatilliselle kehittymiselle resursseja tarjoavana kontekstina oli merkittävä. Kuitenkin koko organisaation yhteisöllisen kehittymisen esteenä korostuivat aineryhmien välinen olematon yhteistyö ja selvät raja-aidat eri ryhmien välillä. Vähäisen yhteistyön nähtiin vaikuttavan myös opettajankoulutuksen toteuttamiseen, jolloin sen vaikutukset heijastuivat vahvasti myös opiskelijoihin. Oma organisaatio (opettajankoulutuslaitos) kuvattiin vanhoihin tapoihinsa kangistuneeksi ja hitaasti kehittyväksi. Oman ammatillisen kehittymisen ja organisaation kehittymisen välillä näyttikin olevan ristiriita: mahdollisuudet omaan ammatilliseen kehittymiseen nähtiin runsaina, mutta samalla opettajankoulutuslaitoksen ja opettajankoulutuksen kehittäminen kuvattiin hitaaksi ja vaikeaksi. Opettajankoulutuksen ja opettajankoulutuslaitoksen muuttaminen kuvattiin lähes mahdottomaksi tehtäväksi.

Tutkimuksessa ilmeni myös ristiriitaisia tapoja puhua opettajankoulutuksesta ja sen toteuttamisesta. Vallitseva puhetapa opettajankoulutusta ja sen toteuttamista kuvattaessa oli kilpailurepertuaari. Tämä puhetapa määritteli opettajankoulutuksen toteuttamisen ja kehittämisen kilpailuksi, jossa eri oppiaineet ja näiden opettajat kävät jatkuvaa resurssikamppailua rajallisista resursseista (esim. opetussuunnitelman opintopisteistä, kontaktiopetustunneista, tuntiopetusresursseista). Tämän kamppailun tavoitteena oli oman oppiaineen ja samalla myös oman työn edellytysten turvaaminen. Puhetapa positioi opettajankouluttajat keskinäisiksi kilpailijoiksi ja oman oppiaineensa puolustajiksi opettajankoulutuslaitoksen sisäisissä resurssikamppailuissa.

Muita opettajankoulutusta kuvaavia repertuaareja olivat aineenopetus-, yhteistyö-, tutkimus- ja tradition murtamisrepertuaari. Nämä eri puhetavat voitiin jaotella kahteen eri pääluokkaan: sopeuttavaan (accomodation meta-repertoire) ja uudistavaan repertuaariin (reform meta-repertoire). Sopeuttavan repertuaarin tunnuspiirteenä oli näkemys opettajankoulutuksen säilyttämisestä entisellään ja sen maltillisesta kehittämisestä peruskoulun opetussuunnitelman muutoksia seuraillen. Uudistava repertuaari sitä vastoin kuvasi opettajankoulutuksen tavoitteeksi kasvatustodellisuuden muuttamisen ja määritteli opettajankoulutuksen opetussuunnitelman suunnannäyttäjäksi laajemminkin kasvatustieteellisen tiedon ja opetuksen kehittämisessä.

Näiden löydösten perusteella tutkimuksessa esitetään, että seuraavat neljä tekijää kuvaavat opettajankouluttajien ammatillisen kehittymisen sekä opettajankoulutuksen kehittämisen välisiä jännitteitä:

- o opettajankouluttajien ammatillisen identiteetin uudistumista estävät kulttuuriset ja rakenteelliset tekijät
- o rajanylitysten vähäisyys opettajankoulutuslaitoksen sisällä ja erityisesti eri aineryhmien välillä
- o resurssikamppailut eri aineryhmien välillä
- o ristiriita opettajankouluttajien vahvan yksilöllisen toimijuuden ja organisaation kehittämisen välillä.

Yllämainitut tekijät voidaan nähdä myös opettajankoulutuksen kehittämishaasteina, joihin olisi tarpeellista kiinnittää huomiota pyrittäessä vastaamaan opettajankoulutukseen kohdistuviin moninaisiin vaateisiin.

Tutkimuksen johtopäätöksenä esitetään, että opettajankoulutukseen kohdistuviin haasteisiin vastaamiseksi ja opettajankoulutuksen kehittämisen turvaamiseksi opettajankoulutuksen sopeuttava kulttuuri on haastettava ja uudistavaa kulttuuria on tuettava. Vahvan yksilöllisen toimijuuden rinnalle on löydettävä keinoja opettajankouluttajien kollektiivisen toimijuuden tukemiseksi niin yksilöiden ammatillisen identiteetin uudelleenneuvotteluissa kuin opettajankoulutuksen työyhteisön ja organisaation kehittämisessä.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview guide

Presenting the ethical principles of the study

- o The collected data will be utilized only in this study, and the analysis will be conducted on a cross-case basis.
- o The supervisors of the PhD project, and all other people, will in no case be aware of the identity of the teachers educators interviewed, and they will not read the transcribed interviews.

Starting the interview

- o How long have you been working in the teacher education department?
- o Describe how it felt to start working there.
- o How would you describe the department at the time when you started to work there?

1. **First main interview theme: Describe the kind of working context the teacher education department provides, according to your experience.**

- o How would you describe the ongoing working year?
- o What kinds of experiences do you have of collaboration in the teacher education department?
- o How would you describe the ongoing curriculum process?

- o What are your experiences of shared practices in the department (for example departmental meetings)?
- o What are your experiences of collaboration in your own main working groups?

- o What gives you joy and satisfaction in your work?
- o What is hard or difficult in your work?
- o Do you feel that you are able to influence your work?

- o Do you have a personal mission in your work?
- o What is the mission of the teacher education department, in your own opinion?

Drawing task: Please draw diagrams depicting:

a) your own position in the department,
b) the working groups that you are involved with, and your own position in these groups. After you have done your drawings, we'll talk through them.

2. **Second main interview theme: How do you see your own possibilities to develop professionally through your work in this work community?**

   o Do you feel that you can learn in your work?
   o Have the work community and the teacher education department supported your own professional development?
   o Have there been any situations in which you have felt that the work community subjugates or hinders your professional development?

   o How do you see the future of the teacher education department?
   o How do you see your own future in the teacher education department?

Is there anything further you would like to tell me?

Closing the interview

   o What kind of experience was this interview for you?
   o Thank you

Appendix 2: Diagram template

University of Jyväskylä

Teacher Education Department

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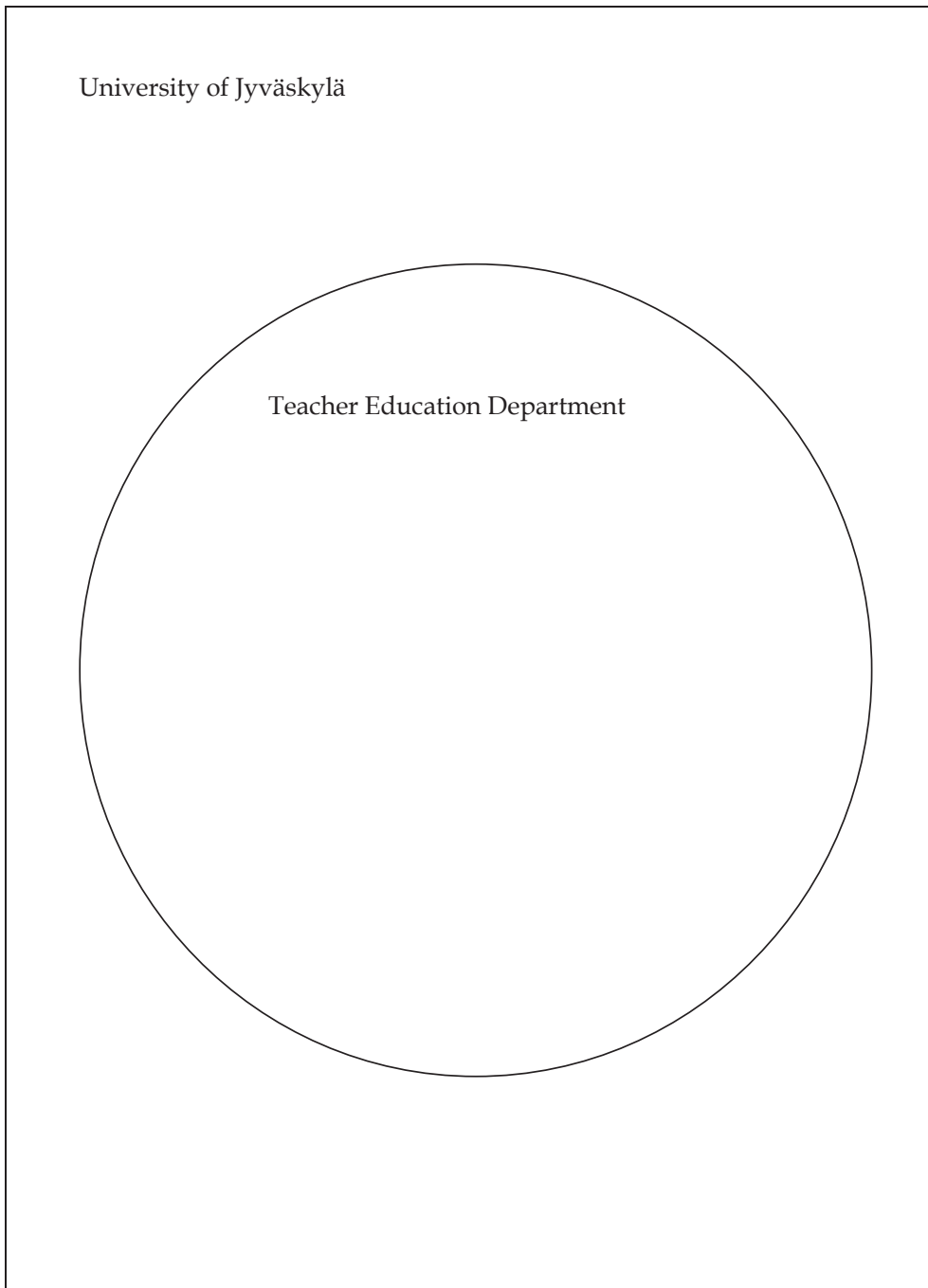
ORIGINAL PAPERS

I

TEACHER EDUCATORS' WORKPLACE LEARNING. THE INTERDEPENDENCY BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AGENCY AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

by

Päivi Hökkä, Helena Rasku-Puttonen & Anneli Eteläpelto 2008

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PÄIVI HÖKKÄ, HELENA RASKU-PUTTONEN &
ANNELI ETELÄPELTO

TEACHER EDUCATORS' WORKPLACE LEARNING:
The Interdependency between Individual Agency and Social Context

ABSTRACT

In order to promote collaboration among teacher-students it is essential that teacher educators themselves can collaborate and learn through participation in work organisation communities. Yet we do have quite limited understanding of teacher education organisations and how they promote collaboration and thus workplace learning among teacher educators. In this chapter our aim is to examine the interdependency between social context of teacher education department and individual agency of educators in order to get a better understanding of teacher educators' workplace learning. We ask how educators can practice their professional identity and agency and how to characterise the interdependency between social context and individual agency. We sought answers by interviewing eight Finnish teacher educators and analysed the interview data in accordance with data-driven qualitative approach. Findings suggest that social context in this organisation affords teacher educators many possibilities to practice their agency by developing their own practices and teaching. However, social context does not enhance boundary crossing between communities of practice and impedes collaboration of educators. Hence, this may prevent educators' workplace learning and also organisational development of the teacher education department.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER EDUCATORS' WORKPLACE LEARNING

Teacher education is particularly well-placed to influence future society, because all of society's members experience schooling. Yet, Korthagen, Loughran and Russell (2006) argued that only in this century has teacher education begun to be properly recognized and valued as an object of academic research. They highlighted three factors that underpin this recognition: (i) the relevance of teacher education to the reality of everyday practice in schools is questioned and this has brought pressure to rethink both the structure and the practices of teacher

education, (ii) recent studies have demonstrated that there are reasonable grounds for some of these complaints and (iii) new conceptions of learning and teaching have been developed that contrast strongly with traditional practices of teacher education. However, we know relatively little about the culture of teacher education organisations and how they are interrelated to the learning of the teacher educators. (Lunenberg, Korthagen & Swennen, 2007; Robinson & McMillan, 2006.) The culture of teacher education departments is important, not only for the educators who work there but also for those undergoing training, i.e. teacher-students, because this shapes the kind of practices that are enacted in teacher-students' future workplaces – schools. It is thus suggested that teacher education organisations should aim to function as true learning organisations, because they constitute the culture in which teacher-students are socialised. Hence, they should support a culture of continuous learning and continuous reforming of their own organisation, in order to promote such a culture among their students.

In Finland a teacher education for primary and secondary teachers is taken place at university context and thus understood as research-based practice. Even primary level teachers are required a master level basic qualifications. As Finland has continuously succeeded extremely well in OECD's international student assessment programmes (e.g. PISA, 2006), the one of the key explanations for this has been regarded the high quality of Finnish teacher education (Jakku-Sihvonen & Niemi, 2006). In order to sustain and develop the high quality of teacher education it is important to enquire the workplace learning of teacher educators. Here, the concern is to examine the kinds of workplace learning opportunities available to teacher educators, as well as the constraints on their learning within their work communities and organisation in Finnish teacher education context. The aim is to analyse: (i) the reciprocal process of how a teacher education department affords participation and collaboration, along with how the educators participate in work activities and social interactions, and (ii) what this implies for their learning through work. We understand workplace learning occurring primarily through participation in professional and work-organisation communities. Consequently, we are interested in teacher educators' experiences of opportunities to participate in different kinds of learning communities and their possibilities for collaboration. We perceive teacher collaboration as a powerful element in teachers' workplace learning (Meirink, Meijer & Verloop, 2007) when its ultimate objective is to enhance student learning and achievement (Vescio, Ross & Adams, 2008).

This study is informed by a socio-cultural approach which emphasises socially and culturally mediated practices in workplace learning. (Billett, 2004; Wenger, 1998.) We understand professional learning as an ongoing process, one that occurs as individuals participate in everyday activities within their workplace. In addition to this, we understand professional identity as something that is negotiated in an ongoing relationship between the individual and the social context. (Billett, 2007: Billett & Somerville, 2004; Eteläpelto, 2007: Kirpal, 2004.) In this study we argue that the interdependency between social context and individual agency may create a dilemma for the workplace learning. We will demonstrate how the teacher education department affords educators' possibilities to construct

their professional identity quite autonomously. However, there is a lack of collaboration between the communities of practice and this might hinder the workplace learning of educators and also the development of the whole work organisation.

In elaborating teacher educators' workplace learning, this chapter is structured as follows. Firstly, we discuss the theoretical framework and illustrate social and individual perspectives on learning at work. We address the importance of professional identity and agency, and also the interdependency between social context and individuals. In the next part we introduce the procedures used in the study and our main findings, with regard to (i) educators' opportunities and obstacles for collaboration, (ii) educators' professional identity and agency, and (iii) the interdependent relationship between the work organisation and individual educators. Finally, we illustrate the barriers between social communities and individual agency, and discuss what these imply for the learning of educators within their own work.

SOCIAL AND INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES ON WORKPLACE LEARNING

The social and individual contributions to learning through work are discussed to a consideration of column (i) communities of practice and workplace learning and (ii) interdependency between individual agency and social context in workplace learning. These are now discussed in turn**.**

Communities of practice and workplace learning

The participatory perspective (Sfard, 1998) has become a dominant metaphor for understanding learning at work. Within this view, learning is understood as a pervasive process, one which is realized through normal working practices. The central issue in learning is thus becoming a practitioner, not learning about practice (Brown & Duguid, 1998). This perspective conceptualizes workplaces as environments which enable employees to learn through collaboration in its practices. Situated learning, became one of the dominant theories applied to learning at work, was first highlighted in Lave & Wenger's early work (1991). Their definition of situated learning assumes that learning involves a process of participation in a community of practice, and movement from legitimate participation to central participation in the community. In Wenger's later work (1998) he elaborated the concept of a community of practice, and theorized it as a group of participants who share in a joint enterprise, cohere through mutual engagement and create a shared repertoire of communal resources that members develop over time. Wenger's primary concern was how individual workers construct their identities through participation in communities of practice. The tension brought about by multi-membership in different communities is a key

element in identity construction, because of the multi-faceted and dynamic nature of identity. In the workplace learning context, this means that the construction of professional identities takes place through participation in authentic, culturally-constituted working-life contexts (Wenger, 1998).

In communities of practice, boundaries play an important role, because they both create and divide social communities. Boundaries arise as a result of different ways of engaging with other parties, different repertoires, histories, ways of communicating and capabilities. In learning, boundaries offer major possibilities. They create and connect communities, and offer learning opportunities in their own right. Boundaries are locations where different perspectives meet and new possibilities arise. However, boundaries can create divisions and be a source of separation, fragmentation and misunderstanding (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002; Wenger, 1998).

Nevertheless, limitations in the community of practice approach have been identified. In particular, criticism has been aimed at the lack of attention to unequal power relations (Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson & Unwin, 2005) and the absence of individual dispositions and approaches to learning (Billett, 2006b). Furthermore, community of practice approach risks accounting only the social aspects of learning, with insufficient attention paid to the complex relations between individuals and their relations to communities (Linehan & McCarthy, 2001). Despite this, studies have established that the community of practice metaphor provides one important starting point for understanding workplace learning and professional identity construction. (e.g. Bathmaker & Avis, 2005; Fuller & Unwin, 2004; Gorodetsky, Barak & Harari, 2007; Wells, 2007.)

Interdependency between individual agency and social context in workplace learning

In recent discussions on workplace learning, the issues of work-identity have become central (Billett & Somerville, 2004; Kirpal, 2004). Identity has become particularly prominent in respect of the human-centred and creative work (Eteläpelto, 2007), because in these fields personal commitment is fundamental element for learning and professional development. However, the concept of identity has evolved in recent years. According to Hall (2001) our postmodern time has given rise to the post-modern subject, conceptualised as having no fixed, essential or permanent identity. Identity is defined as being formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems in which we engage. The concept of the self as a comparatively unchanging core containing a person's essence has been replaced by a more dynamic view of the self. Such a view emphasises the process notion of identity, with the self seen as something being continually reconstructed and renegotiated in the various contexts of everyday life, via interaction (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). Fenwick (2006) defines identity as an image, a symbolic code representing something the subject desires to belong to or possess something

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to identify with. Identity is also a representation that the individual presents to herself/himself – and to others. For individuals' professional identity construction work and workplaces are influential contexts, offering at the same time social suggestions and possibilities for participating and identifying. Work identities can be seen as constructed in the complex interaction and negotiation processes between work processes and settings, and personal resources, attitudes, commitments and values (Beijaard et al., 2004; Kirpal, 2004). Professional core identity is constructed by means of experienced meaning and subjective gratification; hence it is something that commits individuals to their work (Kirpal, 2004; Eteläpelto, 2007).

The concepts of subject and agency have also emerged as significant aspects in discussions of workplace learning. In recent years, post-structural feminist theorists have been particularly active in considering questions of individual subjectivities and personal agency. This approach rejects the essentialist view of human nature as a free and autonomous construction of the self; it emphasises the relational nature of the self in the context of the surrounding social structure and its suggestions (Weedon, 1987; Pierre, 2000). Here, the subject is considered to be created via the ongoing effects of relations, and in response to society's codes, practices and cultural discourses (Fenwick, 2006; Pierre, 2000). For Billett (2007), subjectivity comprises the conscious and non-conscious conceptions, dispositions and procedures that constitute individuals' cognitive experience. This includes individual ways of engaging with and making sense of what is experienced through lived experience. In post-structural accounts, although the subject is seen as relational – being formed within specific social, historical, and cultural practices – it nevertheless possesses the capacity to exercise political and moral agency. Fenwick (2006) describes agency as the subject's recognition of both the process of its own constitution and of the resources within these processes. Agency is thus articulated in the subject's recognition of the processes through which alternative readings and constitutions are possible (Fenwick, 2006). Becoming a subject in a community means becoming an active agent, and this is based on the subject's reflective awareness. Thus, in order to develop one's professional subjectivity in a community, one must understand the positions one holds in the community, and how one can enter into appropriate activity orientations (Eteläpelto, Littleton, Lahti & Wirtanen, 2005; Phillips, 2002; Walkerdine, 1997).

When considering workplace learning, the interdependent relationship between social context and individual employees seem important. Billett (2004) has emphasized the importance of understanding learning at work in terms of participatory practices. He argues that learning through work involves interdependence between the participation of individuals and workplace affordances (e.g. workplace activities and guidance). This is realized through a duality comprising how workplaces afford opportunities for individuals to participate in activities and interactions, and how individuals elect to engage with what the workplace affords. Billett (2006a) also argues that the interdependencies between individual and social practices are not only reciprocal, but relational. This

relational nature becomes evident in the negotiations between workplace practices and individuals' intentions. The social practice of the workplace affords possibilities toward securing its continuity and development. However, individuals' participation in workplaces is also mediated by their intentions vis à vis their own continuity and development. The interplay between these two sets of continuities, and their relative balance or discrepancy, underpins the relations that also constitute the parameters for reconstructing the social practice of the workplace. (Billett, 2006a.)

Recently there has been active discussion on teachers' professional identity when considering their professional learning. In their review, Beijaard et al. (2004) concluded that a teacher's professional identity is an ongoing process of interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences. It implies both a person and a context, and consists of sub-identities that more or less harmonize. The professional learning of teachers requires them to enter into deep-level transformations of their identifications, with redefinitions of their professional selves. Furthermore, Day and Gu (2007) argue that the contexts of teachers' professional learning and development are different from those of persons who do not work in human service organisations – since teachers are essentially engaged in work which has fundamental moral, ethical and instrumental purposes.

Here, we focus to elaborate the educators' experiences of the affordances offered by their workplaces for participation, and of how these affordances are utilized. The educators' collaboration in social activities is analysed using the community of practice metaphor as a starting point when considering the opportunities for learning available to the persons concerned. We ask how educators practice their professional identity (i.e. their desires to identify *with* something) and their agency (i.e. opportunities for agentic actions) and how we can characterize the interdependency between social context and individual agency. A better understanding of educators' workplace learning is sought through focusing on the following questions:

1. What kind of possibilities and obstacles for participation in social communities have teacher educators experienced concerning their work?
2. What do the educators identify with in their work and how can they exercise their agency in the work community?
3. How can we characterize the interdependency between the social communities of a teacher education department and individual educators, from the perspective of workplace learning?

DATA COLLECTION AND METHOD

This study takes place in the context of Finnish teacher education, which has been organized at university level since 1971. The education standards for teacher educators are relatively high in Finland with senior lecturer positions requiring a doctoral degree and a high level of pedagogical competence. Reported here is a

study conducted within a teacher education department with approximately 80 educators and 30 other employees. Most of the educators work as lecturers and university teachers. The department educates class teachers, subject teachers and study counsellors.

A qualitative approach was used in order to obtain an overall understanding of the learning taking place in this workplace. The major source of data consisted of transcripts of audiotapes of open-ended interviews with eight educators. We wanted to have as different and wide variety of educators' experiences as possible and thus the informants varied in age, academic status, subject taught and length of work history in the department. Informants were asked about the following issues: reasons for becoming a teacher educator, experiences of working and developing as an educator, and future expectations concerning work. The interviews also included a task in which the participants were asked to draw a diagram of every significant team and workgroup they were members. The description and analysis focused on the educator's experiences on a general and collectively shared level, rather than focusing on individual biographies or dispositions for learning. This was necessary also for ethical reasons, in order to ensure the anonymity of the persons interviewed. The interview data were analysed in accordance with data-driven qualitative approaches, utilizing a hermeneutical approach (Gadamer, 1975). Hermeneutics focuses on interpreting something of interest. A hermeneutics circle can be seen as an analytical process aimed at enhancing understanding; it places a particular emphasis on qualitative analyses by which parts are related to wholes and wholes to parts. Thus, at a general level, hermeneutics reminds of the interpretive core of qualitative inquiry, the importance of context, and the dynamic whole-part interrelations of a holistic perspective (Patton, 2002).

In the hermeneutical approach, the researchers' pre-existing personal experiences are not eliminated; rather they are accepted as an important element in the understanding and interpretation of the phenomena under study (Gadamer, 1975). Thus, the hermeneutical circle comprises a dialogue between the participants in the study and the researcher. All the authors of this study had been working in the department, thus they all had their own personal experiences of the workplace in question. To attain a more elaborated understanding of an educator's learning at work, we also used research-diary material in parallel with the in-depth interviews. The main author utilized a research diary (gathered during 2002-2005) that includes her own experiences in this workplace to record notions and perceptions concerning various shared practices in the department, for example staff meetings, other gatherings, development projects and curriculum development. Thus, our analysis is based on an abductive construction process in which we have used both data-driven and theory-based interpretation. (Patton, 2002.)

FINDINGS

Within our findings we shall first describe the teacher educators' accounts of possibilities for collaboration in their work. Next, we shall illustrate the main findings concerning the educators' identification to work and individual agency. In last section of the findings we shall describe the interdependency between social context and individual agency.

Opportunities and obstacles for collaboration

The community of practice metaphor proved to be useful concept for considering the social context of the teacher education department. All educators reported being a member of several different reference groups that are analogous to communities of practice. For most of the educators interviewed, their own subject matter (i.e. discipline) group was reported as the most important community of practice. However, cultures and working practices varied considerably across different groups. This meant that the possibilities for collaboration and learning also varied according to different subject matter groups. Some groups were described as very cohesive, collaborating intensively on a daily basis. In these communities of practice, the educators were constantly planning, putting into practice and sharing new ideas. The educators experienced this kind of working as emotionally satisfying and rewarding.

> ... we work together in a teaching group [subject matter group], and the way we work is that we start by discussing things and presenting different points of view, and defending our own points of view. But then generally we start to get some main idea out of it, and in the end, we usually arrive at a shared understanding of things. These moments feel good... there's no other group with the same kind of opportunity for discussion. " (Teacher educator 1)

There were also subject matter groups that functioned in a more disconnected and vague manner. In these loosely collaborating communities of practice, the educators did not necessarily collaborate on a daily basis. Nonetheless, these educators, too, emphasized the importance of their own subject matter group. An exception to this finding was with the educational science group where no identifiable community of practice existed. Basically, the teaching of educational science was conducted independently, without any negotiation, shared repertoire of resources or mutual engagement among those who taught it. The educators experienced this as causing difficulties in their own work, since it led to problems in implementing the teaching and development of the subject as a whole.

      The data suggest that for many teacher educators, subject matter groups afforded a safe and natural community of practice, one in which they could professionally bond and feel a sense of identification. Nevertheless, it seems that

close-knit communities of practice created problems in terms of collaboration between different groups. The educators reported that the boundaries between different groups within the department were very clearly marked. This became particularly evident in experiences of there being no collaboration between different subject matter groups, or between subject groups and teachers of educational science. This lack of collaboration was described as complicating the implementation of the curriculum, jeopardising the quality of the education and hindering the development of the teacher education system. Indeed, one consequence was that courses were organised separately, which the educators described as a major problem. They claimed that the absence of collaboration weakened the quality of teaching, and that it made things difficult for those individual students who had to draw together ideas from separated courses:

> "I am of the opinion – hopefully I'm wrong – that educational studies live their own life, and the same goes for minor studies and for multidisciplinary school subject studies. It places heavy demands on the student in trying to integrate them. I feel that it is an unreasonably demanding task for them to do." (Teacher educator 3)

The interviewees also revealed the educators' strong desire for collaboration, negotiation and exchanges of ideas with colleagues within the department. Indeed, some educators felt threatened by their colleagues' increasing isolation and concentration on their own academic careers and qualifications.

> " I have a kind of idealistic way of thinking: that we could have a lot of innovative people here, people with fresh thinking, people who'd be willing to pull together, and develop teaching and ways of working and everything. But I'm afraid that people are starting to give more and more value to purely academic qualifications, and we're getting more and more of the kinds of individuals who don't ever get together with each other at any point…" (Teacher educator 6)

The educators also described the discrepancies between different groups that emerged in the curriculum development process. Curriculum development was described as a process where in addition to the shared definition of the goals and contents of the curriculum, the significance of the teacher's own subject matter was underlined. The process was mostly described as a kind of competition, one in which the educators of various subject groups negotiated with each other to secure satisfactory objectives, structures and study credits for their own subject. Furthermore, the educators described experiences of what they understood as a general spirit of competitiveness within the department. For example, they felt little incentive to express new pedagogical ideas in public, since as they saw it the department had a tradition of being critical and unappreciative:

"...we have a bit of a tradition of shooting things down. When somebody develops something new, then in general the idea takes off in some way... There's a kind of disparagement, people clamming shut or questioning [the whole thing]. So you don't get anything like 'well done, you've done really good work." (Teacher educator 8)

Although many educators emphasised the problem of a lack of collaboration between the subject matter groups they also described some attempts to develop shared projects and teaching. These attempts were, however, described as fragile, involving separated projects based on mere separate individual efforts. Thus their role and influence was rather weak for the community as a whole. Albeit collaboration inside the department was rare, the workplace still afforded many possibilities to participate in different kinds of goal-directed activities outside the department. The educators reported being active participants in national and international networks, and were able to make connections and networks very independently.

Teacher educators' professional identity, agency and learning at work

The second question addressed to understand how the educators identify with in their work, and how they were able to exercise agency in their work community. The data suggest that the educators experienced a strong sense of professional identity in their own teachership and in their development as educators. They defined teaching and the teaching of the core knowledge and skills of their own field as their core work. In addition, the interviewees reported that their own discipline and subject matter strongly influenced their professional identity. They often described their most important professional challenges as being the development of their own subject and its pedagogics, establishing its relevance to students, along with skills required in it. Given their work, it was also important for them to secure the status of their subject within the field of school teaching and teacher education. The educators were thus very conscious of the importance of their own subject as it affected their teachership – even if at the same time they saw this as hindering collaboration with their colleagues.

" Well, for those of us who are teachers of some subject, we have the problem that we're so bound up with our own subject that it pretty much makes us regard it as *our* subject. It's like...well, if not the most important thing in the world, the second important anyway. And for example, many of these integration discussions come to nothing due to the fact that people unconsciously see the situation as one of 'how can such and such a subject be integrated into my subject – in such a way that it can benefit my subject.' It's not at all a question of co-operation giving rise to some kind of synergy that would benefit both parties." (Teacher educator 3)

The foundation of academics' work is research and teaching. Yet, most of these educators located their professional identity in their teachership, in developing as teachers, and their subject matter. Most educators did not experience research as their core work and described research as subordinate to their own teaching. In other words, research was defined as a tool for their own development as educators, not as a tool for the production of new knowledge.

Certainly, the workplace offered educators possibilities to exercise agency by committing themselves to their teaching, their teachership and their own subject matter. They were conscious of their own possibilities and spaces for acting within the workplace. Without exception, they reported that they were totally autonomous in their teaching and they could carry out as they wished. They did not feel, for example, that there were managers who wanted to control their teaching or tell them how it should be done. They identified this autonomy as the natural basis of their academic work, and the freedom to practice it as they wished was one of the most rewarding aspects of their work.

> "I can affect my own work to an enormous extent. And just because everyone can take care of their own job, you can do whatever takes your fancy... In the case of my own teaching group I don't need to ask anyone what I should do with them... It's a really positive thing in this work that you can set yourself challenges and try things out, see if you can do something in a new way." (Teacher educator 8)

The culture of the department emphasises the autonomy of those who teach in it, provided rich learning opportunities for the educators. This offered them possibilities to focus on matters that served their professional development – implementing and developing their teaching. They reported that learning at work was closely connected with their own professional development as educators, and that this development was realised through planning and implementing their teaching and research. They were also very satisfied with the opportunities for formal education offered by the department, which gave them the opportunities and the resources for their own education, training and development projects.

Interdependency between communities of practice and autonomous educators

The findings suggest that the strong culture of the communities of practice in the department created a problematic context for the educators' learning at work. Strong subject matter groups permitted these educators to identify with, and support their subject matter-based professional identity. Yet, the subject matter groups – as communities of practice – existed as natural constructs of social reality, and the educators were expected to settle in and to bond with the group. The strong structure of the communities of practice limited participation and created barriers to mutual collaboration. The data suggest that boundaries did not create new opportunities for learning; rather, they underlined the differences between the

communities of practice. Every interviewee would have like more collaboration among the educators. Yet, they reported that various attempts to promote collaboration had failed to lead anywhere, producing no real benefits in developing the department as a whole. Furthermore, they complained that they were unable to apply their own expertise for the benefit of the department; unable to share it safely with others. It actually seemed that educators tired to shelter their own ideas from the rest of the organisation because they were afraid of these been shoot down. The practices that *were* shared, such as departmental meetings, were described as fairly irrelevant occasions in which collaboration, sharing and the construction of new meanings did not materialize.

> "From the point of view of doing our work, the problem here is that people to a large extent guard their autonomy and independence, yet – since our teaching is supposed to be co-operative – this leads to difficulties. We all have our courses in our workplans and we teach them – and coordinating them doesn't work because everybody is guarding this 'teacher's autonomy' which is of course something that's actually protected by law in the universities – but here it's sometimes taken rather to extremes." (Teacher educator 7)

However, while denied affordance for shared practices, they were satisfied with the level of autonomy that the work culture provided them. This allowed them to concentrate on practicing their own teachership, and to develop their own subject matter and its pedagogics. The data suggest that this interdependency between the social context of separated communities of practice and the realization of individuals' own agency as autonomous educators creates a dilemma. The educators would like to remake the department's culture, moving it towards a more collaborative model, one that would give them the chance to share meanings with colleagues, make new connections and learn from each others. However, having been offered so many opportunities to practice their agency by concentrating on their own teaching and learning, there is neither enough individual willingness nor enough social pressure to change the dominating culture. In other words, the teacher educators have chosen to be subject to strong boundaries between communities of practice, accepting this as the natural state of the social reality of the department.

CONCLUSION

The findings showed that the educators belonged to many communities of practice connected to their work. Clearly, the most important communities of practice were the educators' own subject matter group. The findings also suggested that the barriers between the different subject groups within the department were high, and that there was very little collaboration between the groups. In other words, crossing the boundaries between communities of practice was rare. The data suggested that

the educators' professional identity was strongly influenced by their desire to teach, and by the subject matter they were teaching. In addition, the educators experienced a strong sense of autonomy in their teaching and learning at work. They reported that learning at work was mainly connected to how they could prepare, plan, develop and implement their teaching. However, there were problems in the educators' workplace learning – and also in organisational development – due to the interdependency between the organisations social structure of separated communities of practice on the one hand, and educators desire to function independently and autonomously on the other.

The interdependency between social context and the individual educators becomes evident in the relationship between educators' intentions and the work practices of the department. The educators had a strong sense of agency in their teaching and learning at work. However, it seems that this leads paradoxically to a situation in which an individualistic work culture cannot easily be developed towards a more collaborative one, since the work community offers educators the autonomy to practice their agency by teaching and developing their work independently. It seems that there is neither the social pressure nor the degree of individual intention that would promote collaboration between different subject matter groups. Hence, the social context supports the educators' own learning in relation to their subject matter and teachership, but it hinders the development and learning of the whole work organisation. According to our findings, individual learning at work does not necessarily promote organisational development if the social context do not afford enough opportunities for individuals to share the meanings with each other, to work together and to collaborate. This is in line with the argument of Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) who suggested that if individuals confine themselves only to developing their own competence separately from their organisation, organisational learning can be hindered.

Recent studies on teacher education have emphasised the importance of collaborative models which allow teacher students to learn by participating. (e.g. ten Dam & Blom 2006.) In order to promote such teacher education it is essential that the teacher educators themselves can collaborate and learn through participation in work organisation communities. Thus, as a practical conclusion we would suggest that if a teacher education department aims to support the work of educators by providing opportunities for collaboration between different subject groups and communities of practice, and thus to promote the organisation as a whole, it is essential to consider two main issues. First, it is important to secure the teacher educators' individual autonomy for identity construction. However, merely securing professional identity construction does not in itself ensure educators' professional development (Timperley, Wilson & Barrar, 2007). In the worst case, securing the construction of professional identity in isolation can lead to greater barriers between different communities of practice. Furthermore, it is essential to pay attention to the boundaries that are maintained by the social context. Recent studies have addressed the importance of boundary crossing and interdisciplinary approaches in teaching and learning in higher education. (e.g. Savin-Baden & Major, 2007; Woods, 2007.) In the case of teacher

education, interdisciplinary should mean crossing boundaries not only between different disciplines in university curricula but also crossing boundaries between different subject matter groups inside the teacher education department.

In theoretical terms, this study has emphasised the importance of understanding the interdependency of social context and individual agency as a factor influencing on workplace learning. In our case the social context of the teacher education department and the strong autonomy of individual teachers led to evident constraints in workplace learning. Educators were able to practice their agency at individual and work community level although they could not practice their agency in organisational level. However, this would be important to widen the learning outcomes to benefit the whole work organisation. Further, boundaries between the communities of practice need to be lowered if there is a wish to promote the work organisational learning and development.

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AFFILIATIONS

Päivi Hökkä,
Department of Educational Sciences,
University of Jyväskylä

Helena Rasku-Puttonen,
Department of Teacher Education,
University of Jyväskylä

Anneli Eteläpelto,
Department of Educational Sciences,
University of Jyväskylä

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II

TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY NEGOTIATIONS IN TWO DIFFERENT WORK ORGANISATIONS

by

Katja Vähäsantanen, Päivi Hökkä, Anneli Eteläpelto, Helena Rasku-Puttonen & Karen Littleton 2008

Teachers' professional identity negotiations in two different work organisations

Katja Vähäsantanen[a], Päivi Hökkä[a], Anneli Eteläpelto[a], Helena Rasku-Puttonen[a] and Karen Littleton [b]

[a] University of Jyväskylä, Finland

[b] The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK

Abstract

Recent studies have described professional identity as the interplay between individual agency and social context. However, we need to understand how these are intertwined in different kinds of work settings. This paper focuses on teachers' professional identity negotiations as involving the work organisation, the professional community and individual agency. The data were gathered from two work organisations representing different management cultures and sources of control over teachers' work. Open-ended narrative interviews were used, focusing on teachers' own experiences and perceptions. A data-driven qualitative analysis was applied. Our findings indicated that different work organisations provided differing resources for teachers' professional identity negotiations. Teachers were more committed to their work organisation if they had enough agency, if they had opportunities to practise their own orientations towards the profession, and if major changes were not imposed on their working practices from outside.

1. Introduction

Traditionally, teachers have had substantial autonomy, especially in matters concerning the content of their work and pedagogy. It has also been thought that teachers' professional

development could be best promoted when the management culture emphasises the autonomy of teachers' work (Hargreaves 2000). Hence, teachers have traditionally been encouraged to be self-directed and reflexive in their work. Work organisations that operate in this way can be described as *loosely coupled* organisations, i.e. consisting of small-scale separated and self-governing teams. In such organisations, individuals and groups are tied together loosely, although they can interact with each other. Management operates via a "flat" management culture, i.e. one in which weak control is exercised. Individuals have the opportunities to oppose social suggestions and reforms, with the likelihood that any changes within such an organisational set-up will be slow and steady (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Weick 1976).

Over recent years, societal changes have moved many organisations towards a new management culture, with a parallel move from loosely coupled organisations to *tightly coupled* organisations. The emphasis is increasingly on strong, strategy-oriented control, aiming at maximum profitability (Meyer 2002; Moos 2005). In education this has led to teachers being increasingly supervised and monitored, to the extent that external evaluations now control the work of the individual teacher. Different professional groups have to co-operate closely with each other and with upper levels of administration: participants are coupled through dense, tight linkages. Educational organisations are seen as accountable, and they are expected to implement continuous external reforms (Meyer 2002; Moos 2005). Strong social control as opposed to professional autonomy is regarded as a prime factor in the professional development of teachers. Although the new management culture has been widely adopted in schooling organisations, we do not yet have a great deal of evidence as to what this implies for teachers' professional orientation and commitment. There is clearly a need to understand how teachers negotiate their professional identities in the present climate, and how they perceive their agency in different work and management cultures.

This paper seeks to investigate teachers' professional identity negotiations in the context of an interdependence between the work organisation, the professional community and individual agency. Using interview data based on Finnish teachers' subjective experiences and perceptions, this paper will consider how two different organisations provide resources for teachers' professional identity negotiations. The differences in the organisations involve the amount of space they allow for individual agency, and the type of management culture they practise. On the basis of the teachers' accounts, the organisations can be described as (i) a tightly coupled organisation, and (ii) a loosely coupled organisation. The study examines professional identity negotiations in terms of how two organisations with different management cultures create constraints and possibilities for teachers to practise their agency and their orientations towards their profession, and to commit themselves to the work organisation. The study is located within a subject-centred socio-cultural framework, and is informed by the literature concerned with the professional identity negotiations of teachers. The key work is reviewed below.

1.1. The professional identity of teachers

The work of teachers demands the continuous negotiation of professional identity, taken here to embody the individual's perceptions of herself/himself as a professional actor. It includes an individual's sense of belonging, notions of commitment, and values regarding education (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop 2004; Day, Elliot and Kington 2005; Little and Bartlett 2002). Professional identity is negotiated in the course of the individual's biography. Moreover, it is influenced by future prospects: the person has goals, aspirations, and notions of the kind of professional individual she/he desires to be (Beijaard et al. 2004). Professional core identity is based on those elements which give a sense of meaning and commitment to people in their work (Eteläpelto 2007; Kirpal 2004a; Kirpal 2004b).

In previous studies, the concept of professional identity has usually been related to the teacher's self-image (Knowles 1992), based on the belief that concepts or images of the self determine the way people develop as teachers. In addition, the emphasis has been placed on teachers' roles (Goodson and Cole 1994), or on what teachers themselves see as important in terms of their own personal background and practical experience (Tickle 2000). Professional identity also encompasses moral, emotional and political dimensions, including the teacher's values and interests (Geijsel and Meijers 2005; Hargreaves 1998; Rasku-Puttonen, Eteläpelto, Lehtonen, Nummila and Häkkinen 2004). The study reported here focuses on teachers' orientations towards their profession (van Veen and Sleegers 2006; van Veen, Sleegers, Bergen and Klaassen 2001), with orientation being defined as the teacher's perception of what is important in her/his work, and the tasks that she/he finds meaningful.

1.2. Professional identity negotiations between personal agency and social suggestion

Professional identities are constructed in the course of negotiation processes, at the interaction between personal agency and social suggestion (e.g. van Oers 2002). Having agency means being able to make occupational choices concerning one's core work, based on one's own interests and motivations; it means that in relation to social suggestions one is able to act in a way that corresponds to personal values and hopes (Eteläpelto and Saarinen 2006; Fenwick 2006). For its part, social suggestion includes organisational conditions and cultural practices, along with situational demands, constraints and opportunities. The social suggestion can be either weaker or stronger in degree (Billett 2007). The relationship between the personal and the social has been looked at from different theoretical viewpoints. Recognising this, Billett (2006) has distinguished between *humanist*, *structuralist*, *late modernity* and *post-structural* approaches.

The *humanist tradition* assumes that social suggestion is weak, or that it is not present in identity negotiations. Individuals are thought to be able to exercise autonomy in realising their goals, almost independently of social structures. They can freely express their subjectivity and negotiate their identity based on self-actualisation and agency (Mansfield 2000; Rogers 1969). Hence, there are no insurmountable limits to the practice of agency or to individual orientations towards the profession.

The structuralist approach assumes that individuals are subjected to social structures and pressures. Professional identity is thought to be strongly shaped by the socio-cultural context of work organisations. The self is developed most fully when the individual adopts the community's norms and values (Foucault 1979; Mead 1934). This means that there are many restrictions in the practice of agency or in maintaining an individual orientation towards one's profession. As compared to structuralist approaches, the *late modernity tradition* offers more space for agency, although identity negotiations are still thought to take place within the limits of social suggestion. Subjects are thought to be self-reflexive, formulating and maintaining their identity agentially within a transforming social system. Subjects both self-regulate and self-subjugate themselves while performing particular roles within and through their working life (du Gay 1996; Rose 1990). In terms of individual orientations towards a profession, individuals will try to achieve a fit between social suggestion and individual values.

In the *post-structural theoretical framework*, identity is presumed to be created via ongoing changes in relations, and in response to cultural practices and discourses. The subject selectively engages and negotiates with social suggestions that are directed at her/him, and the subject's intention is to secure, develop and maintain identity (Fenwick 2006; St. Pierre 2000; Weedon 1997). The subject is formed within specific socio-cultural practices and relationships and as it emerges so too does the subject's capacity to exercise political and moral agency. The

subject can thus resist social structures, outmanoeuvring or avoiding strong social suggestions (Billett 2006; Fenwick 2006).

So far, there has been a lack of research concerning identity negotiations in different work organisations. We therefore need to go beyond the existing research and current theoretical notions, in order to understand the relationships between social context and individual agency, and to try to gain a more elaborated understanding of the interdependence between work organisations and identity negotiations. This paper will examine how teachers' professional identities are negotiated via the interaction between individual agency, the professional community and the work organisation, given that the most prominent social groups that workers belong to are their work organisation and their professional group or community of practice (Baruch and Cohen 2007; Kirpal 2004a). Wenger (1998) has suggested that communities of practice are the place for constructing professional identities, meaning that identities are constructed through participation, and through becoming a member of a professional community. However, Wenger has not greatly thematised the relationships between the individual worker, the professional community and the work organisation.

This study is theoretically informed by a subject-centred socio-cultural framework. In line with a socio-cultural approach (e.g. Lasky 2005; van Oers 2002), we suggest that individuals' identities and social context are mutually constitutive. This means that the cultural resources of communities and organisations provide affordances for individuals' identity negotiations. Nevertheless, since in our view socio-cultural approaches have not thematised subjectivity to a sufficient extent, we have additionally utilised theories that emphasise the role and agency of subjects in a social context (e.g. Fenwick 2006; Weedon 1997). In line with the post-structural approach, we would expect different work organisational contexts and immediate professional communities to create spaces for practising agency, in terms of subjects' individual orientations

towards the profession. We understand that practising agency also means that teachers actively negotiate and renegotiate the conditions and the contents of their own work, and that they have an influence on community and organisational issues. This includes, for example, having the opportunity to renegotiate and to oppose the directions laid down by the administration of the organisation.

1.3. The commitment of teachers

In this paper, the relationships between the socio-cultural context of work organisations and teachers' professional identity negotiations will be discussed also in terms of commitment, which is an important aspect of identity. Previous studies have shown that commitment to the organisation is strengthened if teachers are able to see the relationship between their professional identity and the strategic directions of their school. Day et al. (2005) found that the factors that most sustained teachers' commitment included (i) sharing with and giving support to colleagues, (ii) positive feedback from colleagues, and (iii) shared educational values within the organisation. Conversely, the factors that most diminished teachers' commitment included (i) the imposition of time-related innovations together with the steep learning curves involved, (ii) department initiatives that increased bureaucratic tasks, (iii) cuts in resources, and (iv) a reduction in classroom autonomy and sense of agency.

In a reform context, teachers have been found to experience disappointments that can weaken their commitment to teaching and work, rooted for example in (i) frustration with shifting levels of endorsement or support from school leaders, (ii) dismay over conflicts with colleagues and/or a failure of support from colleagues, (iii) emotional and physical exhaustion associated with extra and unfamiliar responsibilities, (iv) disagreement over the interpretation of broadly defined reform goals, and (v) tensions over the balance between teacher autonomy and

institutional demands (Little and Bartlett 2002). Baruch and Cohen (2007) have suggested a number of conditions necessary for subjects' commitments. At the organisational level, these include issues such as justice and trust, together with the absence of role conflict or ambiguity. At the individual level, a subject's commitment is influenced by self-efficacy, satisfaction, involvement and a variety of emotions (Baruch and Cohen 2007). On the basis of the studies mentioned above, we could expect that tightly and loosely coupled organisations will produce different strengths of commitment to the organisation.

1.4. Aims and research questions

The study reported here sought to gain an understanding of teachers' professional identity negotiations, through an examination of two organisations with different strengths of social suggestion. Thus, this paper focuses on professional identity negotiations in terms of the interrelatedness of the work organisation, the professional community and individual agency. The research questions are as follows:

1. How do teachers perceive the social suggestions of their work organisations, and how are these related to their agency?

2. How do teachers describe their orientations towards the profession, and how are these related to the various social suggestions of their work organisations?

2. Research methods

We interviewed 24 Finnish teachers working in a vocational institution and a university department of teacher education. The teachers who consented to participate in the study varied in age, subject matter, and length of work history in the organisation. The data were obtained by open-ended narrative interviews during 2005–2006. The interviews covered, for example, the

nature of the teacher's work, professional development at work, the work organisation and professional community, and future expectations concerning the work. Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. The data were analysed in accordance with data-driven qualitative approaches, applying qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006; Patton 2002). We focused on the teachers' individual perceptions and experiences. However, in the analysis, we looked for patterns and common elements that recurred across the different interviews, aiming to produce general characterisations from the interview data.

In the first phase of the analysis, for research question 1, we read through all the 24 interviews, identifying at a general level how teachers described their own work organisations' social suggestions, and how these were related to their agency. From a holistic reading, we noticed that the teachers from the two organisations described their organisations in two different ways, with the management cultures exhibiting particularly striking differences. One of the educational organisations was described as strongly controlling teachers' work practices, and hence (in our terms) representing strong social suggestion. We named this organisation as the "stronger social suggestion organisation". The other workplace was described as less controlling of teachers' work; hence it could be taken to represent weak social suggestion, and was named as the "weaker social suggestion organisation". Our analysis of teachers' perceptions was thus the basis from which we identified two organisations as representing different degrees of social suggestion. A more specific comparative process involved more discussion among the researchers, re-reading the interviews and finding similarities and differences in the teachers' accounts. By thematising we were able to define certain more specific aspects which illustrated the social suggestions of the work organisations. We grouped these aspects, placing them on three levels: *work organisation, professional community,* and *individual*. Whilst it could be

argued that the contrastive research strategy used might result in an over-simplification of organisational complexies, our concern was to reflect the teachers' perceptions and experiences. The descriptions of the work organisations should not, therefore, be construed as objective descriptions of the reality within the workplace.

In the second phase, for research question 2, we analysed and interpreted what the teachers said was important to them in their work, including the tasks that were meaningful for them. From the accounts given, we identified and constructed four orientations to the profession. In addition, we examined how the teachers' different orientations towards their profession were related to the social suggestions of their work organisations.

3. Findings

This section is divided into two parts according to the research questions. In the first part, we report on the teachers' accounts of social suggestions within their work organisations, and how these were related to their agency. In the second part, we describe how teachers perceived their orientations towards the profession, and how these were related to the various social suggestions of the work organisations.

3.1. Teachers' accounts of social suggestions within their work organisations

The two work organisations had social suggestions that differed in strength. We were thus able to identify two different modes of social suggestions, one belonging to the stronger social suggestion (SSS) organisation and the other belonging to the weaker social suggestion (WSS) organisation. Table 1 summarises the various specific aspects related to the work organisation, the professional community and the individual level. The professional community of the teachers is understood to be a subject-matter group, based on the subject taught.

- Insert Table 1 about here -

In the following sections we shall first describe teachers' accounts of the *stronger social suggestion* organisation, on the work organisational, professional community and individual levels. Secondly we shall report on accounts of the *weaker social suggestion* organisation, considering these same levels.

3.1.1. Teachers' accounts in the stronger social suggestion (SSS) organisation

Work organisational level

 In the stronger social suggestion (SSS) organisation, teachers reported that in recent years they have been faced with continuous, extensive and simultaneous changes: the institution's organisational structure has been substantially altered, and educational reforms both at national and local level have redefined the curricula and the contents of the teachers' work. The suggestion was that organisational definitions of policy and other features of the current reforms have entailed particular duties for the teachers. Teachers noted that they have had to work increasingly outside the educational organisation, with requirements to organise students' learning within the workplace (i.e. outside the school), to provide information about education, and to market education outside their own organisation. In addition, teachers felt increasingly obliged to carry out developmental and administrative duties.

The teachers described their own work organisation as hierarchical and bureaucratic. In the current educational reform situation they did not have a strong sense of agency. They reported that they were powerless to affect the reform, since the reform was planned and organised mainly

by the administration. There were no possibilities for teachers to make their voices heard. This emerged in reports such as the following:

"Teachers have simply and brutally been told to adopt the current reform, which they must implement. No questions were asked, it's just an order coming from above… There were no opportunities to have an influence on anything." (SSS teacher 5)

Teachers commented that they were required to participate in the implementation of reforms and to do the tasks that were demanded: it was assumed that they would be flexible and dynamic, and that they would take on new roles. According to the teachers, the administration did not provide enough information about the reforms, and did not explain exactly why educational policy in general and the contents of the teachers' work in particular were continuously undergoing changes. The teachers thought that they would be more committed to the organisational demands if the organisation offered better reasons for them.

The teachers explained that many of the important decisions concerning education, resources, the curriculum and the teachers' work were made by the organisation's central administration, mainly without asking teachers' opinions. Dialogue between the teachers and the administration was non-existent. Teachers were expected to approve the goals determined by the organisation, and to enforce external decisions. As one teacher reported:

"I'm a bit confused. Let's say that the message I get is that the individual teacher is no longer listened to as much as before – an order is given as an order and it comes without any reasons for putting it into practice." (SSS teacher 15)

The management culture was described as an example of unsatisfactory managership, and the administration was described as having no respect for teachers. The teachers were dissatisfied with the remote possibilities for making decisions, and they wanted to have more influence on the

decision-making process at the organisational level. They hoped that it would be possible to develop the organisation's administrative and structural procedures in a better direction.

The professional community level

In the SSS organisation, the professional groups (consisting of teachers who taught the same subject) had no strong sense of having the power to affect broader organisational decisions. Within the professional groups, teachers reported being able to negotiate some concrete issues that had arisen. Collaboration within the professional groups varied, but overall, teachers experienced a lack of extensive collaboration, mainly because of teachers having different timetables. Thus, the organisation was characterised as not offering an ideal setting for teachers to collaborate, and in general the groups did not provide all the teachers with opportunities for professional identification. Moreover, the teachers' learning was inhibited, due to a lack of pedagogical discussions with colleagues and to inadequate feedback. The teachers usually indicated a desire for more collaboration. Those teachers who had experienced extensive collaboration within their own group emphasised the significance of collaboration for their work.

The relationships between the professional groups were variable. The organisation's structural and administrative boundaries were described as working against collaboration among teachers: the professional groups worked in isolation from each other and reported to different administrative bodies. Nevertheless, teachers who had participated in various developmental projects did see themselves as having the opportunity to co-operate with teachers from different subject groups. The teachers' networks with reference groups and partners *outside* their own organisation were quite extensive. In fact, many teachers thought they had better opportunities to consider professional issues and to develop their own competencies with partners who were

outside rather than within the organisation. The organisation did support – and actually demanded – the co-operation of teachers with partners outside the organisation.

The individual level

In the SSS organisation, teachers did appear to have a certain sense of agency when they were teaching and guiding students. They said that there was no direct supervision of the teachers' work at the most detailed level. However, some teachers reported that the organisation resorted to control when it was discovered that particular teachers did not follow the ways of acting determined by the organisation. The organisation and the managers were not described as supportive, and teachers had to work without feedback or encouragement. Amid the continuous reforms, the teachers stated that they were working in conditions of uncertainty, with no possibilities for long-term planning. The teachers indicated that if the working environment were more stable, it would be easier to use the knowledge and experience they had acquired during their own career.

3.1.2. Teachers' accounts in the weaker social suggestions (WSS) organisation

Work organisational level

The teachers in the weaker social suggestion (WSS) organisation also experienced the national and organisational reforms as having an effect on their work. However, they felt that their core work was not under threat and that they could influence their work and the changes involved. They had confidence in the continuity of their work organisation and they did not see the reforms as a threat to their work. On the contrary, these teachers experienced strong agency in relation to the reforms. They indicated that they had the opportunity to negotiate and to oppose the directions laid down by the administration, if they believed that these were threatening their core

work. They described themselves as being able to determine their teaching practices and to develop their work according to their own visions. An example of this was a sense of agency during the curriculum development process. Although the structure of the curriculum was defined at national level, they felt they had the opportunity to engage in the objectives, contents and implementation of the curriculum.

The teachers reported that if they wished, they were able to influence their core work, and in addition to this, the decision-making and other shared issues pertaining to their work organisation. However, the ability to contribute to these issues required familiarity with the practices and conventions of the organisation. The teachers argued that anyone who wished to influence matters of work organisation had to be willing to participate in the groups that were planning these matters. Another way to influence matters could be to directly approach key persons within the organisation. In general, the teachers experienced strong agency, and did not see themselves as hemmed in by administrative structures. As one teacher put it:

" There's freedom here. Freedom. By that I mean that I can affect my own work, I can affect matters within the working community, and if I compare this to my previous work I can say that here I can do whatever it takes to get things done. I can carry out research and develop my teaching." (WSS teacher 4)

In the WSS organisation, the teachers reported that they had the chance to negotiate even when faced with the social suggestions offered by central administration. For example, measures such as the development of quality assurance were to some extent viewed positively. On the other hand, there was criticism of some of the measures introduced by central administration. In some cases, the measures put forward were seen as attempts to make teachers implement the strategy of the central organisation without giving them any chance to provide their own perspectives. However, despite these criticisms, teachers indicated that when necessary they were able to

outmanoeuvre suggestions coming from central administration. The possibility of not giving in to strong social suggestions became evident, for example, in the teachers' accounts of their experiences of the development of quality assurance, as part of a set of procedures set up by central administration. If the teachers considered the quality assurance process to be merely "window-dressing", they found ways of avoiding excessive commitment to the process. They produced (as was required) an administrative paper for central administration, their aim being merely to produce the document without spending too much time and energy on it. However, the new salary reform created one exception to the teachers' possibilities to negotiate and resist the social suggestions of central administration. Many teachers highlighted their concern about the growing role of central administration in salary negotiations. The teachers reported that the salary reform had created insecurity, since they did not know the new rules for negotiating in such a changing situation.

The professional community level

In the WSS organisation, the teachers' particular professional group (comprising teachers who taught the same subject) appeared to be a significant reference group for most of the teachers. The professional group seemed to provide possibilities for professional identification and identity negotiation. Teachers experienced their own group as offering the space and opportunity to discuss and develop their work.

> *"My own subject group is the only place where right now or in recent years I have had the chance to discuss various issues properly and in depth, really looking at the work and the work community with all the knowledge and experience a person can have."* (WSS teacher 8)

On the work community level, the power of the different professional groups appeared to be strong. The professional groups had a genuine role to play in issues concerning educational practices. Despite the fact that there appeared to be active negotiation and collaboration within the professional groups, actual collaboration *between* different groups was rare in the WSS organisation. The teachers reported that there had been attempts to develop collaboration between groups, but that these initiatives had not led to permanent changes. However, collaboration and networking with reference groups and partners outside the work organisation was common. The teachers were members of various reference groups outside the organisation, groups that were related to core teaching work and its development. The teachers indicated that networking with other professionals was a natural part of their core work; also that the management of the work organisation had motivated them to make connections and to collaborate with other reference groups.

The individual level

In the WSS organisation, the teachers experienced strong agency related to their core work. They reported that they could work independently and develop their work as they wished. They experienced no strong social suggestions from the administration concerning their teaching practices.

> *"Everyone takes care of their own teaching and then our students get their degrees. That's our policy, that everyone takes care of their own business. So when everyone is allowed to do their own thing it means you can do whatever you want."* (WSS teacher 2)

However, the teachers found that as well as being autonomous, the teaching was separated from other teachers' work. Furthermore, some teachers argued that no-one was interested in the quality

of their teaching. The priorities were merely that the teaching would be carried out, and that the students would get their study credits and graduate within the allotted time.

3.2. Teachers' orientations towards their profession, and the relationships of the orientations to the social suggestions of the work organisations

In the second part of the findings section we shall first describe teachers' orientations towards their profession. Secondly, we shall report on how the teachers' orientations were related to the differing social suggestions within the two work organisations. The relationships between teachers' orientations and social suggestions will be discussed primarily in terms of commitment.

3.2.1. Teachers' orientations towards their profession

On the basis of the interviews, we identified four types of orientations towards to the profession: (i) an *educational* orientation, (ii) a *subject-matter* orientation, (iii) a *network* orientation, and (iv) a *research and development* orientation. The orientations should not be understood as unchanging or exclusive, but rather as dynamic, overlapping and renegotiable. They have the following characteristics:

The educational orientation. The educationally orientated teachers considered their most important tasks to be educating; also creating a basis for students' individual development, and the construction of students' personal identities. For these teachers, teaching the subject was not the most urgent task; what they wanted to do was focus on the student's personal well-being. They cared about their students, desiring to help them with their problems, to improve their self-respect and to prevent them from becoming marginalised. They wanted to help the students to find their own place in working life and society. They underlined the importance of teaching life-values to students.

The subject-matter orientation. When asked about the most important and meaningful tasks of a teacher, the subject-matter-orientated teachers mentioned teaching their subject and helping students to acquire knowledge of and qualifications in the subject. In the school context, they sought to promote the construction of the students' professional identities, in order that the students would have the opportunity to achieve good professional competencies; they also saw it as important that students would know how they should develop their professional competence and knowledge after graduation. They said that the obligation of a teacher is to evoke realistic images of the profession and of different working contexts.

The network orientation. While teachers with the educational and subject-matter orientations were primary focused on teaching activities within the educational institution, the network-oriented teachers had a wider orientation to work. They wanted to act outside the educational institutions, to work with representatives of working life and to collaborate with other educational institutions. The network orientation was also related to the desire to guide students when they had practical training periods outside the actual educational institutions.

The research and development orientation. The research and development-oriented teachers thought that their most important tasks – and also their sources of satisfaction – were to be found in research, in the development of education, and in participation in developmental projects. In addition, their purpose in life was to market and to provide information on their own subject, on a nationwide basis.

3.2.2. Teachers' orientations towards their profession within the stronger social suggestion (SSS) organisation

In the stronger social suggestion (SSS) organisation, the teachers did not have strong agency at the organisational level. This means that they considered themselves to be powerless to affect the

larger definitions of policy, or the reforms. In addition, the organisation did not offer space for teachers to negotiate the contents of their work; on the contrary the organisation laid down duties that teachers had to carry out. In particular, the teachers were increasingly being required to work outside the schooling organisation, and to participate in developmental and administrative duties. Nevertheless, the SSS organisation did not simply constrain, but also opened up opportunities for teachers to practise their orientations towards the profession, depending on what the orientation might be.

In the SSS organisation the *educational* and the *subject-matter*-orientated teachers argued that they were no longer able to practise their orientations freely, or not as much as before. The organisational demands were in conflict with the teachers' orientations; as a result, professional identity was threatened and the teachers were fairly dissatisfied. For this reason, they tended to disagree with organisational instructions, which were seen as conflicting with good practice – or indeed with reality – and as obstructing their core work. The teachers argued that many students had personal problems and learning difficulties which required a supportive teacher, at the same time as central administration wanted the teachers to concentrate on other duties. For these teachers, the ideal situation would be one in which they would concentrate only on educating; in such a case their work would actually be meaningful. Not all the teachers in these categories felt a strong commitment to the organisation, and they made it clear that their commitment would be further weakened if their job descriptions continued to undergo change. This can be seen in the following extract:

"… the teacher's job description is being altered; tasks outside teaching are being increased and the teachers are required to have more organising and planning skills. It's a minor concern. I'm not the kind of person that likes to organise and plan. I'm more of a practical doer. It could end up with things becoming too fraught and difficult. If I feel that

I'm having to work more as a planner and a developer than as a teacher, at some point I'll

probably think about doing some other job." (SSS teacher 10)

However, some of the teachers with educational and subject-matter orientations did not want to leave the organisation, or else they thought that they had no other option than to commit themselves to the organisation. For example, they might not have the competencies to move into other professions.

In the SSS organisation, the *network*-orientated teachers, and also the *research and development*-orientated teachers, were able to maintain their own orientations towards the profession. The teachers who experienced a balance between their orientations and social suggestions mainly had a positive attitude to their profession and to the organisational demands. Some of these teachers would actually have liked more opportunities to participate in development and to decrease their traditional teaching activities. Yet although the network-oriented teachers and the research and development-oriented teachers had the chance to practise their orientations, not all of them were completely satisfied with their work. The problem was a lack of time and resources. Teachers had to be flexible and to work during their leisure time. Furthermore, the lack of a supportive organisation and of resources hindered teachers from doing their core work in the way they wanted. They were innovative and enthusiastic about their developmental duties, but argued that the organisation did not give them enough resources, agency or authority. In this situation, the teachers were becoming increasingly exhausted:

"... Powerless is one reason for stress... [Previously] we had plenty of power and agency as

a team; we could do everything as a team... Everybody felt extremely good about it. Now

little by little we've been whittled away. Now everything is being imposed from above.

Teams no longer have any power. It's tragic. Right now, when what is needed is energy,

some kind of creativity and development, all the power has been taken away... We've

developed things and stuck our necks out... At some point we might take a bit of a different

approach. After all, this is just a job. Otherwise I feel that in our study programme we may

simply not be able to carry on." (SSS teacher 3)

In the SSS organisation, the teachers had inconsistent attitudes to the changes. On the one hand, some teachers were willing to admit the need for educational reforms. On the other hand, some teachers reported that the reforms were unnecessary and were having negative effects. In addition, the continuous changes were described as being stressful and exhausting, and some teachers wished for stability and continuity. Without this, they would become increasingly cynical and lacking in commitment, due to concerns about their own personal well-being.

3.2.3. Teachers' orientations towards their profession within the weaker social suggestion (WSS) work organisation

In the weaker social suggestion (WSS) organisation, too, the teachers reported that external authorities (such as the Ministry of Education or the central administration of the organisation) had an influence on their core teaching work and on the resources available. Nevertheless, they indicated that they had opportunities to negotiate and to resist pressures, if this was needed. In the WSS organisation, social suggestions and administrative structures did not seem to fundamentally obstruct orientations towards the profession. The data suggested that teachers were able to negotiate and work meaningfully, regardless of their orientations toward the profession. They thus experienced a balance between their orientations towards the profession and the social suggestions provided by the work organisation:

"... the best thing in this set-up is that you can influence your work as much as a person

can do. I'd feel outraged if I had to obey instructions given by others." (WSS teacher 7)

However, in the WSS organisation, just as in the SSS organisation, the teachers had found that administrative work had increased considerably in recent years. In their everyday work this was apparent in the increased amount of administrative planning and meetings. However, there was a clear potential for negotiation in the teachers' work. In any case, many teachers did wish to participate in the various working and planning groups in the organisation. The teachers explained that by participating they had opportunities to prepare proposals and to have an impact on matters central to their core work. In the WSS organisation the teachers reported that it was possible for them to exert influence, particularly through the administrative and planning groups. Another pivotal negotiation strategy was direct contact with key persons within the organisation. The WSS organisation offered many possibilities for this kind of negotiation. The data also suggest that both the work community and the organisation as a whole provided a considerable number of possibilities for teachers to construct their professional identities. The teachers were very committed to their work, and to developing it. They also expected to continue working in the organisation in the future.

> *" I have clear vision that I want to work in the department and develop myself here, and also play my own part in the development of this department... yes, I intend to continue here and develop, and I think it is good that I can affect this development, including when and how quickly it happens.* (WSS Teacher 6)

Generally speaking, the teachers were not unduly suspicious of change or organisational development. On the contrary, some teachers even expected it. However, it seemed essential to teachers that organisational development should be led by them rather than by central administration or another outside body. At the same time, some teachers emphasised that if an administrative or external source was not willing to force change, no changes would take place at all.

3.2.4. The relationships between teachers' orientations towards their profession and the social suggestions of the work organisations

All in all, we found varying relationships between teachers' orientations towards their profession and the social suggestions of the work organisations. The SSS organisation and the WSS organisation imposed different constraints on teachers; they also provided different opportunities for teachers to practise their agency, in terms of pursuing their professional orientations (Table 2).

- Insert Table 2 about here -

Depending on the teacher's orientation, the SSS organisation could either constrain or promote the orientation. The core aspects of the educational and subject-matter-orientated teachers' professional identities were becoming eroded by strong social suggestions and continuous changes. By contrast, the network-oriented teachers and the research and development-oriented teachers did find opportunities to practise their orientations towards the profession. The management culture of the SSS organisation could be compared to the new public management culture. Having experienced this management culture, some of the teachers reported a lack of commitment, because of the continuous changes, the constraints on agency, and the difficulties in practising their orientations towards the profession. However, even under strong social suggestions, some teachers did feel a certain sense of agency, in the sense that they were able to control their own sense of commitment. They did not have to commit themselves to the organisation, provided they had enough professional competencies and personal resources to leave the organisation.

In the WSS organisation, by contrast, all the teachers expressed the view that they had the opportunity to specify their core work and negotiate the contents of their work; also, when necessary, to oppose the directions offered by central administration if they saw these directions as affecting their core work. This possibility to negotiate gave teachers the chance to practise their orientation, regardless of the nature of their orientation. Further findings showed that the teachers were committed to their work in the WSS organisation, in a place where they had the chance to practise agency and to act on their own orientations towards the profession. In other words, a "flat" management culture, one that emphasised the agency of the teaching profession, promoted teachers' commitment to their work organisation and to teachership.

4. Conclusions and discussion

The findings, which were based on an analysis of teachers' subjective experiences, highlight many issues that deserve further investigation. The findings showed that the stronger social suggestion organisation placed more restrictions on opportunities to practise agency and to act on orientations towards the profession; it also created continuous expectations of change. Conversely, in the weaker social suggestion organisation, teachers were able to negotiate the content of their work, practise agency and act on their orientation towards the profession, regardless of what the orientation might be. The findings showed that the weaker social suggestion organisation, i.e. the loosely coupled organisation, created a work environment in which teachers were relatively more committed to the organisation. It appeared that teachers were more committed to the work organisation if they had enough professional agency, if they had opportunities to practise their own orientations towards the profession, and if their working practices were not subject to externally imposed major changes. The findings are in line with the results of other studies addressing the conditions of commitment (Day et al. 2005; Little and

Bartlett 2005). However, our findings further suggest that individual agency and social suggestion are closely intertwined, being mediated in professional identity negotiations through subjects' commitment. This aspect is often neglected in discussions concerning the interdependence between individual agency and social suggestion.

Recent changes in work organisations, with more flexible employment patterns, have increasingly meant that classical forms of work-related identity formation (e.g. belonging to particular work-based communities) have undergone significant changes (Kirpal 2004a). Although it is important for teachers that they can practise agency and orientations, this study also underlines the significance of the immediate professional community (i.e. a subject-matter group) for teachers' identity negotiation. Indeed, the professional community was very important for the teachers. Those who lacked membership of such a community had a keen sense of what was missing. Similarly, many teachers would have liked more collaboration within professional communities, if they experienced such collaboration as being limited. We can thus conclude that a teacher's immediate working community, and the collaboration it allows, has the potential to provide a safety net against external changes. In addition, the immediate professional community can promote teachers' individual agency in work organisations. Our findings imply that the essential conditions for teachers' successful negotiations of their professional identity include sufficient individual agency and the opportunity to belong to a supportive and safe professional community. Such conditions were provided in the weaker social suggestion organisation representing the loosely coupled organisation.

However, one aspect that was experienced as troubling in the weaker social suggestion organisation – in which the relationships between professional groups were weaker – was the fact that the different groups did not share experiences and knowledge. Furthermore, it would appear that strong agency among teachers and self-governing work groups is a factor tending to prevent

organisational change. Our findings thus support the suggestion of Nonaka and Takeushi (1995), who argue that organisational development and learning can be inhibited if individuals merely develop their own professional knowledge and competence, separately from their own organisation, and without transfer of their knowledge within the organisation. Conversely, the stronger social suggestion organisation with its new public management culture organised continuous reforms which were supposed to develop the organisation and the education it provided. Yet although strong social suggestions appeared to facilitate organisational change, our findings suggest that the imposition of work changes from external sources, along with expectations of continuous change, can impact negatively on teacher commitment. The organisation with stronger social suggestion would have needed more dialogue between the teachers and the administrators. In such a case, the experience and knowledge of the teachers could also be better exploited within the reform process.

What emerges the findings is that – for the sake of commitment and professional identity negotiation – it would be important for an individual to have enough opportunities to practise agency within the organisation. In the case of an educational organisation, this includes the possibility for teachers to practise their individual professional orientations, to actively negotiate and renegotiate the conditions and the contents of their own work, and to have an influence on issues arising on community and organisational levels. Moreover, in terms of teachers' agency, it is not enough that they can practise agency only in their own teaching work. In addition to this, there must be a chance to gain support from the immediate professional community, as well as the possibility of selecting and resisting organisational suggestions. We would thus argue that in theoretical discussions concerning agency, it is vital that there is consideration of all the three levels mentioned above (i.e. the organisational, community and individual levels).

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Table 1: Teachers' accounts of organisations with stronger and weaker social suggestions, with their perceived possibilities for negotiation at work organisational, professional community and individual levels

	Stronger social suggestion (SSS) organisation	Weaker social suggestion (WSS) organisation
WORK ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL		
Organisational culture	Continuous changes	Stable
Management	Hierarchical	Low hierarchical
Teachers' perceived opportunities for resistance to change	Low	High
Space for individual negotiation of agency	Limited	Extensive
Teachers' perceived power to affect matters	Low	Variable
PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY LEVEL		
Perceived power of professional groups	Low	High
Collaboration within professional groups	Variable	Variable
Relationships between professional groups	Variable	Low
Networks outside the	Strong	Strong

organisation		
INDIVIDUAL LEVEL		
Teachers' perceived agency in teaching	High/variable	High

Table 2: The relationships between teachers' orientations and the social suggestions of the work organisations

	Stronger social suggestion (SSS) organisation	**Weaker social suggestion (WSS) organisation**
Educational orientation	Conflict	Balance
Subject-matter orientation	Conflict	Balance
Network orientation	Balance	Balance
Research and development orientation	Balance	Balance

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III

RECENT TENSIONS AND CHALLENGES IN TEACHER EDUCATION AS MANIFESTED IN CURRICULUM DISCOURSE

by

Päivi Hökkä, Anneli Eteläpelto & Helena Rasku-Puttonen 2010

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Recent tensions and challenges in teacher education as manifested in curriculum discourse

Päivi Hökkä, Anneli Eteläpelto & Helena Rasku-Puttonen

Abstract

This study seeks to contribute to discussions on the development of teacher education by analysing teacher educators' talk concerning curriculum reform. The curriculum is understood as a mediating construction between teacher educators and the social context, and the development of the curriculum is seen as a negotiation process between global discourses and local actors. Our aim was to understand the contrasting discourses used by teacher educators in talking about curriculum development, on the grounds that such discourses frame interpretations that direct the implementation of teacher education as a whole. Five contrasting interpretative repertoires were found. We illustrate these and discuss what they imply for the development of teacher education.

Keywords: Curriculum development; Discourses; Interpretative repertoires**;** Teacher education

1. Introduction

Reforms in teacher education are nowadays conducted in a world suffused with various and often contradictory discourses concerning the curriculum. Globalisation has speeded up the exchange of cultural, educational and curricular knowledge around the world. Thus, the curriculum is not only constructed in local practices; it exists in cultural exchanges constituted as a part of global discourses (Anderson-Levitt, 2008; Connelly & Xu, 2008). These public discourses concerning teacher education have grown rapidly during the last few years (Korthagen, Loughran & Lunenberg 2005; Murray, 2008). Simultaneously, demands for improvements in teacher education have strengthened; it is argued that schools will not change unless the ways in which teachers are educated change (Bransford, Darling-Hammond & LePage, 2005). Teacher educators are being required to develop new perceptions of their professional identity, and of the curricula for teacher education; also a new understanding of their relationships with the schools they work with in educating student teachers (Margolin, 2007; Robinson & McMillan, 2006). In addition, it is now seen as important to increase collaboration and boundary-crossing across disciplines, and this will have an influence on how school subject studies are integrated with educational sciences (Hökkä, Rasku-Puttonen & Eteläpelto, 2008; O'Connell Rust, 2007). Another factor derives from external assessment programmes (in Europe e.g. the Bologna process) that

have brought new demands for a clear quality- and research-based orientation in teacher education (Niemi, 2007).

These recent challenges have been reflected in local discourses surrounding the curriculum process in teacher education, and they have led to wide agreement that the curriculum must be reformed. Barnett and Coate (2005) have argued that in higher education it is important to get a better understanding of how the curriculum is intertwined with the social and historical contexts of universities, and of the wider world in which universities are situated. The fact is that educators have only a limited understanding of the multiple perspectives and tensions that shape curriculum development, and of how different voices form interdependent relationships between individual actors and their local/global contexts. In order to achieve a fuller understanding of how the curriculum process is played out in teacher education, it is necessary to look at the discourses that emerge in the construction of the curriculum.

This study thus aims to encompass the diversity of discourses in the curriculum process, as negotiated in one Finnish teacher education department. We consider the curriculum to be a central aspect of education, since it integrates the actual, local implementation of education with discourses on education that are more public and global. Our focus will be on how teacher educators use various discourses as resources when they describe curriculum development in the context of the global Bologna process. We are interested in (i) the kinds of interpretative repertoires produced in teacher educators' talk, and (ii) what these discourses reflect in the context of curriculum reform.

Our overall purpose is to understand the competing and often contrasting discourses that teacher educators utilise while talking about the curriculum and its development. We base this endeavour on the belief that such discourses frame interpretations that direct the implementation of teacher education. We adopt a (critical) socio-cultural approach as a theoretical starting point, and we highlight the curriculum as a central mediating practice, one that exists between the social context of a teacher education department and teacher educators as individual actors. Our methodological approach also draws upon discursive psychology; hence it emphasises the ways in which language is employed as a form of social and societal action, mediated through talk (Potter & Wetherell, 1994; Potter, 2005). In the following sections we shall address the curriculum within the framework of a socio-cultural approach; thereafter we shall focus on how a discursive approach could be helpful in understanding the curriculum process.

2. The curriculum as understood through (critical) socio-cultural lenses

The curriculum is seen as being at the heart of education, since it defines the integrated, holistic, narrative and public nature of education, and is also a primary locus of the discourse bound up with education (Connelly & Xu, 2007). There is little doubt that the curriculum offers a pivotal tool for developing teaching and learning, and for educational change at different levels of education. The significance of the curriculum becomes evident when one observes the extensive range of curriculum studies within the field of education. Moreover, the field of curriculum studies is undergoing significant growth, and a large number of new perspectives have emerged (Connelly & Xu, 2008; Pinar, 2008). With the aim of widening the understanding of the curriculum, educational theorists have seen a need to understand the curriculum as a social construction. They have argued that there is a need to

reconceptualise the concept of the curriculum and to move towards an understanding of the historical, social and cultural aspects that shape/reshape the construction of the curriculum (Goodson, 2005; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995). The demand for reshaping the understanding of the curriculum has become particularly urgent in institutes of higher education. Barnett and Coate (2005) have argued that in higher education there is actually no explicit understanding of the curriculum; there is thus a danger of being steered towards a narrow understanding of curricula, one that does not do justice to the complexities of the reality faced by students and educators. They suggest that there have nevertheless been tacit notions of the curriculum, and that these notions have emerged from different voices within higher education, exhibiting a variety of concerns. This means that educators require a better understanding of how the curriculum has been shaped by and how it is intertwined with the social and the historical contexts of the universities (Barnett & Coate, 2005).

In examining this need to reconceptualise the curriculum, Pinar et al. (1995) have emphasised the importance of understanding the curriculum as discourse, and of studying the language of the curriculum field in general. In the context of teacher education, Cochran-Smith and Demers (2008) have applied Pinar et al's (1995) idea of treating the curriculum as text, and looked closely at the discourse of the teacher education field in the United States. Their aim has been to provide a new theoretical framework, by reading the curriculum not only as a text but as a political text, and by seeing the teacher education curriculum as a bridge between higher education and the performance of teachers and students in schools. By understanding the curriculum as a text they mean looking closely at the broad range of discourses embodied within texts in teacher education, ranging from informal, unofficial and public debates to books and articles in the scholarly literature. In Cochran-Smith and Demers (2008) examination of the political nature of curriculum discourse the focus is primarily on written texts, seen as embodying particular ideological positions. An alternative – as in the present paper – may be look at how curriculum discourse embodies "talk" within an ever-shifting debate.

In the present study, we locate our work within the *socio-cultural approach*; this means that we understand the negotiation process of the teacher education curriculum as a situated and social practice existing between structural relations and individual actors. The socio-cultural approach (e.g. Rogoff, 2003; Van Oers, 2002; Wertsch, Tulviste & Hagstrom, 1993) describes and analyses human action as mediated by language and other symbol systems within cultural contexts; hence priority is given to the social context and cultural tools that shape the construction of human understanding and human actions. What individuals believe and how they act is seen as shaped by historical, cultural and social conditions that are reflected in mediational tools such as language, literature, art and the media (Wertsch, 1991; Wertsch, del Rio & Alvarez, 1995), or in terms of educational reform such things as policy mandates, curriculum guidelines and standards laid down by the state (Lasky, 2005). In the present study, too, we understand the curriculum as a central mediating practice between teacher educators and social practices, and see the negotiation of the curriculum as an intertwined process between culture, language and individual actors.

In recent years, the socio-cultural approach has been challenged by many researchers. There has been criticism regarding the lack of attention to unequal power relations (Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson & Unwin, 2005); also regarding the risk of seeing only the social aspects and paying insufficient attention to the complex relations between individuals and their relation to communities (Linehan & McCarthy, 2001). Lewis, Enciso and Moje (2007) argue that many strands of socio-cultural theory (e.g. activity theory, situated cognition, communities of practice) do not adequately conceptualise the meaning of language or how subjects are produced through talk and discourses. Hence, it has been suggested that

there is a need to reframe socio-cultural research to give it a more critical bent and to focus on the central role of language, discourse and the individual actor; or as Moje and Lewis (2007) put it; there is a need to develop *critical socio-cultural theory*. Consequently, many researchers have tried to move outwards from socio-cultural theory, turning to post-structural, cultural, feminist and discourse theories to gain an understanding of social, cultural, mental, physical and political aspects of reality (Lewis, Enciso & Moje, 2007).

3. Critical discursive psychology in understanding the curriculum process

In investigating the curriculum as a mediating practice between social context and individual actors, this study utilises discursive psychology to analyse the process by which the curriculum in a teacher education department is negotiated, and to understand the kinds of discursive resources utilised in the negotiation process. Our aim is not to assess the *quality* of any written or realised curriculum; rather it is to see how the curriculum is negotiated in local practices, and to gain a better sense of the discursive resources available for teacher educators in their construction of meaning within the curriculum planning process.

The *discursive approach* emphasises the study of language, talk and texts and how they are used to perform actions. The starting point is that language does not transparently represent the world, or some "reality"; nor does it reflect a pre-existing meaning in the manner of a mirror. Rather, language is seen as a site where meanings are constructed through text and talk in social action (Nikander, 2008; Wetherell, 2007). Thus, language is seen as entering a reciprocal relationship: the descriptions and accounts belonging to language construct the world, and the language itself reflects and is constructed by the surrounding world (Potter, 1996). However, the discursive approach offers a large number of mostly contrasting guidelines for research. Indeed, there are various types of discursive approaches deriving from different methodological principles and involving different conceptions of the role of the researcher and of the relationships between language and social world (De Fina, Schiffrin & Bamberg, 2006; Potter, 2004).

Discursive psychology can be seen as one further manifestation of the general turn to language, culture and discourse found across the social sciences (Wetherell, 2007). The focus has moved away from the individual mind to processes of social and societal action in and through talk (Hepburn & Wiggins, 2005; Potter, 2005). Discursive psychology was first introduced as an alternative to cognitive psychology, placing a new emphasis on the variability, inconsistency and unreliability in people's talk. Such variability became understandable when talk was examined in the contexts of its occurrence and examined functionally and indexically (Edwards, 2005). Thus, this approach aims to make visible the ways in which discourse is central to action (Potter, 2004). It strives to analyse the strategies available to rationalise social practices and to show how patterns of language sustain and recreate social reality. The focus is on the broader patterns of meaning-making that are resources for social actions. A characteristic of this approach is that it operates on more of a macro-level than some other discursive methodologies (Stubbe, Lane, Hilder, Vine, Vine, Marra, Holmes & Weatherall, 2003). In educational research discursive psychology has not yet achieved its full potential, even though it was first articulated some twenty years ago (Roth, 2008).

In recent years discursive psychology has developed in different directions, with two different orientations coming to the fore: one sustained by scholars working within the frame of conversation

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analysis and the other advocated by those working within the framework of *critical discursive psychology* (Wetherell, 2007). Critical discursive psychology pays attention to micro-level details which are supplemented with a macro-level layer of analysis, the focus being on historical, social and political contexts (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). This approach emphasises the meaning of social and cultural resources as sources for individual meaning construction and subject positions. Individual actors are understood to be already positioned within larger social formations but at the same time able, within constraints, to position themselves and negotiate new subject positions (Taylor & Littleton, 2008; Wetherell, 1998; 2005).

In this study we apply critical discursive psychology and understand teacher educators' curriculum talk as emerging in the context of social and cultural resources and discourses. In so doing, we utilise the concept of an *interpretative repertoire* developed by critical discursive psychologists (Wetherell & Potter, 1988; Wetherell & Edley, 1998). According to Potter and Wetherell (1987) interpretative repertoires are "basically a lexicon or register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterise and evaluate actions and events". Hence, interpretative repertoires provide a basis for a shared social understanding and they can be described as the community's common-sense resources that can be utilised in the course of everyday social interaction. Repertoires offer internally coherent ways of talking about and understanding objects and events and making them understandable in a particular community. These understandings create internally coherent ways of making sense of the content of discourse and how that content is organised (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Edley, 2001). This means that when people talk or think they invariably apply terms already provided to them by history. Talk can be original, but it is usually made up of a patchwork of quotations from various interpretative repertoires (Edley, 2001; Reynolds, Wetherell & Taylor, 2007). In our study we are interested in the interpretative repertoires of curriculum development as they are constructed in teacher educators' talk. The repertoires create various images of teacher educators as actors in the community, simultaneously locating them in a particular *subject position*. In critical discursive psychology the concept of subject position implies the existence of different identities; these are made available by discourses that connect dominant cultural storylines to construction of particular selves (Edley, 2001). In this study we do not focus on particular teacher educators' identities as constructed within different discourses; instead we aim to understand the kinds of subject positions that are constructed in general, within different interpretative repertoires.

To sum up our theoretical framework, we aim to contribute to discussions on the development of teacher education by focusing on teacher educators' curriculum talk. As noted above, Cochran-Smith and Demers (2008) highlighted the meaning of discourses in understanding the teacher education curriculum, emphasising the reading of the curriculum as a political *text*. We would agree with the notion of the importance of discourses; however, instead of turning our attention to written texts, our aim here is to focus on teacher educators' *talk* and to the discourses that they utilise themselves when talking about the curriculum. We are interested in how teacher educators talk about the curriculum development process, and in the kinds of discursive resources they utilise while describing the development process of the curriculum reform in the context of the Bologna process. We see that there are socio-culturally constructed ways and possibilities available for teacher educators when talking about the curriculum, and that these ways are concretely and recognisably produced in societal formations – in this case in research interviews. We believe that the discourses used in talking about curriculum development frame those interpretations that have the capacity to direct and construct the implementation of the whole teacher education in its entirety.

4. Aim and research question

We aim to contribute to the understanding and development of teacher education by focusing on teacher educators' discourses concerning curriculum development. In order to gain a better understanding of these discourses we framed this question: *What kinds of interpretative repertoires did teacher educators construct when speaking about curriculum reform?* In this study we illustrate these repertoires, using as analytical tools the notions of (i) function, (ii) context, and (iii) the subject position constructed in the repertoires in question. Furthermore, the study seeks to identify the kinds of *meta-repertoires* that these interpretative repertoires reflect in the context of curriculum reform.

5. Methods

5.1 Research context

The curriculum process under study was connected to reforms implemented as a part of the Bologna process. The Bologna process started in 1998. It was concerned with the harmonisation of European higher education systems, the aim being to create a common European Higher Education Area by 2010. This, it was hoped, could make academic degree standards and quality assurance standards more compatible throughout Europe (Jakku-Sihvonen & Niemi, 2006). In Finland, the Bologna process was seen more as a phase in a joint national analysis of the teacher education curriculum than as a fundamental structural change. National networks and projects planned the new degrees, and also the curriculum. The bodies concerned also offered national guidelines to Finnish universities. However, each university implemented the curriculum reform independently (Jakku-Sihvonen & Niemi, 2006). Thus, the structure of the new curriculum was offered through external regulations, negotiated in both the Bologna context and the national context. Nevertheless, the universities and teacher education departments were expected to conduct independent negotiations covering the following aspects of the curriculum: its main objectives, its local structure (within the limits of the national structure), the model to be utilised, and its implementation.

5.2 Data collection and interviewees

The data for this study were gathered through open-ended interviews with eight teacher educators in a Finnish university-based teacher education department, staffed by approximately 80 teacher educators and 30 other employees. The interviews took place during 2005, when curriculum development was actively in progress. We wanted to have as wide a variety of teacher educators' accounts as possible; hence the teacher educators who were asked to take part in the interviews were selected as key informants representing different categories of age, academic status, subject taught, and length of work history in the department. There was at least one representative from all of the professional groups in the department (assistant, university teacher, lecturer, professor). The individual interviews lasted from approximately one and a half hours to two and a half hours. The overall duration of all the interviews was fourteen hours. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. The interviews were open-ended, and the manner of the interviews was informal and conversational. The main reason for the informal nature of the interviews was the fact that the main author, who carried out

the interviews, knew all interviewees as colleagues – at least to some extent – because she and the other authors of this study had been working in the teacher education department in question.

5.3 Data analysis

In this study we applied critical discursive psychology (Edley, 2001; Wetherell, 1998; 2007). Our focus was not on linguistic issues but rather on language in use, i.e. how the curriculum was described (its meaning and its nature) and how the positions of teacher educators were argued. In order to understand this we analysed the kinds of *interpretative repertoires* that were available for making sense of the curriculum reform and its development, in the teacher education context. As mentioned above, we utilised as analytical tools the concepts of (i) function, (ii) context, and (iii) subject position. The concept of *function* implies that people use language in order to *do* things – there is always a purpose in the talk. Function, however, cannot be understood in a mechanical way, since people do not always use language explicitly. Thus, in order to understand the function of the talk there is always a need to consider the talk within a particular time and space, that is, in its *context* (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). *Subject position* identifies how a particular actor is positioned within a particular interpretative repertoire. It also illustrates the opportunities, constraints, demands and responsibilities for the actor thus positioned (Edley, 2001).

The analysis of the teacher educators' curriculum talk was conducted on a cross-case basis, meaning that patterns in the data were searched for both *within* and *across* interviews. This was because, in critical discursive psychology, the unit of analysis is usually a *discursive practice* – rather than an individual actor, or for example, a biographical narrative (Wetherell, 2007). The cross-case analysis was also carried out for ethical reasons, to ensure the anonymity of the persons interviewed. The interviews were first transcribed verbatim. Because the main objective of this study was to analyse the kinds of interpretative repertoires used by teacher-educators in their talk (and not to arrive at an in-detail construction of talk) more accurate transcription methods were not needed.

Analysis necessitates familiarity with the data and repeated readings of transcripts. Gradually, by reading and re-reading different patterns across people's talk, certain images, metaphors and figures of talk start to emerge (Edley, 2001). In this study, the analysis involved close reading of the transcriptions and consequently all the sections which included curriculum-talk were extracted. Thereafter, the data were thematised. This process was in many respects the same as in other types of qualitative analysis (especially thematic analysis) in which the purpose is to recognise the prevailing patterns of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). From this phase, six preliminary repertoires were identified.

In the next phase, the data extracts were grouped together as representing a number of preliminary repertoires. These were compared using the analytical tools decided upon, i.e. according to (i) function (ii) the context of the preliminary repertoire, and (iii) the subject positions of the teacher educator. The aim here was to examine the boundaries between the various tentative interpretative schemes. In this analytical process the boundaries between two preliminary repertoires were found to be overlapping and these could be reconstituted as a single interpretative repertoire. Thus, in all, five repertoires could be identified as representing differently organised ways of talking about the curriculum development of the teacher education department. After identifying these five repertoires, we still wanted to condense

the findings further and to analyse them in the context of the curriculum reform and of demands for change. For this purpose, the five repertoires were further categorised into two broad *meta-repertoires*.

6. Findings

We first identified five different interpretative repertoires used by teacher educators when talking about the curriculum development process: (i) the *competition* repertoire, (ii) the *practical knowledge* repertoire, (iii) the *collaboration* repertoire, (vi) the *research-based knowledge* repertoire, and (v) the *break with the tradition* repertoire. Thereafter, we arrived at two meta-repertoires derived from the interpretative repertoires: (a) the *accommodation* and (b) the *reform* meta-repertoires. Table 1 summarises the interpretative repertoires and the meta-repertoires in terms of function, context and subject position. The final naming of the repertoires and the meta-repertoires aimed at revealing the particular features of accounts concerning the curriculum and its development. In the following sub-sections we shall illustrate these repertoires, showing how teacher educators talked about the curriculum, and setting out the kinds of subject positions produced within the repertoires. In the data extracts TE is Teacher Educator and I is Interviewer.

6.1. The competition repertoire

The competition repertoire represented the most common way – one could say hegemonic way – of talking about the curriculum development process. This repertoire was identified in all the interviews, occurring several times in most of the interviews. This repertoire describes the curriculum process as a battleground; here we have a struggle in which teacher educators aim to capture as many study credits for their own subject matter as possible, or more broadly, to secure resources (courses, study credits, contact teaching hours) for their subject. Within this repertoire, participants saw curriculum development as a narrow negotiation of resources, rather than as a matter of developing the curriculum as a whole. The planning process of the curriculum was often described as a quarrel, and the interaction between teacher educators was seen as contested. The contested and contentious nature of curriculum development emerged especially with regard to school subject studies.

The competition repertoire occurred many times in every interview, and was the most commonly manifested repertoire in teacher educators' talk about curriculum development. Typically, the educators used it as a natural and self-evident matter, one that did not require explanation or definition. The function of this repertoire was to emphasise the difficult nature of the negotiations, viewed as part of a teacher education department's internal processes. The following extracts illustrate the self-evident and natural occurrence of the competition repertoire:

> TE: In a way, where would we get the strength to keep on discussing these matters? The way I see it, now that the decisions have been made, *there's no longer any need to fight about who gets what*. We could properly consider together how things have gone, and it's to be hoped that we wouldn't blame each other and say 'I told you so,' or say that something doesn't work, or something else. Instead, if something really doesn't work, then let's just state that that's the case and let's decide to do something else.

TE: It's a completely different spirit [*in another department*] and there you have meetings with twenty people and yet they really talk about crucial issues and the things connected with them and […] there they don't speak at all about these quantities *[of resources] and they don't need to fight, fight about who gets most and who is deprived.*

TE: Well I've been following this *[curriculum development]* a bit from the side […]. I mean *I haven't had to get involved in these school subject studies to be more or less fighting over these issues,* and shall we say that I've felt that the discussion that has gone on about these things is totally and utterly necessary […] because I believe that these particular lines are the right ones and I see things through that frame of reference.

This repertoire positioned teacher educators in two different positions. On the one hand, teacher educators were positioned as protectors of their own subject-matter, and as lobbyists whose task and duty was to negotiate resources for their own subject, using different kinds of strategies. It was assumed that they should secure study-credits for their subject or capture even more. The teacher educators were in fact regarded as "possessors" of their own teaching and of those study credits they had previously taught. On the other hand, the willingness to struggle was also seen as the sign of a conscientious teacher, one who was devoted to developing education in his/her own subject and securing the importance of his/her own subject in teacher education. Thus, this repertoire positioned teacher educators not just as combatants but also as professionals, people committed to their teaching mission.

6.2. *The practical knowledge repertoire*

The practical knowledge repertoire portrays one of the central objectives of teacher education as being to teach practical skills to students. The use of this repertoire emphasised the importance of school subject studies in teacher education. It also underlined the need for plenty of contact lessons in teacher education. In this repertoire the relationship between educational sciences and school subject studies was described as problematic. The following extracts illustrate the curriculum process viewed in terms of the practical knowledge repertoire, and show especially how the repertoire is manifested in the relationships between educational sciences and school subject studies.

TE: I've gained the impression that, to put the matter rather harshly, there [*in the curriculum development process*] educational science has now taken over, but actually that's no problem if there is nevertheless enough consideration of school realities. But that's where we find the point that has also to be taken into consideration, the point that as I see it hasn't been dealt with that much in these discussions.

TE: It's clear that relatively speaking the focus *[study credits]* moved from these arts and crafts subjects to these cognitive subjects and yet when matters are based on the notion that content doesn't need to be taught, and on that general theory of learning and these meta-cognitive skills and so on, here, nevertheless, is the nub of the matter. And when in these theoretical subjects you could say that the studying is actually more or less the same irrespective of the content, and taking into account the entire body of skills in arts and crafts subjects in which there is a different way of studying [*from the cognitive way of studying*], then to some extent the logic of the basic

idea breaks down. […] Fortunately, though, the student has the opportunity to take these minor subjects. It's when we go below a particular limit [in a given subject] then what comes to mind is whether in school subject studies we can still concretise core matters related to the teaching and learning of each subject matter in such a way that it would be any use when the students go into the school.

The practical knowledge repertoire emerged as a critique of the curriculum reform, and especially of the plans for the integration of school subject studies within the change process. There was a concern that the curriculum development, and the way in which school subject studies would be integrated within it, would reduce the number of face-to-face teaching lessons. This, it was thought, could threaten the quality of teacher education as a whole. Consequently, the significance of minor studies was underlined, as a means of securing the quality and satisfactory amount of contact teaching of subject studies in teacher education. The practical knowledge repertoire positioned teacher educators as subject teachers, persons whose duty was to teach the skills and knowledge needed by teacher students.

6.3. The collaboration repertoire

Thirdly, an interpretative repertoire was identified in which curriculum development was discussed as an interdisciplinary enterprise implemented by teacher educators working along with teachers from the teacher training school plus academic teachers from other departments. This repertoire was named as the collaboration repertoire. It described collaboration as a central aspect of curriculum development. The objective of the ongoing curriculum development process was seen as improving possibilities for collaborative teacher education, both at the planning and the implementation stage. This repertoire emerged when teacher educators described their work with partners (working in the teacher training school and in academic departments) but especially when educators talked about their hopes for the future. Collaboration was seen as rare, as far as the recent implementation of teacher education within the teacher education department was concerned. However, there were high hopes for better collaboration in the future. The following extract illustrates the collaboration repertoire.

> TE: I had this extremely positive experience when we launched this three-way collaboration in [our subject] and really it's more or less completely unofficial. We don't have any formal background in this and the way we all experience it is that when we're leaving the meeting, we are more convinced than we were, and feel that the next time, everyone will come who can, from all the departments […] So in my opinion it's really great, what we have with these three participants. And then these other things that there have been as well. Last spring regarding [Faculty x] and the rest, well I've found a tremendous amount that is positive in this milieu from the point of view of teacher education. I mean there are extremely good possibilities to start collaborating. The thing in this is that now we just need to push what we want more strongly, pull some strings, so that we truly make use of this great opportunity that we actually have to collaborate with each other.

This repertoire underlined the need to restrict the individual autonomy of teacher educators in order to support collaboration among educators. However, this was described as difficult to implement. It is worth noting that the main function of this repertoire was to emphasise the need for collaboration among teacher educators *within* the department. This includes collaboration between different subject teachers, and between subject teachers and teachers of educational sciences. Overall, this repertoire

positioned teacher educators as bridge builders between various groups and participants inside the department and between the partners working in the teacher training school and in academic departments.

6.4. The research-based knowledge repertoire

This repertoire represents accounts in which teacher education was described using traditional academic discourse. The main objective of teacher education was seen as producing new knowledge and conducting research-based teacher education. In addition, the objective of the curriculum was portrayed as developing the teacher education department towards an academic research community, with an emphasis on building stronger links between theory and practice. The research-based knowledge repertoire underlined the scientific and academic nature of teacher education. This was seen as a prerequisite for promoting competencies that would allow teachers to face the diverse reality of schooling, and to solve the diverse problems that teacher students will face in their professional career. The following extract illustrates the research-based knowledge repertoire:

> TE: What in fact gives this university its own special characteristic and makes teacher education what in my opinion it ought to be, I mean this kind of maker of teachers who are educated for scientific thinking and actions based on research [...] The way I see it is that perhaps in a way nowadays theory and practice are partly separate – that's according to research, and I would say the same thing. I'd like to be the one who in some sense would build a bridge between the two.
> […]
> I: And you see your own role as precisely this kind of intermediary acting at these interfaces?
> TE: Yes, yes. So that in a way in my teaching I bear in mind that I must open up to students a research-based, scientific point of view for looking at what the school really is when you go there, and also these situations so that when they go into the school they see the kinds of resources the scientific community provides for facing new situations, the kind there's no formula for.

The function of this repertoire was to represent teacher education as a research-based and academic enterprise. The subject position was that of the teacher educator as researcher. However, the context in which this repertoire mostly appeared was in descriptions of what teacher education *should* be, rather than of teacher education at the present time.

6.5. The break with tradition repertoire

This repertoire represented a highly critical way of talking about the current implementation of teacher education. Teacher education (as currently practised) was criticised as fostering an outdated "teacher training college spirit" linked to traditional teacher education. The traditional way of doing things was seen as a behaviourist enterprise in which the emphasis was on content knowledge, skills and teaching techniques. This repertoire was also critical in defining the recent subject position of teacher educators. Teacher educators were regarded as traditional face-to-face teachers aiming to secure their role as individual possessors of knowledge. In the following extract a teacher educator draws on the critical transmission of knowledge repertoire:

TE: And then of course going into this curriculum reform, it breaks down that tradition and perhaps in some sense in this community, that's so overshadowed by its history of having a seminar [*teacher training college*] culture, if anyone dares to break down tradition then he's someone who is destroying some cherished national myth, or people see it as a matter of 'this old way should be preserved because it's the Finnish way.

I: Mm. Do you feel that we are still stuck within this old community?

TE: In my opinion there's a segment that wants to hold onto it […]. So that if we don't get any change in the school any quicker than this, the school won't move anywhere [...] this process which we have here has certainly given me quite a lot of understanding of why at the school the curriculum reforms are felt to be so awful – because in some sense we've been brought up on this culture of preservation.

This critique of the way teacher education was conducted had the aim of reforming the curriculum of teacher education. The function of the break with tradition repertoire was to justify demands for radical curriculum reform. The development of the curriculum was seen as something fundamental. As a repertoire it drew on a critique of those discourses which resisted curriculum reform. In addition, this repertoire was utilised when the interviewee was criticising teacher education as kind of a quasi-scientific enterprise.

6.6. *Two meta-repertoires*

We were able to identify certain shared aspects in the repertoires described above. These concerned the nature of and the need for curriculum reform. Some repertoires shared the conception that curriculum development should be regarded as a matter of accommodation to social demands. Other repertoires shared the notion of a need for reform in the teacher education curriculum. We could categorise these different (and partly contrasting) repertoires as forming two competing and over-arching meta-repertoires. By meta-repertoire we mean a superordinate category which includes various specific interpretative repertoires. These two meta-repertoires were named as (1) the *accommodation* meta-repertoire and (2) the *reform* meta-repertoire.

The competition repertoire (see 6.1) and the practical knowledge repertoire (see 6.2) were categorised within the *accommodation* meta-repertoire. The common characteristic of the accommodation meta-repertoire was the notion that teacher education had to respond to societal changes, and that the curriculum of teacher education must be developed in line with curriculum development in the schools. Following this line of thinking, the Bologna process was described as an external regulation which required teacher educators to make local adjustments and to adopt ideas that had been produced by external actors.

The *reform* meta-repertoire included the collaboration repertoire (see 6.3), the research-based knowledge repertoire (see 6.4), and the break with tradition repertoire (see 6.5). The common characteristic of the reform meta–repertoire were that teacher education was regarded as playing an important role in the development of schools and society as a whole. The objective of the teacher education curriculum was described as supporting societal development and social innovation. The Bologna process was explained as an important and welcome opportunity for local curriculum reform. Table 1 provides a summary of the five repertoires identified, together with the two meta-repertoires.

Table 1. Interpretative repertoires and meta-repertoires involved in teacher educators' accounts of the curriculum, in terms of function, context and subject position

Analytical tools	Interpretative repertoires				
	The accommodation meta-repertoire		The reform meta-repertoire		
	Competition	*Practical knowledge*	*Collaboration*	*Research-based knowledge*	*Break with tradition*
Function of the talk	To emphasise the demanding nature of curriculum development, seen as an internal process within the department	To provide a critique of development plans involved in the curriculum reform	To increase collaboration between teacher educators – especially between educators within the department	To emphasise teacher education as an academic enterprise	To justify the demand for radical curriculum reform
Context of the talk	The repertoire occurred many times in each interview, as a self-evident and natural matter.	The repertoire was drawn on within a critique of plans to integrate studies – especially the teaching of school subject studies.	(i) Occurred when describing work with other partners (e.g. within the subject departments, or with Normal School staff) (ii) Occurred when talking about future expectations	Appeared especially in talk of what teacher education *should* be in the years to come	Occurred as a critique, aimed *against* resistance to curriculum development plans
Subject position of teacher educator	(i) Defender of and lobbyist for one's own subject matter (ii) Conscientious teacher	Subject teacher	Bridge-builder	Teacher educator as researcher	Preserver of the old "seminar-spirit" tradition

7. Conclusions

In this study our aim was to analyse teacher educators' curriculum discourses through the lenses of critical discursive psychology. We understood the curriculum process as a major mediating practice between teacher educators and the social context of teacher education. Thus we saw curriculum discourses as framing those interpretations that direct and construct the implementation of teacher education as a whole. The data for this study were gathered through open-ended interviews in one teacher education department at a time when curriculum development was actively in progress, and

when teacher educators were struggling to translate curriculum ideas into practical and pragmatic formats. Despite the limitations of methodology and scale of the data, we would argue that the findings nevertheless reflect some important general issues in the field of teacher education. Our findings demonstrated the contested and contradictory nature of the discourses that teacher educators utilised in talking about the curriculum development process. In describing the five interpretative repertoires, we have attempted to make visible those tacit notions, multiple perspectives and tensions that shape and influence the process of curriculum development in the local settings of one teacher education department (see Barnett & Coate, 2005). Critical discursive psychology was found to offer a valuable methodological approach for analysing the cultural resources that shape social reality within curriculum development, and thus the ways in which teacher education is conducted in its entirety.

In this study the competition repertoire emerged as a hegemonic repertoire in teacher educators' talk. This underlines the importance of the local negotiation process in curriculum development. The demands for curriculum development came from external authorities, including the body responsible for the Bologna Declaration, the Finnish Ministry of Education, national working groups and the administration of the university. The external guidelines framed the local negotiation process, but at the same time challenged prevailing power relations and the resources allotted to training in different school subjects. Thus, the negotiation of the curriculum demanded re-negotiation between different subjects and the assertion of the status of one's own subject. In this pattern one can see a danger that the need to defend one's own subject could hinder the development and implementation of the curriculum, and hence adversely affect the quality of teacher education.

In the context of the Bologna process and its demands for curriculum development, it is interesting that when teacher educators talked about the ongoing curriculum process, they mostly drew their support from the *accommodation meta-repertoire*. The use of this pattern to talk about the curriculum process may be an indicator of the slowness of change in teacher education and of the opposition to radical reforms (cf. Korthagen, Loughran & Russell, 2006). This meta-repertoire also raises the possibility that curriculum development will take the form of "window-dressing", meaning that although the written curriculum may be changed, the lived and realised curriculum will continue to be implemented as before. Nevertheless, when the teacher educators described their future expectations and hopes concerning teacher education, the prevailing pattern was drawn from the *reform meta-repertoire*. This finding suggests that there exists a readiness for fundamental reforms in teacher education. One critical concern is how to achieve a balance between external demands for change and the teacher educators' own (contrasting) perceptions of the essential principles that should underlie the curriculum and the implementation of teacher education as a whole.

Cochran-Smith and Demers (2008) have characterised issues pertaining to the teacher education curriculum as complex, messy and filled with intractable controversies. Their point is that "controversies about the teacher education curriculum are always about what knowledge is worthwhile and what purposes schooling should serve" (Cochran-Smith and Demers, 2008, p. 277). With this argument they underline the significance of power issues in establishing the teacher education curriculum. Our study has further demonstrated the multi-voiced, tensioned and complex process in which curriculum reform is negotiated in the context of one Finnish teacher education department. Thus, wrapped up in the complexity and messiness of teacher education curriculum discourses, considered as texts, there are controversies embodied in teacher educators' talk concerning the objective(s), meaning(s) and implementation of the teacher education curriculum. As a general conclusion, we would suggest that in order to conduct real reforms in teacher education, it will be

necessary to achieve a deeper understanding of the contrasting discourses that frame interpretations of the ways in which teacher education should be conducted. Moreover, since teacher educators are the key persons in developing teacher education, it is fundamental that they themselves should become aware of the contrasting repertoires that shape their discourses concerning the curriculum – and thus, potentially, the entire process and conduct of teacher education. Nevertheless, the big question remains: how are power issues entwined with the purpose, content and implementation of teacher education curriculum? This means that in future research, there should be a much stronger and more detailed focus on issues of power, in order for educators to widen their understanding of the teacher education curriculum, its implementation, and its development.

Transcription Notation

[…]   Material omitted by the authors
[text]   Material changed by the authors for the sake of anonymity
[text]   Material added by the authors for the sake of clarity

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IV

THE PROFESSIONAL AGENCY OF TEACHER EDUCATORS
AMID ACADEMIC DISCOURSES

by

Päivi Hökkä, Anneli Eteläpelto & Helena Rasku-Puttonen 2012

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The professional agency of teacher educators amid academic discourses

Päivi Hökkä*,
Department of Education
University of Jyväskylä
P.O. Box 35
FIN-40014, Finland
E-mail paivi.hokka@jyu.fi
Tel.: +358 14 260 1685

Anneli Eteläpelto
Department of Education
University of Jyväskylä
P.O. Box 35
FIN-40014, Finland
E-mail anneli.etelapelto@jyu.fi
Tel.: +358 14 260 1669

Helena Rasku-Puttonen
Department of Teacher Education
University of Jyväskylä
P.O. Box 35
FIN-40014, Finland
E-mail helena.rasku-puttonen@jyu.fi
Tel.: +358 14 260 1812

* Corresponding author

Agency has been seen as fundamental in the renegotiation of professional identities. However, it is unclear how teacher educators exercise their professional agency in their work, and how multiple discourses frame and restrict the practice of their professional agency. This study examines how teacher educators practise agency in negotiating their professional identities amid the multiple discourses emerging from the academic context of their work. Our aim was to investigate educators' locally expressed professional agency in the context of the more global discourses that may construct teacher educator identities. In our analysis we applied thematic discursive analysis to address patterns of talk relating to teacher educators' manifestations of agency within their work as teachers and researchers. We found that professional agency was strong in the construction of their teacher-identity. By contrast, the construction of their researcher-identity was subjugated, complex, and characterized by a lack of resources. Furthermore, teaching and researching were mainly described as two separate functions. We discuss what these findings imply for the renegotiation of teacher educators' professional identities and for the development of teacher education in an academic institution.

Introduction: From teacher-identity to researcher-identity

In recent years, discourses concerning teacher education have multiplied in both public and academic domains (Korthagen, Loughran & Lunenberg 2005; Murray 2008). The resulting discursive transformations have caused tensions in the work of teacher educators, who are increasingly required to redefine their professional identity, moving away from the traditional identity of "me as teacher" towards that of "me as researcher" (Cochran-Smith 2005; Murray 2007). As researchers they are expected to be involved with ongoing systematic enquiry as a key element in their work. In parallel with demands for more research, teacher educators are also required to develop their own practices and teaching in a systematic way (Helleve 2010; Margolin 2007; Smith 2003). The demands imposed on teacher educators can be seen as partly conflicting, and as creating tensions in teacher education and in the work of teacher educators. The demands have varied over different times and in different national contexts; what is clear, however, is that the role of teacher educators as researchers is increasingly being emphasized, and that this is happening in many countries (e.g. Arreman 2005; Cochran-Smith 2005; Livingston, McCall & Morgado 2009; Murray et al. 2009; Robinson & McMillan 2006).

The demands made on teacher educators, and especially the requirement to become a researcher and an academic scholar, have raised the issue of how teacher educators can widen their competencies and renegotiate their professional identities in their local workplace settings. Professional identity can be understood as negotiated in a mutually constitutive relationship between the individual actor and the social context (Lasky 2005; Sfard & Prusak 2005). This negotiation is a dynamic process, one that intertwines external suggestions coming from the social context with individuals' internal expectations as they seek to make sense of themselves and their work (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop 2004; Cohen 2009). Thus, professional identities are seen as constructed by participation in the practices and discourses of work organizations. Within this process, organizational norms and instructions may be appropriated, adopted, ignored, or resisted (Wells 2007).

Recent studies have underlined the meaning of professional agency in professional identity negotiations (Billett 2006b; Fenwick 2006). These negotiations emphasize the interdependence between professional identity and perceived agency. Practising agency is seen as important, on the grounds that individual agency is fundamental in the renegotiation of professional identities, within the dynamic practices and discourses of present-day workplace settings (Billett & Smith 2006; Eteläpelto 2008; Watson 2008; Ybema et al. 2009).

For more than thirty years now – longer than in any other country – the Finnish teacher training system has had an academic orientation. This has been the case since 1974, when the education of primary and secondary school teachers was transferred as in its entirety to the universities. The teacher training has a strong research emphasis, and it aims to educate autonomous and reflective teachers who will be capable of taking a research-oriented attitude towards their work. Hence, teachers are expected to take an analytical approach to their work, to draw conclusions based on their experiences, and to develop their teaching and learning environments in a systematic way (Krokfors et al. 2006; Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2006). This means that Finland offers an interesting context in which to examine teacher educators' various professional roles and identities.

The academically-based teacher education found in Finland – and increasingly elsewhere – imposes high standards on teacher educators. They are considered to be academic professionals who are responsible for conducting academic research themselves, keeping up active societal relations, and providing research-based teacher education. Their duties include the supervision of masters-level theses. Thus, for example, to be appointed as a senior lecturer in a teacher education department one must have a Doctoral degree and a high level of pedagogical competence. This means that in the Finnish system, teacher educators are mostly recruited from the field of higher education, and that only a few of them are qualified as school teachers. In this sense the Finnish system differs considerably from, for example, the English system, where nearly all teacher educators are qualified in the school or college sectors (e.g. Murray 2008).

Because teachers in Finland are educated at university level, changes in the academic context have a direct influence on teacher education. In recent times, discussions on the university sector have emphasized the turbulent nature of present-day academic work and the erosion of academic professionalism (e.g. Murray 2008). It is true that teacher educators in Finland are still relatively autonomous, and that they remain strongly committed to their work and work organization (Vähäsantanen, Hökkä, Eteläpelto, Rasku-Puttonen & Littleton 2008). However, we do not know how teacher educators exercise their professional agency in their fairly autonomous workplace context, or how the multiple discourses that are present frame and restrict the practice of their professional agency. Challenged by this, we recognized a need to examine how teacher educators practise agency in negotiating their professional identities amid the academic discourses that are present in their local work contexts. We shall look at the intertwining of the professional agency of teacher educators with the social context, considering the accounts given by educators, and the ways in which these accounts represent collective resources for agentic actions. We are interested in how teacher educators exercise professional agency in negotiating their *teacher*- and *researcher*-identities, and how professional agency is manifested in their local work contexts at individual level, at work-community level, and at organizational levels. In what follows, we shall outline our theoretical starting points, give a brief general review of the concept of agency, and in particular, introduce our understanding of what teacher educators' professional agency actually consists of.

Teacher educators' professional agency and the social context of teacher education

This study is based on a socio-cultural approach, and it seeks to conceptualize the interplay between individual actors and the social context. Within this approach the emphasis is on cultural aspects of human development, and the main concern is with the social context and the cultural tools that shape the development of human understanding and ways of acting (Vygotsky 1962). Human understanding and acting are perceived as always being shaped by cultural, historical, and social structures (Lasky 2005; Wertsch 1991). Individual actions are thus always

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afforded and constrained by the social context, and influenced by mediational phenomena, including language (Wertsch, Tulviste & Hagstrom 1993). With regard to agency, such an approach assumes that agency is not automatically attributed to isolated individuals; rather it is often socially distributed or shared. Overall, taking a socio-cultural view, agency is seen as the capacity to change a context, with people acting in such a way as to affect their immediate settings through resources that are culturally, socially, and historically developed (Lasky 2005).

Most recent examinations of agency share the aim of understanding how individual agency and social context are intertwined and mutually constitutive (Billett, Harteis & Eteläpelto 2008). However, they offer different ideas concerning this relationship, and differing emphases on how individuals embedded within particular contexts are to be conceptualized and theorized. One trend in recent discussions of agency has been criticism of the prevalent socio-cultural framework, on the grounds that it neglects the active role of individual subjects (e.g. Billett 2006b; Eteläpelto 2008) and pays insufficient attention to power relations (e.g. Lewis, Enciso & Moje 2007). Thus, scholars have perceived a need to reframe socio-cultural theory, taking a more critical perspective, and addressing in particular the intertwined nature of identity, agency, and power. With this in mind, many scholars have been drawn to post-structural and discourse theories, seeing these as enabling a broader understanding of the social, cultural, and political aspects of reality, and of how these shape/are shaped by individuals within particular cultural contexts (Lewis et al. 2007).

Broadly speaking, it can be said that the discursive approach emphasizes the ways in which language, talk, and texts are used to perform actions. The discursive approach aims to make visible the ways in which discourses are central to action, and the ways in which they are used to constitute identities (Edley & Wetherell 1997; Potter & Wetherell 1994). However, the discursive approach offers a large number of partially contrasting guidelines for understanding agency. In the field of discursive psychology it has been commonplace to distinguish between a

theoretical approach influenced by conversation analysis and a more global form of analysis derived from post-structuralism (Wetherell & Edley 1999).

Critical discursive psychology offers a "synthetic approach" (Wetherell 1998) and strives to combine these two frameworks. In this approach people's talk is seen as reflecting not only the local meanings of a particular context but also broader and more global patterns of collective sense-making and understanding (Hökkä, Eteläpelto & Rasku-Puttonen 2010; Wetherell & Edley 1999). Individual actors are understood as embedded in relationally constructed flows of practices, partly subjected to discursive resources, but continuously utilizing and renegotiating these resources (Taylor & Littleton 2008; Wetherell 1998; 2005). The emphasis is on social and cultural resources as sources for individual meaning-construction, with individual agency and social practices seen as intertwined. The aim in this regard is to understand the ways in which agency and social structure become practical issues for people engaged in their local communities. Thus, agency is seen as a discursive resource rather than as a state or essence. The interest then is in investigating when people invoke agency, and when they invoke external determinants (Wetherell 2005).

To sum up our own position, we understand agency as socially shared, culturally, historically, and socially shaped, and provided through mediational means (Lasky 2005; Wertsch, Tulviste & Hagstrom 1993). Within the socio-cultural perspective we have applied a discursive approach, seeing teacher educators' agency as constrained and constructed within different discourses and socially, culturally, and historically mediated local practices (Wetherell 2005). In the midst of these culturally-mediated social contexts and practices, the educators themselves are seen as utilizing different discourses as resources for their professional identity negotiation. Thus, agency is not regarded as an individual capability or set of autonomous actions, but rather as a process of identity negotiation, in iterative relationships with the context (Biesta & Tedder 2007; Lawy & Tedder 2009). In these relationships and negotiating processes we emphasize the importance of language, seeing it as entering into a reciprocal association: the accounts constituted in language construct the world, and the language itself reflects and is

constructed by the world (Potter 1996). We understand language as a pre-eminent tool mediating between individual actors and the social context, and we see language and culture as tightly interwoven (Ahearn 2001; Lewis et al. 2007).

In accordance with this, we see the educators' professional agency as referring to the capacity to meaningfully construct and display their professional identity within socially defined contexts, in other words their *capacity to negotiate and renegotiate professional identities* within their local work practices. In addition, we see agency as referring to the idea of the "active" agent – the individual who is able to act on and influence the social context. Hence, we understand agency also as the *teacher educators' capacity to act* in socio-culturally mediated contexts (Ahearn 2001). This acting involves the capacity to do things in respect of the individual's own intentions – but still within the operative social and contextual constraints. Hence, with a view to gaining a perspective on the recent challenges posed to teacher education and teacher educators, this study seeks to achieve a better understanding of the complexity of the interplay between teacher educators' professional agency and the social context, with its resources and obstacles.

Aim and research questions

In this study we aim to examine teacher educators' locally expressed agency in the context of the more global and socially shared discourses that may construct teacher educator identities. Our focus is on investigating teacher educators' professional agency in terms of their identity negotiations as teachers and researchers. Our particular study questions were framed as follows: (i) *How do teacher educators exercise agency in terms of their teacher- and researcher-identity at individual, work-community, and organizational levels?* (ii) *What kind of relationships exist between teacher- and researcher-identities in the manifestation of agency?*

Methods

Data collection and interviewees

The study reported here was conducted in one teacher education department in a large multidisciplinary Finnish university. The department in question has the longest history of teacher education in the country, and has an excellent reputation. It is staffed by approximately 80 teacher educators and 30 other employees, and thus it is one of the largest teacher education departments in Finland. One particular feature of this study is the role of the first author; she has had roles both as a practitioner and as a researcher, having worked at the teacher education department in question as a Departmental Coordinator (from 2000 to 2006).

The main data for this research were collected by the first author, through open-ended interviews with eight teacher educators in 2005. The research data were supplemented by means of a research diary that she kept while working in the department. The interviews followed an open-ended format, the aim being to keep them as open and as flexible as possible in registering the participants' perceptions and accounts. Nevertheless, the data-gathering did make use of an interview guide, i.e. a method previously used as one means of conducting open-ended interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009; Patton 2002). An interview guide is a script that lists the questions that are to be talked through in the course of an interview, in a more or less regular format. It thus provides topics within which the interviewer is free to ask questions that will illuminate the topic under study. Hence, the interviewer is free to build a conversation, but at the same time will maintain the focus on a particular, predetermined research topic (Hoffmann 2007; Patton 2002).

In the interviews, the teacher educators' agency was approached in a "three-dimensional" way to include influences from the past, engagement with the present, and orientations towards the future (Emirbayer & Mische 1998). The interview guide included four main themes: (i) reasons for becoming a teacher educator, (ii) teacher educators' experiences of working in the department, (iii) possibilities for developing as a teacher educator, and (iv) future expectations concerning work. Within these four overarching themes there were several questions that were intended to open up the conversation and guide the interview, if the conversation was slipping into issues that were outside the focus of the

research. As Rapley (2007) points out, interviewing is never "just conversation," even though it may take a conversational form, since the interviewer must have some level of control.

In this study the aim was to collect a rich, multifaceted, and representative data-set encompassing as wide a variety of teacher educators' accounts as possible; hence the main author formulated in advance profiles of different kinds of teacher educators that should be included as interviewees. This kind of *purposive sampling* aims to utilize the best informants on the phenomena under study (Denzin & Lincoln 2000; Silverman 2005). According to Johnson (2002), in interview studies the best informants are those who have been thoroughly enculturated in the setting or community, have recent membership participation, have some provisional interest in assisting the interviewer, and who have adequate time and resources to take part in the interviews. In this study the focus was on having representatives of different categories of age, sex, academic status, subject taught, and length of work history in the department. Because of the first author's experience of the department and familiarity with the personnel, she was able to choose certain teacher educators as key informants in terms of representing these different categories.

In selecting the participants it was assumed that the accounts constructed in the interviews and the language used would reflect also the knowledge and perceptions of the other teacher educators in the department, and thus that it would adequately represent different discourses within the work organization. Since we were interested in socially shared and communal meanings, we assumed that these shared meanings could be found among the range of informants interviewed in the study. Although the actual number of informants was relatively small, they gave rise to a multiple and rich data set (as transcribed, 187 pages, A4, single spaced), and to patterns indicating knowledge shared also by other members of the community. Note that in discursive approaches it is not unusual for the patterns revealed in interviews to be taken as indicating knowledge shared by other members of the culture under study (Taylor 2001). All in all, the teacher educators who were asked to take part in the interviews were selected as key informants representing different

categories of age, sex, academic status, subject taught, and length of work history in the department. There was at least one representative from all of the professional groups in the department: assistants, university teachers, lecturers, professors. More precise information cannot be given, for reasons of confidentiality.

The manner of the interviews was mostly informal and conversational, since the interviewer and interviewees were equally familiar with the culture of the department and its local discourses. Indeed, one could say that the interviews were more like conversations between two colleagues than research interviews in their traditional form. However, adherence to the interview guide was a way to maintain a high degree of control over the course of the interviews (Patton 2002; Rapley 2007). The interviews also included a drawing task in which the participants were asked to draw a diagram of every significant workgroup they belonged to, both at the departmental (i.e. teacher education department) and the organizational (i.e. university) level. These drawings were discussed at the interviews and the discussions were tape-recorded. The individual interviews lasted from about one and a half hours to two and a half hours, and the overall duration of the interviews was fourteen hours in total. The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Ethical issues had to be considered throughout the research process, from the first preliminary formulation of the study task to the final report (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009; Taylor 2001). In this study ethical issues had direct effects on the decisions concerning methodological choices, since the anonymity of the organization under study could not be sustained and the interviewees were known to the researchers, at least to some extent. In order to secure the anonymity of the participants, the data were analysed on a cross-case basis. This means that the analysis focused on collective and shared meanings across the whole data corpus, and not, for example on individual narratives. Furthermore, the use of discursive methods can be seen as one further means of protecting the anonymity of the informants. The discursive approach offered an ethically sound way to analyse the data, in the sense that the interviews could be approached "only" as a text and not as expressions of participants' experiences and perceptions.

The main interview data were supplemented through a research diary compiled by the main author between May 2002 and June 2006. During this period she wrote up her own observations, experiences, and ideas about being a member of teacher education department and working there. The overall length of the research diary material was 28 pages (A4, single spaced). The research diary was used as complementary material. It offered an important mirror by which the first author could critically reflect on and analyse her experiences of the department under study. These issues are examined in more detail in the Discussion section.

Data analysis

In the data analysis we adopted a qualitative approach, applying thematic discursive analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006; Potter & Wetherell 1987). We addressed socially shared patterns of talk related to teacher educators' manifestation of agency in their work as teachers and researchers. Thus, the analysis was conducted on a cross-case basis, meaning that patterns were searched for and analysed both *within* and *across* individual interviews, rather than regarded as the expression of individual identity. In order to analyse the educators' accounts in detail and at a practical level, we considered two different aspects within the analysing process. Note that in analysing discursive data, such different elements are not "stages": the analytical process is not so much sequential as iterative – although systematic in the sense that it involves careful sorting to ensure that all the research material is considered (Taylor & Littleton 2006).

As a first task, after reading and re-reading the whole data set, the transcriptions were thematized according to the educators' teacher- and researcher-talk at different levels of local practices. As different levels we considered the *individual* level, the *work community* level (subject-matter groups), the *departmental* level, and the *organizational* level (the university). The aim here was to understand how agency is manifested within the social context of practical and local communities. After that, the thematized accounts were coded according to the educators' explicit expressions concerning (i) the exercise of agency, and (ii) the obstacles that

subjugated their professional identity negotiation and work. Within this process, we counted the instances of each theme that we identified as occurring in the data; this was done to ensure systematic and careful sorting, and to guarantee that all the research material was considered. This process was not linear, but iterative, and that it involved continually moving back and forward within the entire data set. Through the coding process we were able to identify the prevailing patterns when the interviewees described their work as educators.

As the second task in the data analysis we compared the various agency accounts (as noted during the first task), focusing on the most prominent tensions and conflicting patterns of talk. At this point we paid particular attention to the educators' individual accounts within the unique context of their talk. We elaborated when they invoked agency, and when they invoked external determinants in referring to different levels of their practices. However, rather than focusing on individual variations in identity negotiations and agency, we paid particular attention to collectively shared elements, i.e. to aspects that could be taken as commonalities of the educators' talk. In so doing, we sought to explore especially the social resources available to the educators in their identity negotiations. Thus, the data extracts presented here will be illustrative of relevant social resources and obstacles, rather than a presentation of all the data analysed.

Findings

Our findings show teacher educators manifested a strong sense of agency when describing their work as teachers. This implies that being an active agent requires negotiation of one's own position in the work community, primarily as a teacher. However, in contrast to the teacher-identity, the negotiation of researcher-identity emerged as subjugated and conflicting. In fact, the prevailing pattern in talking about working as a researcher reflected a lack of agency, with only minor resources for research at every level of practice.

As a second task we addressed the most prominent tensions concerning agency as manifested in teacher- and researcher-talk. In the sections below, we focus on the

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contradictory relationship between teacher- and researcher-talk, and compare how teacher educators manifest their agency in these two types of discourse. In discursive studies it is imperative to anchor analytical observations firmly to the data in order to let readers evaluate the data on which the analysis is based (Nikander 2008; Potter & Edwards 2001). Thus, the following findings will be supplemented with authentic data extracts representing the predominant patterns in teacher educators' accounts of their work. The extracts below exhibit these patterns, illustrating the exercise of agency at different local levels (individual, work community, departmental, and organizational levels). They also demonstrate the obstacles and resources affecting the practice of agency. At the end of this section there is a summary of the main findings.

The agency of teacher educators as exercised in teacher-talk

The prevailing pattern of talk concerning *individual-level teaching* reflected total ownership and more or less unrestricted possibilities for agentic practices. In the following extract, one teacher educator describes his individual-level teaching, and his possibilities for agentic actions at this level.

Extract 1
I can have enormous influence over my own work. It's just as if everyone can look after their own job and you can do whatever you like. For example with [name] we started to teach [subject] together, and we just needed to book adjoining rooms and reserve the same time for teaching. Then we got the students into one of the rooms and started teaching together. So it went really easily because we didn't need to get permission from anybody…And after that we could work away totally freely (Teacher educator 1).

Here the educator explains the possibilities to affect his own work, which he sees as explicitly connected to his individual-level teaching. After saying that "everyone can look after their own job and you can do whatever you like" he draws support for that claim from his possibilities to work with his teaching groups in precisely the way he wants. Here he is constructing a picture of a totally autonomous actor, someone who is capable of conducting his teaching mission by his own means. When he describes a teaching project with another educator, he says that they needed to ask permission from the leaders of the department at the

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time. The permission was needed because projects usually produce extra costs, and a requirement for departmental funding. However, the request for permission is described as a routine action: "We didn't need to get permission from anybody… and after that we could work away totally freely." Thus, the working context is described as offering opportunities for practising agency at the individual level of teaching. This implies that the educator has sufficient resources for his teacher-identity construction, and that there is a balance between the social demands of "teacher-educator-as-teacher" and his own professional identity as a teacher educator.

The prevailing patterns for talking about practices at *work community level* in teaching were closely connected with working in subject-matter groups. Such groups were described as resources for identifying with and committing oneself to a certain community. Subject groups were described as contexts where educators can compare, discuss, and plan their work as teachers, and also where they can learn and develop their teaching practices.

Extract 2
My own subject group is the only place in which at this moment and in recent years it's been possible to discuss matters in real depth and detail, looking at an issue fully, applying the whole of one's knowledge, examining one's own work and work community. All these things on a general level – although I've been actually present in a work group as well, it's been a completely different kind of thing. I've had to take on more of the role of an auditor with the right to attend but not participate (Teacher educator 3).

In this extract the teacher educator underlines the importance of the in-detail and in-depth processing of issues related to core work. She sees this as possible in subject-matter groups. She uses emphatic words and phrases such as "the only place in which […] it's been possible to discuss matters in real depth and detail" to emphasize the importance of the subject group as a resource for identity construction as a professional teacher. She also compares subject groups with other working groups in the department. Her own subject group is here defined as a context where the speaker has her own voice and the possibility to be recognized as an active participant and actor; by contrast, other working groups in the

department are described as contexts where participation is limited, and where her own voice is subjugated.

When participants described their working practices (as teachers) at the *departmental level,* the most common pattern concerned categorization and cliques. This usually meant being labelled according to one's subject. It was often described as leading to distinct camps within the department. This implies that at the departmental level, professional identity construction is subjugated: educators are seen mainly as representatives of their own subject group, and as having the voice of the subject teacher. The prevailing pattern of talking about departmental work reflected a kind of externally defined "frozen" identity. In addition, the educators commonly indicated that at departmental level they could not safely share all their expertise and knowledge with their colleagues.

Extract 3
Well maybe what's bothered me pretty much the most during the time I've been here is that people really put each other into particular categories and you can't get rid of these conceptions. And it inevitably leads to these kinds of camps being formed and inevitably creates these kinds of boundary-fences as regards people's ideas. And then it has an effect on one's whole existence as a person, the idea that you are classified into some particular category and that you can't think of anything else and can't do anything else. And you can never get rid of these conceptions, that kind of thing really bothers me a lot (Teacher educator 6).

The extract above contains accounts of working in the departmental context. The issue that emerges strongly is labelling and categorization by other educators in the department. The interviewee makes a clear reference to the subjugation coming from other educators, and from their perceptions concerning who she is as an academic teacher. She underlines her sense that this labelling affects her own understanding of who she is, and her "whole existence as a person". She also describes these categorizations as permanent in nature, things that "you can never get rid of".

The teacher educators' accounts of being a teacher at the wider *organization level* could be categorized as representing two main patterns. First of all, the interviewees often described *other* departments as resources for their teacher-

identity construction. Working with scholars from various departments was explained as giving the opportunity to collaborate with people who have similar interests and aims, and who have up-to-date knowledge of issues. Another prevailing pattern in the talk at this level involved the central administration, and the demands and control it tried to exert on teacher educators' work. Yet even in this regard the accounts reflected agency, with possibilities to resist the manoeuvres of central administration. The educators indicated that they were able to oppose the directions set by central administrators by ignoring them, or by using minimal effort in fulfilling them.

Extract 4
Well, departmental meetings are pretty meaningless affairs. I mean, somehow I get the picture that they start off from some point other than people's own needs. Or from the fact that the central administration places certain demands on us and these demands have to be met, and if they are to be met then people have to be organized. And I think that's somehow the basic logic. And then these, you could say, the rank-and-file teachers want to resist these things, or at least not do anything (Teacher educator 1).

In the extract above the educator describes departmental meetings and links them to a stage of administrative subjugation. However, the educators are described as active actors; they have the power to resist the demands coming from outside the department, i.e. at the organizational level. In this pattern, the educators' agency is described in terms of resistance, manifested by ignoring the demands coming from central administration.

The agency of teacher educators as exercised in researcher-talk

When we compared teacher educators' accounts of their work as teachers and researchers, the patterns they used varied considerably. While teacher-talk reflected plenty of possibilities and resources for agency, researcher-talk was quantifiably less abundant, and it also reflected social and contextual constraints at work.

At the individual level the most common pattern in talk about being a researcher reflected subjugation, with few possibilities for researcher-identity negotiations.

However, despite the subjugation present in researcher talk, the demand to be a researcher and an academic scholar had to be solved and explained in an accepted way. The prevailing pattern in solving this demand was reference to the future, with the hope that there would be opportunities to do research at some unspecified time. Another pattern involved reference to doing one's own research as a hobby. Research was explained as an enterprise realized in one's spare-time and holidays, not as an integrated aspect of one's everyday work. Generally, this was explained as resulting from a work plan which was full of face-to-face teaching or administrative work. Furthermore, even if research was included in the work plan, it was usually seen as impossible to carry out within working hours, since teaching and other responsibilities took so much time and effort.

Extract 5
For the future, I look forward to being able to increase the amount of research. I mean the proportion of research. And that I could use my working time to do research, perhaps half of it at some stage (Teacher educator 8).

Extract 5 above contains the common pattern of referring to the future, hoping to do research "some day", but with specific mention also of the wish to do research within the speaker's *own working hours*. Note the contrast in the following extract (6), which exemplifies the pattern of talking about research as something *isolated from everyday work*.

Extract 6
There is no co-operation in research since I haven't had time to do research, and any research that I manage to do is totally connected with my own materials (Teacher educator 8).

Here the speaker describes research as something which in fact he cannot do, due to insufficient time. In saying "any research I manage to do" the speaker implies that since there is no time for research, the opportunity must be earned or seized. The expression "research […] is totally connected with my own materials" implies that the research he is able to do is unconnected with his work as an educator, belonging to pursuits separate from his everyday work.

In our data there was no discussion at all concerning research activity in the various subject-matter groups, i.e. *at work-community level*. Subject groups were mentioned only when talking about teaching practices, or the developing of teaching practices. Thus, it seems that the subject groups do not offer resources of any kind for researcher-identity negotiations, and that researcher-identity is not constructed at this level at all.

Departmental level accounts concerning research activity were also rare. The data contained no talk of common research projects or shared research resources. The talk reflecting departmental-level activities was connected to administrative issues, and especially to working-plan negotiations. The prevailing pattern was to refer to the fact that the work plan was full of contact teaching, and that in fact there were no resources for research activity.

Extract 7
Somehow it feels right now that I just haven't had time to do my own research and it's just something that's been bothering me and stressing me. And when you haven't had time to do it or get into it, even though it would be interesting and pleasant to do it, and you should do it for the sake of your work as well (Teacher educator 5).

Here the teacher educator strongly invokes a lack of resources as an obstacle to research. This extract illustrates the lack of agency in researcher negotiations and researcher work. She points out the contradiction between professional demands as an academic scholar, and the absence of resources to fulfil these demands, describing research as something which should be done but cannot be implemented due to the time factor. She also highlights the contradiction between the absence of resources and her own aim to work as a researcher. She further describes this lack of resources as "something that's been bothering me and stressing me".

As regards *organizational level* accounts related to working as a researcher, this pattern could not be identified at all in our data. However, it was observed that one educator described his work as a researcher in a way that revealed – in an obvious manner – the conflicting relationship between the organizational demands placed

on academic scholars and the educator's individual perceptions concerning his work. Even though it cannot be said that this was a prevailing pattern, it is worth including this extract to illustrate the contradiction between social demands and the educators' individual perceptions.

Extract 8
Here there's a basic contradiction, that I have to do research and publish articles, and that's quite OK. But now when a lot of my time goes on teaching, and when the rest of the time goes on doing my own research, then I don't have any time left for reading. It would be interesting as far as education is concerned. And if I think that I should become a good teacher some day, then in these jobs it means that I should have time for more broadly-based general culture in the field of pedagogics, and this means that I should have time to read all sorts of things, and now unfortunately the time isn't there. And the thing is that from the point of view of the department it would make sense if I didn't have to produce reports, and if I could read different kinds of things in peace (Teacher educator 1).

In this extract the educator brings up the juxtaposition between his own perceptions of himself as a good teacher, an expert in "broadly-based general culture in the field of pedagogics" and the organizational-level demands placed on academic actors. He says that his aim is to become a good teacher some day, but that this objective is challenged due to the demands placed on scholars to produce research reports and other publications. He indicates that such demands actually threaten his professional development, by forcing him to produce the kinds of results that are expected of him instead of being able (as he would wish) to broaden his pedagogical vision and expertise by studying "different kinds of things in peace". This extract also underlines the conception of a teacher educator's identity being primarily that of a teacher. The production of new knowledge is not regarded as a value in itself, but rather as a tool to promote one's own development specifically as a teacher. Table 1 summarizes the main findings.

- Insert the Table 1 about here -

Discussion

This study has presented some critical aspects concerning the interplay between social context and the opportunities/obstacles offered regarding teacher educators' exercise of agency in their identity negotiation and work. Our particular focus has been on understanding the social and culturally shared resources for exercising professional agency rather than on examining agency in individual identity negotiations. Our concern is with the shared and iterative commonalities in manifestations of professional agency in teacher educators' accounts of their work. We see the educators' talk as reflecting not only local resources/obstacles in identity construction, but also more global patterns in the collective understanding of teacher educators' work.

Our main finding was that teacher educators' professional agency was strong in the construction of their teacher-identity. By contrast, the construction of their researcher-identity was subjugated, complex, and characterized by a lack of resources. The accounts reflected a lack of agency, with minor resources for identity construction or for working as a researcher. For example, subject-matter groups, which were described as having major importance in teacher-identity construction, were simply not mentioned as a resource of any kind in researcher-identity construction. Furthermore, teaching and researching were mainly described as two separate functions. We found these findings fairly surprising in the context of Finnish teacher education, where the discourse of academic and research-based teacher education has prevailed for decades (Krokfors 2007; Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2006). All in all, it seemed that organization and subject groups offered support for educators' identity negotiations as teachers, but that these contexts did not support the negotiation of researcher-identity. One particular feature of the data was the subjugation of agency at *departmental* level, in terms of most of the aspects of professional identity negotiation that we studied. Departmental level accounts mainly contained patterns related to working with other teacher educators in the department, or to departmental administration.

Teacher educators' polyphonic relation to research is a central issue on a global scale. Recent studies in different parts of the world have discussed the problematic relationship of teacher educators to research (e.g. Cochran-Smith 2005; Lunenberg & Willemse 2006; Robinson & McMillan 2006). In many countries, teacher educators work in universities and thus have dual role as researchers and practitioners: they are expected to be experts in teaching and learning, and at the same time are judged according to the quality of their research and the number of publications they produce (Korthagen et al. 2005). As researchers they are expected to be intelligent consumers of research, meaning that they need to be able to interpret new research findings and have expertise in conducting research on their own practices (Cochran-Smith 2005). This viewpoint emphasizes the value of ongoing systematic enquiry as a key element in teacher educators' work. It also underlines the notion that active engagement with the processes of research should involve *all* teacher educators and not just a few active researchers within a teacher education department (Livingston et al. 2009).

There are, nevertheless, other views on the relationship between teacher educators and research. Murray (2008) argues that not all teacher educators need to be involved in conventional published research in education. Rather, it should be acknowledged that there are numerous forms of being involved as an academic scholar – for example: engagement in educational studies through sustained reading and reflection; enquiries into personal practice; action research; communal participation in small-scale studies published in professional journals; writing books and teaching materials; involvement in large national or international research projects. Murray further argues that teacher education must oppose the prevailing way of defining research narrowly as the production of published research papers adhering to criteria set by external auditors or national education standards (Murray 2008).

Recent global changes in higher education have posed challenges to professional teacher educators and their identity negotiations. In particular, many countries have seen demands for more research or evidence-based practice and for a rigorous approach to the rating of research quality (e.g. Livingston et al. 2009).

The demands in question are related to larger changes in educational organizations and in the university sector. These areas have seen the adoption of a new public management culture, involving rigid administrative procedures, a strong emphasis on accountability, and a strategy-led orientation. All this has brought with it increased control over teachers' work and the erosion of academic professionalism (e.g. Murray 2008). We can see a discrepancy here: the university context requires teacher educators to work as academic researchers and to produce international research reports, but it offers only limited resources for them to practise their agency as researchers, or to exercise agency in researcher-identity negotiations. Many studies have emphasized the importance of individual-level agency in working life, and especially in reform contexts (e.g. Billett & Pavlova 2005; Vähäsantanen & Billett 2008). The lack of agency as a researcher may affect the well-being of teacher educators in a situation where they are expected to be active academic scholars producing high-quality research – despite a lack of adequate resources for research, or possibilities for researcher-identity negotiations.

In the context of recent requirements set for teacher educators, and in the light of our findings, we would highlight the importance of a balance between the social demands imposed on teacher educators and the resources they can utilize in negotiating/re-negotiating their professional identities. In the case of teacher educators as academic professionals, our study showed that teacher educators' agency in researcher-identity negotiations is restricted and complex. Nevertheless, simply giving more flexibility, time, or resources for research will not offer a complete solution. Recent studies have shown that although teacher educators face national and organizational pressures to be involved actively in research, many of them would prefer to use any additional working time to protect their pedagogical power and their social role as a teacher (Robinson & McMillan 2006). Moreover, there is evidence that strong agency in one's own teaching mission can support an individualistic working culture and impede boundary crossing between different subject-matter groups at the organizational level (Hökkä, Rasku-Puttonen & Eteläpelto 2008); hence it can hinder community learning and organizational development (Hökkä et al. 2010; Vähäsantanen et al. 2008). We would therefore suggest that it will be crucial to develop new ways to strengthen the connection

between teaching and research activities in order to enhance the quality and attractiveness of research within teacher education. We would agree with Livingston et al. (2009) that research should be a fundamental element of every teacher educator's everyday work, not just the privilege of few active researchers within a department. This would mean that working as an academic scholar should be understood more broadly than just the production of published research reports – a point made also by Murray (2008).

In this study, teacher educators' professional agency has been examined via a discursive approach. Thus, there are limitations to be considered – relating in part to ethical issues – in evaluating the reliability of the study. One methodological and ethical aspect relates to the first author having examined her own workplace. In this case, we would suggest that the first author's position can be seen as both a resource and a limitation. As a resource, her position made possible prolonged engagement and persistent observations, allowing her to become familiar with the research context and the topic (Lincoln & Cuba 1985). Thus, the practices and discourses of the education department under study were familiar to the main author of this study, and this familiarity could assist in understanding the prevailing culture, and in analysing and interpreting the findings.

Furthermore, because of that familiarity the author in question was able to evaluate the content and substance of the interviews in terms of how open and parallel they were, in comparison with everyday conversations, both in formal (meetings, work groups) and informal (lunch and coffee breaks) contexts. According to her estimation, the interviews were extremely open in nature: the educators did not appear in any way inhibited in discussing the department, and they brought up and problematic issues as well as positive and constructive aspects. Taylor (2001) observed that the researcher's "insider status" can be an attractive claim for the quality of the interpretation. However, she also pointed out some pitfalls. For example, the researcher's familiarity with the research context can entail the risk that his/her own dominant or prior interpretations may guide the analysis and make him/her blind to the overall richness of the data. Thus, critical reflection throughout the whole research process will be of paramount importance. In this

study the author's research diary offered an important mirror for analysing such pre-existing notions, and for looking at them critically.

In small-scale qualitative studies we can raise the question of the extent to which the findings and conclusions can be transferred to other settings. It has generally been assumed that the transferability of the findings to other contexts depends upon the similarity between the contexts (Patton 2002). Furthermore, Peräkylä (2004) suggests that the transferability or generalizability of the findings concerning social practices and discourses should be approached as an issue of *possibility*. Certain practices can be regarded as generalizable even if the practices are not actualized in completely similar ways across different settings. In the present study, the starting point was the idea that globally shared academic discourses can affect teacher educators' identity negotiation. We would therefore suggest that transferability is possible (i) to contexts in which teacher education is conducted, provided that (ii) the teacher education is research-based, with the kinds of discourses and practices that research-based education entails (Peräkylä 2004). Thus, the findings of this study might be transferable to other teacher education departments within the university sector.

Practical conclusions

This study has shown that the construction of researcher-identity in teacher education is a challenging task. Although in Finland teacher education has been conducted as research-based endeavour for several decades (Kansanen 2007; Krokfors 2007), the findings of this study imply that the researcher-identity of teacher educators is still weak. Hence we would emphasize the need to find new ways to strengthen the connection between teaching and research activities in teacher educators' work. The demand for active research as an integrated part of every teacher educator's work has been challenging, and will no doubt continue to be so. If the requirement is to be fulfilled, it will require consideration of *the widest possible range of aspects* of the social context and of individuals' agency in professional identity negotiations. Bound up with this, there is a clear need to support teacher educators' researcher-identity construction, with enhanced

possibilities for the renegotiation of teacher educators' professional identities, from teachers to researchers. And for this to happen, it is important that research should be made attractive to individual teacher educators.

All this implies that we need new ways to support teacher educators' researcher identities at different levels of their local practices. At the individual level this would mean promoting individual agency, for example through different narrative interventions at work (e.g. Hänninen & Eteläpelto 2008). This would be important because renegotiation of professional identities, especially in human-centred professions, requires the ongoing re-interpretation of experiences, with deep-level transformations in individuals' understanding of their professional selves (e.g. Beijaard et al. 2004). In addition, teacher educators should have opportunities to develop their researcher competencies, for example by participating in methodological courses, with the updating of competencies that such courses can provide. Another suggestion concerns the nature of the research conducted within teacher education. At work community level this would mean that different subject-matter groups could be seen not only as resources for developing pedagogical practices and knowledge, but also as resources for *shared research efforts* and spaces for research-identity negotiations. Furthermore we would emphasize the importance of intensive, *small-group research teams*. At the departmental level it would be important to support structures for boundary-crossing between subject matter groups, with shared practices for common research efforts and activities.

In this study we have examined the agency of teacher educators through the *shared* patterns of their talk in relation to the social context (with its possibilities and constraints). Hence, the study does not shed light on individual variations, involving for example differences in subjects' positions (modified, for example, by interpersonal power relations). Thus, there is a clear need for further in-depth studies of teacher educators' agency and identity construction – studies that would allow us to better theorize individual agency among teacher educators, in relation to the social context of teacher education, and including the wider framework of societal challenges and changing work conditions. One further major question for

future studies will be how the new managerial models that have been widely adopted in educational organizations and universities may tend to influence teacher educators' agency in their professional identity negotiations and their work.

Transcription Notation

[…]	Material omitted by the authors
[text]	Material changed by the authors for the sake of anonymity
[text]	Material added by the authors for the sake of clarity

Acknowledgements

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Table1. Teacher educators' agency at different levels of teacher education practices

	Teacher educators' agency in terms of teacher and researcher	
Level of teacher education practices	*Teacher*	*Researcher*
Individual level	Total ownership of one's own teaching: "I can do whatever I want."	Lack of agency: "some day in the future" talk; research as a hobby.
Work-community level (subject-matter group)	Community as a resource for learning: commitment to and identification with the subject matter and subject group.	In the data, no discussion at all concerning research activity.
Department level (teacher education dept.)	Categorizations and labelling according to subject-matter: "frozen" identities.	No time or resources for research. No shared research activities. Work plan full of face-to-face teaching.
Organizational level (university)	Other university departments as resources. Administration of the university seen as a threat – strategies for resistance.	Accountability as subjugation.

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