

# Standards and Teacher Educators

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# Key questions

- 1. Can the development of professional standards by professionals themselves contribute to professional development?**
- 2. Could the Dutch example be followed in other countries?**
- 3. Should ATEE promote the initiative?**

# Reflections on the Dutch Standards for teacher educators 1

Issues of identity, expertise and practice -

- What makes an HE-based teacher educator (TE) different from other seemingly similar professional / academic groups? (e.g. school teachers, school-based teacher educators (mentors), academics / professional educators in other university disciplines?)
- What is distinctive about our identities, our areas of expertise and our practices?
- Returning to analyse our professional responsibilities, our areas of expertise, and the ways in which these are played out in our pedagogies and practices
- Professional responsibilities of teacher educators - purposes of teacher education – how these understood individually, communally and nationally?
- How are they played out in the practices of teacher educators?

# Reflections on the Dutch Standards for teacher educators 2

Identification, separation, synergy and holism

- Identifying the inter-relationships between *what* is taught (the ‘content’) and *how* (the pedagogical modes used) – synergies
- Considering inter-personal and inter-professional dynamics
- ‘Practising as a teacher educator demands an engagement in teaching about teaching through the medium of personal pedagogy.’
- Is holistic and involves *professional artistry*  
Schon (1987)

# Reflections on the Dutch Standards for teacher educators 3

Scholarly and Research Activity (SARA) and its place in teacher educators' work

- Acknowledge full spectrum of SARA activities.
- Ensure that SARA is embedded as central to teacher educators' practice.
- Recognise different models of engagement in the spectrum and the institutional pressures involved.
- Challenge restricted definitions of what 'counts' as research activity for teacher educators
- Symbiosis of teaching and SARA under threat

# The English teacher educators' experience

- Standards / competencies for 'trainee' and experienced school teachers – imposed nationally in top down initiatives
- The introduction of partnership with changed epistemological, pedagogical and organisational aspects
- Narrowing of the expertise needed to be a teacher educator in Higher Education – imposed through government circulars
- The importance of 'recent and relevant' experience – 1984 onwards
- De-emphasising and de-valuing expertise – 1997 onwards
- Results - blurring of the boundaries between the various parties involved in teacher education, especially between HE-based and school-based teacher educators (mentors).
- Loss of the explicit recognition of ways in which HE-based teacher educators contribute to teacher education. Expertise and distinctiveness of teacher educators eroded.

# Could English teacher educators follow the Dutch example?

**Advantages** – recognition of expertise, making the tacit explicit, re-claiming aspects of our professional autonomy, professional framework for professional development and self-regulation.

## **Disadvantages** –

- The implications of ‘standards’ – semantics and beyond – overcoming the doubters and sceptics – changing the language / adapting the methods of development?
- Diversities and differentiations within the English teacher education sector and its providing institutions.
- Working with explicit and tacit contestations within the sector (sub-groups and professional / institutional interests).
- Acknowledging and working with the centrality of partnership in our system and the roles and responsibilities of the partners.

# Key question 1

**Can the development of professional standards by professionals themselves contribute to professional development?**

**Yes, if –**

- **development process begins and progresses as a dynamic process owned by those professionals – and if any end point is clearly acknowledged as only temporary**
- **the professional standards do not become a strait jacket for professional practice.**
- **the standards are not ‘hi-jacked’ by other groups in order to assert control over teacher educators and teacher education.**
- **the standards are holistic enough to encompass the *professional artistry of teacher educator* practice and to allow for synergy and integration of teaching with SARA**
- **the standards are flexible enough to encompass individual and communal innovations and excellence**

# Key question 2

## **Could the Dutch example be followed in other countries?**

Possibly, but

- adapted to the various contextual factors operating in different countries, including the political context.
- acknowledging the various ways in which the purposes of teacher education are understood and played out in teacher educators' work
- acknowledging the diversity of institutional contexts within which teacher education operates
- acknowledging the importance of micro communities of practice in teacher education (communal understandings) as well as individual differences.
- if the initiative is 'bottom up' and never 'top down'.

# Key question 3

## **Should ATEE promote the initiative?**

- One of the focuses of this conference.
- Devising a framework for the initiative which takes into account commonalities and differences – a challenging task, but it would be *our* task
- Possible outcome - powerful identification of variations in teacher educators' expertise and practices across Europe.