Teacher education in Finland:

current trends and future scenarios

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Abstract

This article aims to draw a picture of current trends in Finnish teacher education and to explore the question of how TE should be developed in the near future. Following a short historical background, the main strategies and results of the research project, "Effectiveness of Teacher Education", will be introduced. The project created and implemented a concept of communicative evaluation. The results clearly showed that Finnish teacher education has been successful in many respects, but there are also critical points which require revisions. The important finding is that institutional and professional cultures in schools and TE institutions have a strong influence on the effectiveness of teacher education. They reinforce each other. TE cannot affect real changes if schools are not prepared to change and, vice versa, schools cannot change if teachers do not have the skills needed. Another important viewpoint is the fact that system-level structures may support the objectives of high quality learning in schools and teacher education, but system-level structure may also colonise and destroy a new culture which should be created.

A short history of Teacher Education policies in Finland

Teacher education for elementary and secondary schools was transferred to universities in the Finnish educational system through the Teacher Education Law, in 1971. The earlier teacher training colleges, the "seminars" for the primary level, were attached to Education Faculties as newcomers. Secondary school subject-teacher education was also renewed by expanding pedagogical studies. The purpose was to unify elementary and secondary school teacher education and to develop an academically high standard education. It was also necessary to answer to the needs of a new comprehensive school system

which was implemented in the sixties. In the late seventies, university education for both teacher groups was planned as 4 to 5 - year programmes. The basic qualification for secondary and elementary school teachers was decreed as a Master's degree. The first teachers to receive a Master's graduated in 1984-85. In other words, Finnish TE has had a 15 - year experience of university-based teacher education, with a strong research component. The main structure and components of studies are summarised in Table 1.

	Major	Minors	Master Thesis	Teaching practices	Other studies
Elementary School TE 160 credits (4 - 5 years)	Educational studies in Education Faculties 55 credits	Combination of basics of different school subjects and specialising in one or two subjects 35 + 35 credits	In education 20 credits	As a part of educational studies (20 credits)	Language and communication Optional courses 10 - 20 credits
Secondary School TE 160 credits (5 years)	Different school subjects in academic faculties 55 - 60 credits	One or two other subjects and Education in Educational Faculties 30 + 35 credits	In academic subjects 20 credits	As a part of educational studies (20 credits)	Language and communication Optional courses 10 - 20 credits

Table 1. The main components of Finnish teacher education.

The objectives of teacher education have emphasised teachers' professional competency to work as independent experts and to develop their work. In the seventies and eighties, the fairly strict core curriculum was set by the Ministry of Education. It unified teacher education in all universities. A good point was the standardised quality and unified programmes, but it made teacher education too inflexible. It also fixed the non-relevant practices and did not activate seeking new forms on the local

level. The newest decrees, in 1995, provide a very loose framework for universities to plan their teacher education. Recently, however, teacher educational departments have faced new problems which place restrictions on their development. There have been great economic pressures and budget cuts of basic degrees in a university sector. Accountability criteria emphasise doctoral degrees, high quality research and international publications. Also, co-operation with the business world has become an important funding source for universities. For technological departments it is easier to find sponsors, but the education sector has fewer chances. In Finnish universities, teacher education departments have succeeded to create a real research tradition, but the opportunities for them to compete only through research and external funding are weaker than in many other university sectors. In this sense, university policy should see their role in producing high quality basic degrees as an important task in society.

National and international evaluations of Finnish TE during recent years

During the last ten years, Finnish teacher education has been evaluated systematically many times. The following major evaluation processes have been carried out during this time:

- 1989 National committee for developing teacher education

- 1993-94 National and international evaluation of educational sciences and teacher education. (The Committee Report, 1994; Buchberger et al. , 1994; Niemi & Kohonen, 1995a)

- 1995-1998 Research project "Effectiveness of Teacher Education" as part of a large national research programme "Effectiveness of Education". (Niemi, 1996b; Niemi & Kemmis, 1999)

- 1998 National evaluation of ICT in teacher education. (Niemi, 1999a)

- 1998-99 National evaluation of teacher education. (Jussila & Saari, 1999)

- 1999 Evaluation of the quality of research in the teacher education department of the University of Helsinki. (University of Helsinki, 2000)

Main trends and scenarios emerging from the evaluations can by summarised as **strengths and weaknesses** of Finnish TE in the following way.

The evaluations have revealed many positive outcomes of TE in Finland. Elementary teacher education is one of the most popular study options. Teacher education has succeeded to recruit high quality students. The competition has made TE very selective, only 10-15 % of the applicants are accepted to

start their studies. Secondary TE is not as attractive and there will be a lack of teachers in certain subjects in the coming years. Graduated teachers have good classroom skills and content knowledge. The future lack of qualified teachers, however, is not caused by the quality of teacher education. It is more a consequence of early retirement, poor working conditions in schools and teachers' burn-out problems.

Teachers in Finland until now have been highly committed to their profession. There has not been a real problem of dropouts in the teacher-education programmes and teachers do not usually change from their teaching job to another profession. Only 10-15 % of teachers have even thought of changing to another career (Niemi & Tirri 1997). Young teachers see their profession as life-long learning and they have a very positive attitude towards developing their job. Now the situation seems to point to the fact that older teachers have difficulties continuing in their career until normal retirement age.

The evaluation projects have also revealed that both schools and teacher education departments have overcome the attitudinal resistance of using ICT. There are several innovative processes, both in schools and in teacher education departments. They are distance-learning projects in which e.g. language teaching and optional courses are provided to schools in remote areas in Lapland or on isolated islands. Some pilot projects have opened new routes through ICT for partnerships between teacher education, local schools and business life. There are projects for media education and interactive technology projects for the evaluation of teaching practice. (Niemi 1999a)

The research component is an essential part in teacher education. Despite the first years' difficulties, in the eighties, to integrate research studies with other components of TE, research methods and the writing of a Master's thesis are the best parts in elementary school teacher education. Research studies give an opportunity to do a real project, in which students have to formulate a problem in an educational field, to seek information and data for the problem independently, to elaborate it with the newest research and to make a synthesis as a written thesis. They learn to study actively and internalise the attitude of how teachers may act like researchers in their work. The general result of the evaluations is that the more demanding the studies were, in terms of quality of learning, the more useful they were evaluated as.

Subject-oriented didactics has been evaluated as very relevant and meaningful component by secondary school teachers. They emphasise how important it is to learn to integrate educational methods in the context of the subject they teach at school. The contextual knowledge also helped them to understand how to better approach students' learning.

Although teacher education has succeeded in many respects, there are still many problems which need to be taken seriously. Many evaluations have pointed out that the lack of co-operation between different partners decrease the quality of teacher education. Co-operation should be much better organised, more oriented towards common purposes and more intensive. These needs are apparent between academic disciplines and educational departments, normal schools and teacher education departments, local schools and university schools, teacher education institutions and local communities. The other thing which has also been a concern is quality of learning. Do teachers have good enough capacities to teach different learners in a world that is more contradictory than ever? Learning in a multicultural information society, where social exclusion is a real threat, demands high teacher competencies. Year after year there has also been strong criticism of student teachers' own learning culture. It seems to be more receptive than active in parts other than the Master's thesis writing and teaching practice.

Communicative evaluation as a tool of development

In the Finnish research project, "Effectiveness of teacher education" (1995-1998), a new approach to evaluation was developed. The purpose was to enlarge an evaluation concept and make it a tool for continuous development and particularly a tool for creating increasing co-operation between different partners in TE. The theoretical basis of the project has been introduced in earlier articles (Niemi, 1996b; Niemi, 1997; Niemi & Kemmis, 1999)

The project took a broad view of "effectiveness", and attempted to see it through the eyes of a variety of groups related in different ways to teacher education and its outcomes: teachers, teacher-education students, school children, Ministry officials, and a range of other relevant partners (including parents, business and working life groups and teachers' unions). Several sub-studies under the broad umbrella of the research project collected quantitative and qualitative evidence related to the general issue of the

effectiveness of teacher education at three levels - society, culture and person. The aim of the evaluation was not to take the role of a judge by ranking or blaming TE institutions or TE educators. The interest of knowledge was participatory and reflexive-dialogical (Kemmis, 1995). All the time, the most important target was to activate and build communication between different groups and stakeholders and thematise together issues of TE (Niemi & Tirri, 1997; Niemi 1996a; 1997).

Three central functions of communicative evaluation were outlined:

- *revelation* - helping people to understand cultural, social and interpersonal dynamics in and around programmes and settings, and to do so in a critical way,
- *anticipation* - helping people to orientate towards the future in increasingly unsettled times, and
- *building communication and partnership* - helping people to work together for transformation, not only at local levels but also in relation to global issues, trends and tendencies.

The project selected three levels on which to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher education: *culture, society* and *the person.* In Habermas's theory of communicative action, these are regarded as the structural components of the lifeworld. Each of these levels has a special task in the process of social and cultural reproduction and transformation. In this way, the project aimed to recognise and respond to the notion that the effectiveness of teacher education is multi-layered.

Culture includes interpretive frameworks, facts, norms and experiences. These are all socially constructed. We do not have knowledge without tradition, and we also participate continuously in reproducing and transforming traditions. Our culture is the stock of knowledge from which participants in communication supply themselves with interpretations as they come to an understanding about something in the world (Habermas, 1987, p.138).

In the evaluation of effectiveness in teacher education, work at the cultural level included exploring the objectives of teacher education from the perspective of different stakeholders. The evaluation aimed to reveal how well objectives have been achieved, and to identify some of the main barriers to achieving results. Teacher education is one manifestation of culture. It has been formed in the cultural

reproduction process and is also part of this process. There are no absolute objectives and contents of teacher education; these are always socially constructed in certain social, political and scientific situations. One task of the evaluation was to analyse the relevance of different objectives and how they should be developed in anticipation of future demands.

On the cultural level, different studies in the research project targeted themes including:

- teachers' abilities to promote active learning in schools;

- teachers' abilities in curriculum development;

- teachers' readiness for new information technology;

- teachers' readiness for media education;

- teachers' readiness for partnership in educational tasks;

- teachers' abilities to encounter and handle moral dilemmas in school life; and

- teachers' abilities to promote intercultural learning.

Some of these targets were selected on the basis of already-established needs and concerns; some were selected as new objectives which have emerged in relation to the moving horizon of contemporary social change.

Society, according to Habermas, refers to the legitimate orders through which participants regulate their memberships in social groups and thereby secure solidarity (Habermas, 1987, p.138). This concept of society includes relationships between different organizational subsystems. Institutional structure, administration, power, control, and cooperation between different partners are among the phenomena of interest in analyses at the society level. In teacher education, this level raises some crucial questions, including questions about the independence of teacher education, and the nature of relationships between teacher education and the administration of education systems. There is a lot of evidence that problems, open or hidden, exist in the relationships of teacher education to other educational subsystems and stakeholders.

The society level studies conducted within the overall research project included studies focusing on themes like:

- How have relationships between teacher education institutions and other educational institutions promoted or hindered the effectiveness of teacher education?

- How would different partners (working life, parents, local community, administration) like to see teacher education develop?

- How can greater cooperation between teacher education and different stakeholders in education and teacher education be facilitated?

- What does gender equity mean in teacher education?

At the level of the *person,* we are concerned especially with matters to do with the competence that makes a subject capable of speaking and acting, that puts him or her in a position to take part in the process of reaching understanding and thereby to assert his own identity (Habermas, 1987, p.138). In the research on evaluation of the effectiveness of teacher education, the studies have not focused so much on the general competencies which teachers may be assumed to have, but rather on teachers' and beginning teachers' personal interpretation of what the teaching profession means to them, and how they would like to develop as teachers. At this level, the studies have focused very much on the initial and continuing processes of teachers' professional identities. If teaching is regarded as an ethical profession, the development of teachers' commitment and responsibility are important aims for teacher education.

Teachers' own growth processes have become more important during the last ten years as new meta-knowledge of teaching and learning has emerged. It seems obvious that teachers themselves have to learn to be learners in their profession, but it is less clear how they can best be supported in this learning during pre-service teacher education and in subsequent in-service education, especially in terms of strengthening their identity as ethical professionals. In our view, the new role of teachers in a world with a moving horizon requires a highly-developed awareness of one's own identity.

Personal level studies of the research project addressed themes including:

- How has teacher education supported teachers' growth and identity as representatives of an ethical profession?

- How should teachers' growth as lifelong learners be supported in the future?

On all three levels - culture, society (social organisations) and person - the research proceeded on principles of communicative evaluation, involving revelation, anticipation, and aiming for communication and partnership. Empirical data have been collected using qualitative and quantitative methods which aim to produce an improved understanding of both subjective and objective experiences in teacher education. The project also explored the way the effects of teacher education are transformed (or forestalled) in school contexts, from the multiple perspectives of student teachers, teacher educators, teachers and pupils.

Obstacles of effectiveness

In many countries today, there is a persistent dilemma between changes in society (in the economy, working life and social structures) and changes to education systems, including teacher education. They are changing at different tempos, and sometimes in different directions, and sometimes there are external pressures and internal resistances preventing or impeding change - even change for the better. Many writers take the view that teachers and schools are changing too slowly (Garman, 1995; Grimmett, 1994). Cuban writes pessimistically that "Not surprisingly, many reforms that were intended to alter the fundamental structures of schooling met with little, if any success... Some reforms have succeeded in altering the vocabulary used by policy makers and practitioners" (Cuban, 1990, p.75). Writing of teacher education, Wideen says that "Teacher education has to face the strong and compelling argument that the perceived failure of the schools rests upon the shoulders of those who prepared teachers for those schools - the teacher education within faculties of education. Although schools have always been the scapegoat for all the assorted ills of society, today´s criticism seems to have adopted a stronger tone and one that is much less forgiving" (Wideen, 1995, p.1). Outlining reasons for ineffectiveness in teacher education, Wideen lists among the most important: the marginalised status of teacher education in universities, the persistence of the technical-rationalist tradition in teacher education, and low pedagogical standards among teacher educators.

The evaluation of the effectiveness of Finnish teacher education confirms strongly the results which had came out through earlier national evaluations. It revealed that teacher education has an important role in teachers' professional development, and it also pointed out that the young teacher generation

sees its profession as a life-long learning process. The communicative evaluation also gave a multi-perspective view to the problem of why effectiveness is, in certain areas, very low and why changes are so slow. The one function of the evaluation was to reveal what the obstacles are to achieving important aims. This article will be elaborated on this problem. In this description, the results of the project's sub-study on active learning will be used as an illustration (Niemi 1998).

Teacher education as a detached subsystem

In the Finnish research project, the isolation of schools and TE could be seen. Schools have their own traditions and cultures and teacher education its own. Lack of co-operation means that the effects of TE may vanish very soon after graduation. School systems and teacher education are subsystems of society. Functions relevant to society as a whole are distributed among different subsystems. These systems live their autonomous lives and in a rationalisation process they often loose their capacity for communication and co-operation. The institutions or organisations have their own structures, regulations and control mechanisms. If one institution or part of it, for example the school level, is successful in supporting growth towards some important aims, such as active learning, another institution may vanquish it.

These problems can also be seen in the divisions of a school community in ICT innovative projects. Their problem is often that they remain the projects of a small active group. Very often they are isolated from other groups in schools or TE communities. The culture of these pilot projects is different from what is usual in those institutions. They work with a flexible timetable; they allow individual choices; they have contacts with other institutions and partners. The projects are very rewarding for the participants, but they have difficulties in being integrated with the normal school life or TE practices. The innovative ICT projects set a clear need for schools and TE institutions to change their cultures. (Niemi 1999a)

The reasons that different subsystems work separately are often caused by system-level factors. The system-level steering powers seem to be timetables, curricula, marks and credits, class or group sizes, and material resources in schools and teacher education. These are making it impossible for teachers to utilise new skills that they have learnt in TE. This was emphasized in the context of active learning.

All interviewed teachers were very worried about the curriculum. They explained that courses are overloaded and they are working under time pressure. They felt that active learning methods take too much time and they cannot take the risk that students do not learn all the contents of the curriculum. A sense of continuous time pressure was very strong. This aspect is amazing in the new situation of Finnish schools. They are very free to develop their own curriculum and focus on the most essential and important questions. The interviewees, however, were young, new teachers in school communities. This probably adds stress to work under the unwritten norms and the hidden curriculum of the school. It also raises the question of whether schools really use their freedom to develop the curriculum.

The system-level steering powers seem to colonise teachers' and students' lives in such a way that they give up their ideals of active learning. They have learnt that it is better to earn many credits, guarantee good marks and secure progress, which the system rewards, than to take a risk with active learning methods. It also means that all partners are playing a game. They know that they are behaving because of a system, although they see it as irrelevant or non-meaningful.

The main message, from different viewpoints, is that the effectiveness of teacher education is connected with several many-layered contexts and it is not separated out as a phenomenon which is caused by one actor or one institution. The effectiveness of teacher education can be good, but its power in the dominating school culture is weak. If teacher education has not succeeded to provide enough experiences in high quality learning for student teachers, they are in a very controversial situation: it seems to be rare that schools would encourage them to apply these methods.

Reinforcing cultures

Separation of systems is not the only reasons for low effectiveness. The other factor is a mutual reinforcing process between the cultures of teacher education and schools. These maintain the status quo in educational settings, but they can also act as supporting forces in a positive case.   We are an integral part of our contextual cultures and traditions, and we reproduce them through our own acts. We structure our social life from an intersubjective perspective, create a shared understanding of our culture, forming relationships and solidarity with one another, and develop shared norms and values.

We establish a sense of our own identity in relation to others in the real-world settings in which we find ourselves (Kemmis, 1995). Teachers live with a professional culture which originated in earlier teacher generations. The teaching culture contains a lot of common wisdom, but also many irrelevant practices or concepts which do not support pupils' growth into active learners. We are also carrying our learning culture from the earlier times of our own school life, and it forms our concepts and ideals which we regard as aims of learning.

Figure 1. Reinforcing processes in schools and teacher education

Teacher educators

Student teachers

SELF-REINFORCING
CULTURE IN SCHOOLS
AND TEACHER EDUCATION

Teachers   Pupils
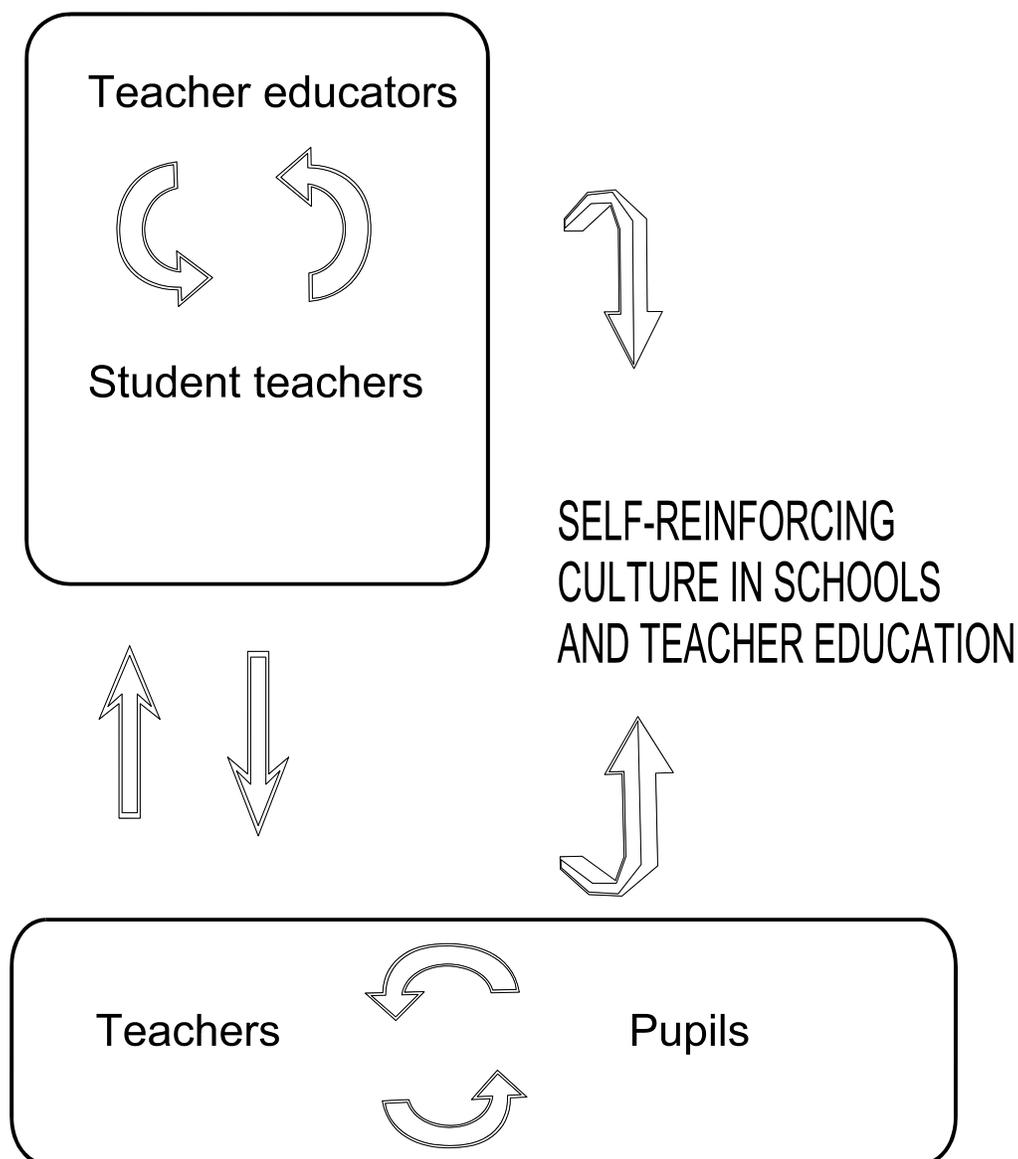
The active learning sub study (Niemi 1998) of the project "Effectiveness of Teacher Education" revealed that the reinforcing process keeps the passive learning culture as dominant. The process is strengthened by a lack of knowledge about active learning methods and strategies and a lack of metacognitive knowledge at different levels of the educational system. Pupils in schools do not have enough metaknowledge of learning. They are not used to steering their own learning and they lack the readiness to inquire, structure, elaborate and evaluate knowledge and their own learning. They are used to receiving ready-made task settings and orders from outside their learning. When student teachers start their studies in universities they bring their earlier learning culture with them. If the teacher education system creates circumstances of time stress and an inflexible, scattered curriculum, the consequences are tiredness and superficiality in teaching and learning. This creates a situation in which teacher educators react to student teachers' learning habits and system-level restrictions by using methods which do not require very much active learning processes.

Teaching and learning cultures in schools are socially constructed. All the groups who participated in the research described their partners in the institutions as one of the most important obstacles (Niemi 1998). Teacher educators considered student teachers' external motivation and lack of motivation. Also, student teachers saw peer students' passivity as an obstacle. The younger teachers considered the negative attitudes of senior teachers, students and parents as a threat to active learning. The study of active learning revealed how different partners react to each others' expectations and they create social structures which keep teaching and learning cultures as unchangeable. This means that new teachers continue following old traditions and the new generation comes from high schools to universities with a low learning capacity.

Teachers' new role

Teachers no longer work in stable contexts. They are confronting a moving horizon, in which changes in society values, family conditions, educational and professional structures, national and global crises and the new opportunities of technology are realities in classrooms. Teachers will need a greater readiness to work collaboratively in the school community and they will need a greater preparation to co-operate with stakeholders, such as parents, working life, cultural and social partners. Teachers need

the required skills to work with children and young people, giving them even more personal support than earlier. But they need, in addition, skills to activate, support and get together multi-professional teams and voluntary groups in a civil society. A teacher's new identity is to be an organizer of networks of adults who will support and facilitate students' learning in schools. Communicative evaluation can be an useful tool in creating co-operation.

All interviewees of the active learning study (Niemi 1998) emphasised that new learning environments and active learning methods require a teacher's new role. The teacher must be open to various kinds of questions. Questions can be very difficult and you do not have answers to all of them. The teacher must be ready to explore many different new things.

Students also need a lot of support. The teacher has to supervise them during the working process in such a way that students do not even notice it. The teacher has to develop a new assessing system for students' products. Evaluation also means a continuing support process. The teacher has to give something extra to students' work, not only just saying "well done". Almost all teachers stressed that using active learning methods does not mean that students are left alone. On the contrary, teachers have to teach them metacognitive strategies little by little. This means that students are tutored on how to obtain knowledge, how to process it and how to use source materials. They have to get used to active learning methods.   The interviewed teachers also described how students have a different readiness for active and independent learning. Some students are very ready for them, but some do not have any readiness. It does not necessarily depend on students' age. Their earlier experiences of learning are more important.

The new teachers were in a very contradictory situation. The most important reason for student teachers' criticism was the experience of not having been taught through active learning methods. Active learning principles were introduced to student teachers, but they were not implemented in their tuition. If young teachers are very uncertain of new activating methods, after graduation the schools are not an effective place to practice them because of older teacher colleagues and critical secondary school pupils.

The results of the project "Effectiveness of Teacher Education (Niemi 1998) clearly indicated that schools and teacher education departments are in the middle of a cultural change. In both institutions, many indicators of active learning and other revisions of the learning culture can be seen, but active learning methods are implemented by only a few teachers, and mainly with fairly closed tasks. Open learning environments, which require students' own initiative, planning, experimentation, elaboration and self-evaluation, still seem to be rare. In both institutions, there are pioneers of active learning, but they face many obstacles to active learning. All interviewees emphasized that active learning methods require much more work and are harder on a teacher than traditional teaching. The real problem may be that the available learning materials, especially meaningful PC software in Finnish, are not good enough and teachers must produce materials on their own. Teachers seem to be in a very problematic situation. On the one hand, they would like to apply active learning methods, on the other hand, they feel that they do not have enough strength for all the new tasks. They said that active learning methods are challenging, rewarding, but they are worried about whether they have the time and energy to implement them.

Active learning as well as other educational revisions, however, **cannot be promoted only by pre-service teacher education**. All partners in a learning society should promote the achievement of this goal. The learning ethos in schools should be changed, and this is a serious challenge to in-service teacher education and those who are responsible for curriculum planning. It is necessary **to create a strong cultural change** from outer-regulated learning and superficiality to the real responsibility of students for learning. We need a continuum of in service education for teachers. The effectiveness of teacher education depends on teachers' capacity learn new methods in their work and first of all to be ready reassess their working culture.

Future scenarios

How to break negative reinforcement and to make TE a real partner in a society is an important question. In the following scenarios, the question is elaborated at the levels of society, culture and the person, which were the starting concepts in the evaluation project.

Society level

Teacher education has a much larger perspective in the reference frame in which teachers are seen as representatives of a high-quality ethical profession, rather than of a technical craft. In the former case, it requires that teachers are provided with a language of criticism and political skills through which there can be a rational, moral and purposive commitment in the revision of education (Sultana, 1995, p.141; Carr & Hartnett, 1996). Aronowitz & Giroux (1991, pp.108-109) describe the responsibility of teachers in a postmodern world: If teachers are to take an active role in raising serious questions about what they teach, how they are to teach, and the larger goals for which they are striving, it means they must take a more critical and political role in defining the nature of their work, as well as in shaping the conditions under which they work. We believe that teachers need to view themselves as public intellectuals who combine conception and implementation, thinking and practice, with a political project grounded in the struggle for a culture of liberation and justice (see also Niemi 1999b; 2000).

Culture level

If the teacher is seen as a partner in enhancing educational opportunities, the following aspects of teacher education should be emphasised (Niemi, 1996a):

- teaching as a moral profession with a high-level moral responsibility needs a good initial education for exploring value questions
- teaching requires professional autonomy; teachers need to be active partners in school development, and teacher education should introduce them to this role
- teacher education has to provide active learning concepts with a deep knowledge of learning and an ability to guide the learning processes of different learners
- teacher education's mission is to educate teachers to become active partners for enhancing education and seeking learning opportunities in society for all learners
- teachers have to learn collegial collaboration with other teachers and co-operation with different stakeholders.

Person level

In the Finnish context teachers have a good readiness to work in classrooms, but readiness for relationships with partners, such as parents, social workers and the working life is weak. Teachers' professional role is very individualistic. They are used to working alone. It seems that teachers are educated for a stable world.

The 21st century will set high demands on learning. The world will be full of contradictory trends and tensions, such as globalisation, regionalisation, value conflicts and social inequities. Changes in the teachers' role cause stress among teachers and they need support for their own professional growth process and identity formation during and after TE (see also Hargeaves, A. 1994; Hargreaves D. 1994; Niemi & Kohonen 1995b).   There is no given model of a teacher, but rather different variations of representatives of an ethical profession. It is impossible to establish any common consensus, what is the right way to teach or learn. But what we need more than ever is communication about the aims and purpose of the school and teacher education.

In civil societies, we must create communicative space for a continuous discussion with different partners. It is a sphere in which we can share uncertainties and thematise problems together. Teachers are representatives of an ethical profession and they have an important role in the course of implementing democracy, social justice and human rights. The future revisions of teacher education should be in line with these purposes.

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