

Teacher  
educators  
pathways  
to becoming  
research active

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**Series: Life and work of teacher educators, volume 4**

Teacher educators pathways to becoming research active

# Contents

Preface	3
Teacher educators becoming research active	5
Jane Brooke: an accidental teacher educator	7
Nicole Brown: teacher, teacher trainer, learner	10
Roy Halpin: teacher educator under pressure	13
Julia Mackintosh: teacher educator and novice researcher	16
Eglé Pranckunienė: from policy making to teachers' development and research	19
Jeanny Prat: a journey in the perpetual learning galaxy	23
Nobuko Takeda: advocate for children and youth	25
Mariëlle Theunissen: associate professor and teacher educator	28
Final remarks	32
Further reading	33
The editors	35



# Preface

This fourth edition in the series 'Work and life of teacher educators' is edited by Elizabeth White. We thank her for taking this initiative and the inspiring text she has made in cooperation with eight colleagues from diverse countries. The shared experience and professional development of all colleagues in the four brochures is striking, notwithstanding different educational systems, cultures and circumstances.

Teacher educators work in a triangle: professional practice (schools), HE educator, researcher. These three perspectives are interdependent: questions can be raised from each perspective and reflecting on the consequences from one may provoke starting a cycle of development and innovation. By doing this within their team, together with their students and their colleagues in schools, teacher educators create learning communities and lifelong learning. This may sound as a platitude, but many platitudes are based on reality.

The initiative in 2015 to start this series of brochures was supported by Dick de Wolff. From February 2017 onwards Wichert Duyvendak will promote the series and look for opportunities for new brochures. We are enthusiastic about how Peter Lorst and Anja Swennen built up in such a short time the series and gave voice to many colleagues from all over the world. Both of us would like to thank Peter Lorst and Anja Swennen for the work they have done and for the inspiring conversations we had.

## **Dick de Wolff**

Dean Faculty of Education, HU University of Applied Sciences

## **Wichert Duyvendak**

Director of the Institutes for Primary Teacher Education and Educational Needs Education, HU University of Applied Sciences

**'The motivation for becoming research  
active was as diverse as the contributors'**

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**'Doing a research degree has been a  
significant part of their pathway'**

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## Teacher educators becoming research active

This brochure joins the series about 'Life and work of teacher educators'. The aim of the series is to give teacher educators a stage to present themselves: to describe how they developed in their professional lives and the way in which they participate as educators in their daily practice as an educator, researcher, and team member and in professional development. All booklets are on the site of Hogeschool Utrecht. The first brochure was published in July 2015: **Maatschappelijke Wortels van lerarenopleidingen** (Roots in society of teacher education). This publication gives a short overview of the education and professional life of teacher educators in the Netherlands. The second brochure was published in February 2016: **Life and work of teacher educators**, containing the personal stories of teacher educators from different countries and how they came to be teacher educators. The third brochure was published in 2016: **Schoolopleiders, leraar en lerarenopleider tegelijk** (School based educators, teachers and teacher educators at the same time), and provides an insight into the professional life of this specific sub-group of workplace-based teacher educators. This brochure, **Teacher educators pathways to becoming research active**, is the fourth in the series. Like the second brochure, it has its roots in the Professional Development of Teacher Educators (PDTE) Research and Development Community (RDC) of the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE). The teacher educators in this brochure are from France, Japan, Lithuania, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom. They share their stories of how they became research active. By this we are describing a pathway to becoming, rather than a completed process. Each contributor would not necessarily claim to be an established and successful researcher, but would relate to being engaged in carrying out practitioner inquiry or having research interests in an area that closely relates to their practice. In sharing their stories, we hope to provide encouragement and inspiration to those who are just beginning on this journey.

There are different routes into teacher education in different countries, many start as teachers and as mentors with student teachers. Through their relationship with a teacher education institution they were asked to become teacher educators. In the process of becoming a teacher educator and developing in the role, they have faced the challenge of developing an academic identity and becoming research active (Murray, 2010; White et al., 2014). This is more than being engaged in scholarly reading associated with teaching, but moving into practitioner-based research and starting to disseminate findings. This then is 'the teacher becoming a teacher educator becoming research active' route that

Nicole, Jeanny, Julia, Roy, Eglé and Jane describe. In contrast, Nobuko is a teacher educator coming from the background of clinical psychology and not having school teaching experience. She describes the process of becoming research active in order to have an impact on the educational system in Japan through the teacher educator community. Mariëlle's contribution highlights the experience of researcher becoming teacher educator, then going through the full circle of becoming a teacher, becoming a teacher educator again through a practitioner route rather than a research route, and then developing as a researching teacher educator engaged in practitioner inquiry.

An aspect that is relevant for teacher educators in becoming research active, is the setting in which they work. Some are based in school improvement organisations or institutions involved in Higher and Further Education whilst others are school-based. These contexts vary in the value that they place on different kinds of knowledge and learning and subsequently there are different expectations on teacher educators for scholarship and research activity and outputs (Boyd and Harris, 2010; White 2014; White et al. 2015). For all the contributors doing a research degree at masters or doctoral level, or both, has been a significant part of their pathway to becoming research active. Engagement in practice-based research and support of senior colleagues were significant factors identified in this journey by several contributors including Julia and Roy. Jane described a realization of the convergence of research and teaching roles that helped to move her practice on, whilst Jeanny explained that hearing a researcher presenting at conference helped her identify a hunger to understand more deeply. For Eglé, that hunger arose from her professional activities whereas Roy was driven by the complexity of the working context that he wanted to research. The motivation for becoming research active was as diverse as the contributors: to survive; to improve practice (school-based teacher education, continuing teacher education and the curriculum for teacher education); to improve student engagement, learning and teaching and for pupils' well-being (to change educational and social values).

6

What is remarkable is, that the teacher educators in this brochure, despite working in very different systems and contexts, tell stories of becoming research active that have more similarities than differences. The similarities include the desire to study and understand the educational environment through conducting practitioner inquiry which has provided training in research techniques. The work of teacher educators is layered in its nature (Boyd and White, 2017). One aspect of this is through teaching teaching, and using explicit modelling as a pedagogical tool (Lunenberg et al., 2007; White, 2011). Another aspect is through teaching practitioner inquiry and modelling this through explicitly taking 'an inquiry stance' (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2007). Mariëlle and Nicole both identified that their own research engagement supported their own development in teaching and supervising practice-based research.



# Jane Brooke: an accidental teacher educator

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## *Personal story*

My journey into becoming a teacher educator began in November 2002 at Thomas Danby College, Leeds. I was asked to join a small team whose remit was to develop a literacy/numeracy subject specific teacher-training course aimed at addressing the shortage of Basic Skills tutors, as part of Prime Minister Tony Blair's Skills for Life (SfL) Strategy. This was a period of huge change within the sector's teacher training agenda: new regulations were being put into place for all further education (FE) teachers to gain generic teacher qualifications to at least Level 4 on the higher education (HE) national qualification framework, as well as for those teaching literacy and numeracy to have subject specific qualifications, while new teacher training qualifications were being developed concurrently. Such was the scale and pace of change, my introduction into the role of teacher educator felt as if I had been dropped into an alternative world awash with quangos – each with its acronym or initialism to be remembered - which seemed to frequently undergo transmutation, or die. This was a world of national SfL targets to be met, funding bids to be chased, new courses to develop, and was far removed from the one I had just left, my seemingly safe and certainly less complex role of a literacy and English tutor in a different Leeds college. However, the course (First Steps to Teaching Literacy and Numeracy) was successful, and I was invited to join Thomas Danby College's generic teacher training team in September 2003. At first, my involvement was limited to an awarding body's Level 4 teaching certificate, before joining the college's Certificate/ Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (Cert Ed/PGCE) team, delivered in partnership with the University of Huddersfield, in 2004. Thus, my entry into teacher training was one of timely opportunity rather than a pre-meditated career move.

My professional identity as a generic teacher educator remained embryonic for the first years, as research for survival was the imperative. To display an outward show of confidence, I had to be cognizant of (a) the continuous changes that were taking place in teacher education within the sector, and (b) the actual 'stuff' I was now expected to teach. It all seemed far removed from that of a literacy teacher educator; however, in 2005, I completed a literacy training the trainer course run by London South Bank's Language and Literacy Unit (LLU+, RiP). The tutors were inspirational and enabled me to see how my two roles were complementary rather than divergent. This was the start of my becoming more research active.

As part of the course, I had to investigate a current pertinent issue within the SfL agenda, and focused on teacher professionalism within the sector. This was

**'My entry into teacher training was timely opportunity rather than a pre-meditated move'**

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**'Research for survival was the imperative'**

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Jane Brooke

8



subsequently published as an article in Numeracy Briefing (May, 2006). I then began a master's degree in Applied Linguistics at the University of Nottingham, which continued to strengthen the ties between generic and literacy teacher training, particularly in my research into classroom discourse and literacy practices. During this period, I co-wrote an article with a colleague in the Thomas Danby Teacher Education Department, which discussed the difficulties that teacher educators face in helping vocational tutors develop their literacy/English skills. It is this area that I am particularly interested in, and enabled me to continue to develop a more active research role following my move to Selby College in 2009, which also works in partnership with the University of Huddersfield. The college's Teacher Education Programme Manager, Heather Lister, encourages her team to remain research active. Our first collaboration was an informal study into trainee teachers' reflective practice preferences in 2011, followed by a more formal study into the literacy support trainee teachers require to complete their Cert Ed/PGCE in 2012.

Heather Lister and I have recently completed another research project: the use of flipped learning within teacher education (June 2016). This was published in the peer-reviewed *Teaching in Lifelong Learning: a journal to inform and improve practice*. Although we are not presently engaged in a formal research project, I believe that, given the oscillatory nature of the sector, and how changes impact upon teacher training, a teacher educator must remain research active. The guidance and advice I have received from Heather and former team member Ellen Schofield, have contributed greatly to my confidence in this.

9

### **National context of FE-based teacher education in the UK**

In-service teacher training is the largest form of initial teacher education (ITE) in further education (FE) colleges. There was a period of expansion in in-service FE ITE from 2003 onwards as FE and higher education (HE) responded to New Labour's 2004 *Equipping our Teachers'* initiative and the 2007 legislative requirement that all teachers and trainers working in the FE and skills sector should possess at least a Level 5 ITE qualification. Three types of FE ITE provider existed: FE colleges offering awarding body qualifications, FE colleges delivering 'franchised' university validated programmes, and university-based programmes.

This framework remained in place until the publication of the Lingfield report (2012), which argued that the requirement to have a Level 5 ITE qualification had little impact on the quality of teaching by newly qualified teachers. The subsequent 'de-regulation' of ITE for the FE and skills sector coincided with the introduction of the 'new fees' and student loans, seeing FE ITE fees for some part-time courses increase three-fold.

Many employers were no longer able to or were not prepared to pay the 'new fees' and the student teachers had to apply for student loans. Today 'de-regulation', higher fees and student loans have seen the overall number of students training to teach at Level 5 or above decline whilst the number of those acquiring lower level awards, such as the Level 3 Award and Certificate grow substantially.

The future of FE ITE is uncertain. The government continues to 'meddle' in this

'de-regulated' landscape; their latest idea being the 'apprenticeshipisation' of ITE for the FE and skills sector in the form of 'Trailblazer' Standards at Level 3, 4, 5 and soon 6. To what extent they will be adopted remains to be seen.

## **Nicole Brown: teacher, teacher trainer, learner**

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### *Personal story*

From a very early age I knew that I wanted to be a teacher and I could not ever imagine doing anything other than teach. My own education was therefore geared towards becoming a secondary teacher. My studies and teacher training in Austria and the United Kingdom led to my gaining the teaching qualification for secondary and grammar schools in Austria and the qualified teacher status in the UK. Once I had achieved my aim to work as a foreign languages teacher for several years, I realised that I was not entirely satisfied with only influencing the learning in my own classrooms. I fostered pupils' interest in modern foreign languages, raised pupils' awareness of cultures and languages and achieved pleasant classroom environments. The results in my classes and my pupils' feedback demonstrated that I was successful as a teacher. But I wanted to be able to impact pupils beyond my own classroom, and so I became involved as a school-based subject mentor for trainee teachers. At the same time, I undertook postgraduate training for the Master of Teaching and so learnt about the concept of professional development for teachers by engaging in reflective practices, such as journaling and carrying out practice-based enquiries. Gradually, I encouraged my trainee teachers to also engage in more scholarly activities and to substantiate their practical experiences with relevant literature. When the opportunity arose I took on the role as a lecturer in education, which was a crucial moment for me in becoming more research active. As lecturer on the Master of Teaching course I was going to support teachers to develop research skills in order to improve their classroom practice. I felt I could not ask teachers to engage in scholarly work and practice-based enquiries in their schools without leading by example according to the concept of transformational leadership (Bush and Middlewood, 2013; Güth et al., 2007; Johnson, 2012).

Initially, my research activities revolved around improving my own teaching practice within school and higher education settings. I experimented with new methods for

providing feedback or teaching strategies such as modelling and explored their impact and effectiveness regarding trainee teachers' learning and understanding. These research activities related to my own professional development (Zeichner, 1999) and as such they were strategic and systematic. However, as I matured in my role as teacher educator I realised that I had reached a learning plateau and in order to move forward and develop further, I would need to take a more proactive role regarding research.

My becoming more research active is largely due to the trainee teachers I taught. Their criticality of, and scepticism towards, the benefits of research-based practice encouraged me to investigate issues around differentiation, classroom management, assessment and feedback. I also researched bilingualism within monolingual classrooms. I then disseminated my findings amongst the communities of practice I was involved in. I was very aware of the positive contributions I made to my trainee teachers' formation. However, I did not feel that I could produce academic outputs because unlike traditional research outcomes my findings were strongly contextualised and not widely generalisable (Lunenberg and Willemse, 2006). More recently and partly due to a specific initiative at University College London, I have started embracing research-based teaching. So currently, I am examining reflective practice and more specifically, the use of representations and metaphors within reflections. This work is in collaboration with my trainee teachers who are equal research partners. By connecting the postgraduate students to research from an early stage in their programme I am hoping to foster their interest in continuous professional development and so to encourage them to engage in research-based teaching. In this context, I explore new ways of collecting data and generating knowledge, which in turn will be used to advance learning and teaching.

11

### **National context of teacher education in The UK**

Over the last decade teacher training in the United Kingdom has seen many changes, so that there are many routes into becoming a qualified teacher. For example, trainee teachers can be employed by their schools and train on the job while earning money, or undergo programmes that are led by higher education institutions. Additionally, due to developments within the wider education system teachers are not necessarily formally qualified or subject specialists in order to teach the specific curricula they are employed to transmit. In my current position I prepare international postgraduate students to become confident teachers. My students are trainee teachers who experience the UK education system for the first time, but are training to be teachers within voluntary religious education centres in their home countries. This means that the curriculum they are training to teach is specific to their context and works across a wide range of subjects: religious education, history, geography, music education, literature, language, personal and social education. Therefore, the secondary teacher education programme is not a typical teacher training programme in the UK. My trainee teachers work towards teaching standards, but these are not set out by the Department for Education as they are contextualised and specific to the programme.

**'My becoming more research active is  
largely due to the trainee teachers I  
taught'**

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Nicole Brown

12



Ultimately, our aims are the same as those of traditional teacher educators: supporting students in becoming effective teachers who care for their pupils, their pupils' learning and their personal, professional development.

## **Roy Halpin: teacher educator under pressure**

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### *Personal story*

My route into teacher education was more by happenstance than design. I suspect now that if I'd realised the possibility of moving into this area I would have begun working towards it sooner, but in truth during much of my early classroom career the teacher education group and their work were entirely off the radar in my area (GCE Advanced Level teaching, United Kingdom) despite being well known by other teams within the college. Even 15 years ago, the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) landscape for Further Education (FE) was fractured, very much smaller and less well-understood than in the school system.

After some success in teaching Advanced level I began branching up and out – initially as team leader, then taking on a number of projects to further the use of information technology in my curriculum area (Geography and Earth Science). Probably as a result of showing this kind of broadening interest, I began to be invited to take part in a variety of CPD (Continuing Professional Development) opportunities, some of which focused on advanced teaching and learning skills. I was then encouraged to develop some staff development activities. These were initially quite low key but quickly gained approval from college management and before long I was delivering a whole-college staff training package. Looking back on the materials and strategies used, some have stood the test of time, others are probably best forgotten about! This is reflective I think of the current moves towards real evidence-informed teaching and learning, and some of the issues regularly faced, as small pieces of evidence are extrapolated far beyond their value and end up packaged and labelled into programmes to be sold and delivered as a sort of fait accompli rather than part of an ongoing process of improvement and challenge.

Following on from this a vacancy in the teacher education team looked like an interesting career opportunity. This certainly proved to be the case and my current role continues to be an interesting and challenging one. Becoming active in research

**'Becoming active in research has been  
more to do with opportunity than design'**

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**'I'd like to stress the vital importance of  
understanding and supportive managers'**

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Roy Halpin

14





has again been more to do with opportunity than design. I undertook a Master's degree as a non-specific career development move 10 years after I first started teaching, when I knew that I needed an academic challenge. Although I had no particular aspirations in this direction at the time, it proved to be a useful move as Master's level was the minimum requirement for my first role in teacher education. As I currently work at the FE/HE interface, undertaking research and gaining a doctoral degree is entirely appropriate - the insights I have gained from having a foot in both camps prompt a lot of questions and have been an important driver in becoming research active. Colleagues at York St John University and the University of Huddersfield have been key in guiding my thinking and assisting in practice. I'd also like to stress the vital importance of understanding and supportive senior managers at my usual place of work, York College. My progress could not be happening without their continued support.

My early days as a teacher educator were full of bewilderment. Moving from your own discipline into general ITE is akin to asking a scientist to become a historian. Whilst the underlying pedagogical ideas and techniques will be sound, the depth and detail is lacking. It took about 5 years for me to feel fully in tune with this new environment and not to be experiencing daily 'imposter syndrome'. A few more years' experience, in addition to reading for my doctorate, and I am now fully confident to be a part of the story and excited to be on the edge of two potentially game-changing developments; the long-awaited (and likely waiting some more) disruption by digital technologies especially social media; and the current move towards a real evidence-informed education sector, despite the current political misuse or ignorance of such evidence. My own research investigates the developing use of digital pedagogies as trainee Further Education teachers' transition into work.

15

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Level 5 or above decline whilst the number of those acquiring lower level awards, such as the Level 3 Award and Level 4 Certificate grow substantially.

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## **Julia Mackintosh: teacher educator and novice researcher**

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### *Personal story*

16

Aged 35, I qualified as a primary school teacher, becoming a class teacher for pupils aged between 5 and 11. Having taught for 5 years, I began to look for opportunities to develop my career. Interested in teaching and learning, rather than management, I asked if I might mentor the next student-teacher that came to the school where I was working. I had no idea that I was going to enjoy the role as much as I did. I found considering and helping to develop the practice of my mentee fascinating; I relished the opportunity to discuss teaching and learning with another practitioner on a daily basis and thoroughly enjoyed seeing the impact that their teaching had on the children's learning and also on my own practice. I was hooked! Over the next 7 years I mentored undergraduate and post graduate student-teachers, teachers who were returning to work in school after a career break and sixth-form students who were considering teaching as a possible career. I became initial teacher training (ITT) and newly qualified teacher (NQT) coordinator within my school and was invited to become a member of an advisory committee at a local university. Eventually, working with student-teachers became the aspect of my job that I found most satisfying and I undertook a part-time Masters' degree in primary education with a view to becoming a full-time teacher educator in a university.

Completing my Masters' degree transformed my view of teaching and learning. It encouraged me to look beyond my classroom, to consider novel aspects of teaching and ignited my interest in research into primary education. For the first time since starting to teach, I valued the contribution of educational theory and research to inform practice. This qualification also allowed me to apply for my current role as a teacher educator at the University of Hertfordshire, lecturing in professional studies,

primary science and primary geography. In addition, it provided the mechanism for me to take the first steps towards becoming a research active practitioner. As my Masters' research project concerned the learning experiences of two student-teachers during their school-led initial teacher education, this informed my teaching at the university and encouraged by a colleague, I shared my findings with school-based teacher-educators during their mentor training. This was well received and led to an invitation into a school to share my findings with other staff and to involvement in two school-based action-research projects with other colleagues from the university. Since then, alongside my teaching commitments, I have been lucky enough to work with two very experienced colleagues in a research team studying the impact of a primary science CPD programme. Initially, as the only novice researcher in the team, I felt very unsure of my role and that I had little to offer the project. However, I have been extremely fortunate to work with colleagues who are keen to develop research activity within our department and with their support and encouragement they have allowed me to see that I can contribute, albeit in a small way at present and I have written my first academic paper, which I presented at a primary science conference last summer. I have worked with one of them to develop this paper into a journal article, which gave me the confidence to write an article for our in-house journal based on my Masters' research. Next year, I am disseminating our findings at a conference poster presentation.

My journey to becoming a research active teacher-educator has therefore taken a number of years and is still underway. Following my first tentative steps, encouraged by my colleagues, I hope to undertake a doctorate and travel further along the path to becoming a fully-fledged research active teacher-educator in the future.

17

### **National context of teacher education in England**

There are now a wide range of routes into teaching, training programmes can be led by universities, colleges and schools. Training programmes lead to QTS (Qualified Teacher Status), which is the professional accreditation based on Teacher Standards, set by the Secretary of State for Education. An academic qualification e.g. PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) or BEd (Bachelor of Education) is also awarded on successful completion of most teacher training courses.

Traditionally, primary teachers followed a 3 or 4 year undergraduate (concurrent) programme, while secondary teachers followed a one year postgraduate (consecutive) programme. More recently, the majority of primary as well as secondary teachers now follow a postgraduate programme. All programmes involve a high proportion of school experience and some programmes are employment-based.

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Julia Mackintosh



# Eglė Pranckunienė: from policy making to teachers' development and research

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## *Personal story*

My path to education and teacher training was very much related to Lithuania's independence declared in 1990. It was the most exciting time which changed our lives dramatically: from stagnant authoritarian Soviet rule, Lithuania became a vibrant free open democratic country with many new opportunities. At that time we were creating our country, working 24/7 with great enthusiasm. My career in education started from a high position: in 1992 I became an advisor to the first Minister of Education who started an extremely ambitious reform of education. He invited a group of young people to work with him and our loyalty, enthusiasm and sense of possibility was more important than diplomas and qualifications. After being a part of the policy making I turned to practice by working in the non-governmental sector. In 1999 I, together with my colleagues Marina and Rita, founded a Centre for School Improvement. Since then we have been playing an active role in the professional development of teachers and school leaders in Lithuania, offering training programs, consultancy and other initiatives promoting student-centered learning, cooperative learning, shared leadership for learning in tune with our mission - to help schools in Lithuania become places where everybody is learning to learn, to be, to do and to be together.

I was playing different roles at the Centre: leading the team, managing the activities, fundraising, developing training programs, leading training and conferences, advocating for school improvement initiatives, etc. I liked most of the things I was doing, especially working with teachers and school leaders, but I had a feeling that it was not deep enough. Creating programs I never had enough time for a deeper analysis or my own research. I like analyzing, reading, writing, but I was always too busy running around organizing something and I could not stop and spend more time for my own professional growth. I had a dream to enter a PhD program, but it was always not the right time as I needed to start a new project or to be fundraising to maintain the organization. In 2012 it was my 50th birthday, a time to reflect on my life, and I decided to start on a PhD program. Firstly I was hungry for a deep learning, secondly I wanted to explore issues I was interested in: life histories of teachers and leaders, lived experiences of educational change and trust. Thirdly I wanted to write and share my ideas with others and to enrich the dominating discourse with the new themes and approaches.

There were many people who encouraged me in this endeavor. My husband and daughters, Marina, the co-founder of our Centre, who agreed to take over part of my responsibilities, my supervisor and my colleagues - researchers who are always

**'Working on my research is extremely  
frustrating but ... gives me a greater  
understanding of teacher education'**

Eglé Pranckunienė

20



ready to help and give advice. The Canadian researcher Dean Fink was the one who involved me in an international research project despite my little experience and helped me to find a focus for my further research.

I started doing research after 20 years of intensive teacher training practice. This experience is an important source for my research helping me to understand the context, knowing many people and having a passion to learn more and more. I'm still on my journey of professional growth as a teacher educator. Working on my research is extremely frustrating but at the same time it gives me more trust and a greater understanding of teacher education. It is opening new conceptual horizons and new ideas to be shared by teachers and leaders. Analyzing life narratives of my research participants gives me a sense of responsibility to represent the voices of teachers who are still very silent and not heard enough.

### **National context of teacher education in Lithuania**

Education in Lithuania has gone through rapid reforms in the last 30 years. We still are moving slowly from a teacher-centered standardized and unified instruction towards a student-centered approach. Since 1990 all the aspects of our education system were in a constant change: curriculum, examination system, structure of school, teacher training and professional development, accountability system, school network restructuring, etc. The first decade of the reform resulted in great progress in the international tests of students but at the moment we are experiencing a period of stagnation due to chaotic and non-systematic reforms. After elections each new government would introduce something new, usually contradicting their predecessors. For 20 years we have faced demographic crises resulting in closures of schools and reducing jobs for teachers. 41% of teachers are over 50 and that means that in few years we will be facing a shortage of teachers but at the moment teaching is not considered to be an attractive profession (OECD, 2016). Despite all these challenges there are a lot of positive developments: a lot of highly educated, passionate and motivated teachers and school leaders who are still in the system, potential for innovations due to decentralisation and the autonomy of certain schools, growing involvement of parents and communities. The difficult side is the bureaucratic administration of the system, overemphasis of test results which limits the creativity of teachers and deep learning of students.

**'Don't worry', he said, 'with your dynamism and a little diplomacy, it should be OK'**

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**'Workshops didn't interest me so much anymore, I was beginning to hunger for deeper understanding'**

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Jeanny Prat

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# Jeanny Prat: a journey in the perpetual learning galaxy

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## *Personal Story*

Somehow my career as a teacher educator started that day in 1985 when the school Principal asked me into her office and told me with a mysterious smile that I was to contact the EFL Inspector because he wanted to come and observe one of my classes. So I phoned the number she handed me - and was rather startled when the Inspector asked me to choose the class I wished to be observed at work with. Absolutely unusual by French Education Nationale culture. I decided it would be a nice opportunity to get feedback on a jigsaw-listening and speaking activity I had only recently designed for a not-so-motivated group of teenagers.

It was a pretty risky thing to do (everybody will tell you not to try out anything new on inspection day); besides, group work was still unusual in French classes. The post-observation interview didn't last very long - the Inspector quickly said he had in fact come to offer me a half-time position as teacher trainer. I didn't even know such a thing existed (I was in my fifth year of teaching) and quickly asked 'any trainer training?' I got a pat on my shoulder - 'Don't worry', he said, 'with your dynamism and a little diplomacy, it should be OK.' And that was it.

A chance encounter during my first year of teaching had acquainted me with TESOL-France (TESOL: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). So in the early 80s, I fed mostly on the workshops and paper presentations (those I found a little hard to follow) at their annual Convention in Paris. I also attended most the British Council's Wednesday afternoon workshops and presentations the year I was sent to teach about 70 kms north of Paris. I met Philippe Meirieu who was organising a summer teacher training week, discovered the existence of Educational Sciences and started a BA. Now that I come to think of it, the rest happened sort of naturally. I once suggested TESOL-France should not be in Paris all the time, why not Lyon - I got told why not organise it, so I did. One of my in-service trainees told me of an experiment she had made, using a videocam (such an incredible new and rare tech at the time) so that the students could watch themselves speaking and understand the necessity of a good pronunciation. Because she had two similar classes, I suggested she tried a cross viewing between them. This ended as a workshop at the British Council in Paris- and lo, we were invited to attend The International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) Conference in Edinburgh. Wow - a four-day conference, so much to discover, so many practitioners and researchers... The following year 1989 I found myself part of a group of twenty International Visitors invited by the State Department for 'a grand tour', all of us teacher trainers or university lecturers from Cyprus, Soudan, Ceylon (Sri Lanka today), Russia, etc.

together for a month's visit of various schools and universities. Part of this tour was the TESOL Convention in San Antonio, Texas – another four-day one, yet even bigger. Then the shock – I was listening to David Nunan presenting the result of his last piece of research when I realised workshops didn't interest me so much anymore, that I was beginning to hunger for deeper understanding, that maybe my little experiments in my classes were some sort of research, too.

That year 1989 definitely is a turning point in my professional voyage. I took and passed the French competitive exam called *agrégation* while finishing the BA in Educational Sciences. The Ministry of Education had just decided on the introduction of foreign languages into primary schools and the Head of in-service training made me responsible for setting that up in the Lyon area - my turn to devise some teacher-training. So on from in-service teacher training to initial teacher training in the IUFM (University Institute for Teacher Training), now ESPE (Teaching and Education College). It took me a while to dare engage in a Master Research in Educational Sciences, I had to rely on Michel Develay's shrug 'You aren't aware of your working capacity' to push myself into it.

But at the time of writing this, I have just kicked myself up again and registered for a Ph.D. in Language Sciences...

### **National context of teacher education in France**

24

Teacher education in France has gone through a number of successive reforms, especially recently. Education Minister Jospin's 1989 Education Act was crucial which created the *instituts universitaires de formation des maîtres* (IUFM) where initial teacher training for both primary and secondary was developed over two years, one for preparing for the state competitive exam, the second for learning how to teach with about one third time of teaching practice. In 2009 (under President Sarkozy) France was very late in fully complying with the Bologna process requisites (Bachelor-Master-Doctorate system) and teacher initial education was rashly turned into a master's degree, with no clear national framework. This resulted in universities competing instead of collaborating, and almost no teaching practice (thus reducing the load on the nation's budget since second-year students did not have to be paid as state trainees any more). At that time a huge number of teaching posts disappeared as a result of the government's policy to not replace one out of two retiring civil servants (which almost all French teachers are) and a great number were reaching retirement age. On coming to power in 2012, President Hollande's government reconsidered everything with a new Education Act (2013), a national framework for Masters in Education whereby all the universities in a given area (*Académie*) must collaborate, a new list of professional competencies and the (re-)creation of almost as many posts as had previously disappeared. France has been swaying back and forth between right-wing and left-wing governmental positions for the last 25 years – will the May 2017 presidential election result in a similar turnaround?

# Nobuko Takeda: advocate for children and youth

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## *Personal story*

The goal of my research and action as a teacher educator has been to achieve children's wellbeing. I aim to improve education and link my research to the practice in real school situations. I have taught Educational Psychology as a teacher educator at Musashi University, Tokyo since 1992. At the same time, I identify myself as a clinical psychologist. In my twenties, I engaged in children's psychotherapy at a psychiatry hospital and an educational counselling center. Through this experience I realized that what was needed more was to change our educational values rather than mental care and counselling for children. I felt I should involve myself in changing social values of the Japanese society, where competitive and burdensome education was valued at the expense of children's mental health.

That is why, in 1999, I became a visiting scholar in University of Toronto Faculty of Social Work to research social worker education and children's environment in Ontario where its policy of respect for children's rights was known internationally. Upon returning to Japan, I studied the professional development of human service professionals in other fields including medical and nursing education as well as early childhood educators' education. Consequently, I developed competency lists for child family supporters and play workers and trained those professionals nationwide. During my next sabbatical in 2006, I was a visiting scholar at Free University of Amsterdam, researching education in the Netherlands where I heard that teachers respected children's autonomy. There I met competency lists for the professional quality of teachers and the ALACT model for teachers' reflection (Korthagen and Vasalos, 2005) and various alternative approaches, which stimulated my sense of importance for teachers' first-hand experience of different educational methods, as well as reflection and discussions with their colleagues on their own practice and values. As a result, I initiated the development of teacher competency lists and of a reflection workbook for teachers and student teachers in Japan, while paying close attention to the local context and needs. Now that I have successfully developed the materials, I have shifted my focus to professional development of teacher educators who can actually utilize them in their teaching. I was never a school teacher, but I have taught university students using active learning, by applying theories in clinical and educational psychologies to my own educational practice. I give talks and training sessions nationwide for teachers, child caretakers and parents. To accomplish my mission of children's wellbeing, I have always utilized the perspective and techniques from my background in clinical psychology to improve the situation of systematic maltreatment in Japanese education. This has led me to the world of professional

**'The goal of my research and action as a  
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**'I realized that what was needed more  
was to change our educational values'**

Nobuko Takeda

26



development of teacher educators.

To share my research results with my colleagues in Japan, I have worked on translations of books, and have published articles on comparative study of teacher education in Japan and abroad. I started participating in the Professional Development of Teacher Educators (PDTE) Research and Development Community (RDC) of the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE) from 2010, where Anja Swennen kindly welcomed this researcher from the Far East. Thanks to this opportunity, I have been able to share the latest information on European teacher education. This has encouraged Japanese researchers to look at the situation in other countries, and in 2016, twenty researchers from Japan joined the ATEE's annual conference.

I have so far invited a total of three teacher educators from the Netherlands to Japan and organized symposiums with The Japanese Society for the Study on Teacher Education as well as people from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and held workshops with teachers and teacher educators. After publishing the Japanese translation of 'Linking Practice and Theory' by Korthagen et al. (2001), Japanese teacher educators have participated in his workshops in the Netherlands, South Korea and the United States, and the participants are now using the group work techniques in their practice and holding workshops for teachers throughout Japan. They are now researching teacher education in other countries including North America and Scandinavia. I am now working on the translation of 'The Professional Teacher Educator' (Lunenberg et al., 2014) which will further develop research on teacher education in Japan. With John Loughran's visit planned in February 2017 from Australia, soon the concept of self-study will spread across Japan as a research methodology for teachers and the development of a pedagogy of teacher education will start, I believe.

27

### **National context of teacher education in Japan**

Nearly all teacher trainings are provided at 4-year universities. Any university can train students to become teachers if they offer subjects necessary for acquiring a teacher's license. Teacher training at general universities has contributed to producing high quality teachers. On the other hand, there are many people who do not become teachers after acquiring the teacher's license.

Teacher educators are mainly institution-based researchers, and most of them give student teachers one-way lectures. In many universities, there is only a total of 2-to-3 week practicum period in 4 years; therefore the student teachers have insufficient experience in real school situation. Thus having the teacher's license does not guarantee the minimum required practical ability as a teacher. Further, to become a teacher, they should pass a grueling knowledge-weighted examination, and many novice teachers experience initial shock. In recent years, experienced teachers have been hired as teacher educators for the purpose of fostering practical skills. However, the majority of them are over-60-year-old male former principals who tend to fall into too much empiricism. Professional development of teacher educators after being

employed is an urgent matter in teacher education.

Once people become teachers, they have various opportunities for both public and private training. As widely known, “lesson study” is a characteristic training method in Japan. However, there are still many perfunctory training for teaching techniques and knowledge transfer. Under such circumstances, school education in Japan is now about to switch to a learner-centric active learning, and teacher education is also changing.

## **Mariëlle Theunissen: associate professor and teacher educator**

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### *Personal story*

28 During secondary school I became interested in education and learning, so I decided to study educational studies at university. After graduation, I was offered a four-year PhD position in the Institute of Teacher Education at my university. During my period of research, I also started teaching students at our Institute. I loved it! I visited them during their internships and observed their lessons. I taught them important theories and assessed their reports. In the meantime, I finished my PhD and decided to continue educating future teachers. I hadn't yet become a successful researcher, as I hadn't succeeded in writing proper articles for acceptance by peer-reviewed journals. But the quality of my work as a teacher educator increased, and a few years later, I was registered as a professional teacher educator at the Dutch Association of Teacher Educators (VELON).

By the time I prepared my re-registration, I formulated goals to become an even better teacher educator. I realized that I had never been a teacher myself. How strange was that? I educated my students from important perspectives in theory and research, but some of my colleagues were also able to use their perspectives as experienced teachers in secondary education. While I had observed lessons my students had taught and had even given them feedback, I had never experienced myself what it felt like to see 30 pairs of eyes looking at me and expecting me to teach them, handle their behaviour, and take care of them. I had never experienced what it was to operate in a school organization, teaching 20 or more lessons of 50 minutes each a week.

Consequently, I made a decision: I resigned from university. As my teaching subject, I chose my hobby since childhood: music. I found a job as a teacher of music in secondary education. I also auditioned for conservatory, because I needed my diploma as a teacher of music. In two years, I graduated from conservatory after developing my skills mainly as a pianist, because in the vision of the conservatory a future teacher of music had to be a musician. In the meantime I struggled as a teacher, but in the end, I loved it. I had a great supervisor at school and reread – with totally different eyes! – my theoretical books on classroom management and instruction. I was able to sing with my classes, teach my pupils to play keyboard, and manage co-operative learning assignments in composing. I also organized excursions to a fabulous symphony orchestra. Still, there was more: I was involved in coaching new colleagues and student teachers at school. In the end, I was still a teacher educator! I was invited to teach at the Institute of Teacher Education again, and this time I felt that my teaching was improved by the short stories and examples I was now able to give from my own classroom.

One of the subjects I taught, and still teach, is practice-based research. I pursued professional development in supervising practice-based research by conducting practice-based research myself. As a subject, I chose another class that I had taught: adolescent psychology. My secondary school is part of a Professional Development School, and together with the Institute of Teacher Education, we teach this subject at school because we want to take advantage of the adolescent student population there. The how and what of this advantage are still questioned, as the organization of this course is still up for discussion from both sides: the school says it is hard to organize a schedule for the pupils, and the teacher institute questions the quality of the theoretical basis of the course.

29

In the end, all the paths of my professional career have come together in becoming an associate professor on the beautiful subject of school-based teacher education. I now formulate research projects with the intention of improving school-based teacher education, improving continuing education for teachers, and improving the curriculum of the institute of teacher education. With pain in my heart, I stopped teaching music, but promised myself I could always restart while still teaching future teachers.

### **National context of teacher education in The Netherlands**

Initial teacher training courses for the various types of school are part of higher education, some being provided at universities of applied sciences and some at universities. Kindergarten and Primary school teacher training courses are higher professional education courses offered at universities of applied sciences. These courses require four years' full-time study.

Secondary and Vocational school teacher training courses are provided at universities of applied sciences and universities. Students specialize in one subject. Courses in arts subjects are provided by a number of universities of applied sciences specialising in courses in the fine and performing arts. University graduates with a master's degree

**'I hadn't yet become a successful  
researcher'**

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**'I realized that I had never been a teacher  
myself'**

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Mariëlle Theunissen

30





can take a postgraduate teacher training course. Students can also begin, and, if they wish, complete their teacher training while they are still undergraduates. The part-time, full-time and dual options all require one-year's full-time study. Teaching practice is an important component of teacher training. Students receive practical training in the area in which they eventually intend to work.

Schools and teacher education institutes in The Netherlands have built partnerships with joint responsibility for educating future teachers. School-based teacher education is organized around learning to teach in authentic situations. School-based teacher education, however, is more than just giving students the opportunity to learn in authentic contexts. Guidance and 'work-based education' are necessary to support and stimulate supervising teachers' learning, connecting theory with practice and the other way around. Some 20% of all student teachers receive their practical training in these Professional Development Schools.

# Final remarks

The first of this series of 'little red books' that was compiled by and for teacher educators was published in July 2015. Now, less than two years later, the fourth booklet sees the light. Elizabeth White brought together an international group of teacher educators who told their stories about how they became researchers. Becoming active researchers is, as evidenced in this booklet, a powerful way for teacher educators to professionalize themselves and improve teacher education. However, doing research provides more benefits. Teacher educators who are researchers are no longer just consumers of research carried out by full time academics, but they contribute actively to the development of the professional and academic knowledge base to improve teacher education and the pedagogy of teacher education.

It is important for teacher educator researchers to publish their academic work in ways that makes the results useful to their direct colleagues and valued by their academic peers. We learn from the stories that teacher educators foster research that is rooted in practice and as well as in academia. However, it is not easy to serve these the two communities with their distinct traditions. Most authors published their work in various ways and this booklet is one of the means for them to share their work within their own international community of teacher educators.

32

If we learn one thing from the four brochures that are published so far, it is that teacher educators are educational travellers. They constantly cross borders and boundaries and do so with great enthusiasm, pleasure and never failing dedication. They literally and figuratively travel to and from schools and teacher education, and the university world of academia in which they import their knowledge of the world of practice and bring back useful tools and instruments for their daily work and research. Teacher educators travel on a national level when they share their practice and research with other teacher educators in projects, seminars and conferences and they cross international borders to share and learn about unknown practices, ideas and vision.

There is still much to be gained in the improvement of professional development, formal and informal, for teacher educators in the context of their home institutions, and on national and international levels. We look forward to the next booklets which will cover new and exciting themes for teacher educators.

**Peter Lorist, Anja Swennen and Elizabeth White**

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# The editors

## **Elizabeth White, guest editor**

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After leaving school I studied for a first degree and PhD in biochemistry and started a career in neurochemistry. Following a career break to start a family, I wanted to inspire others to gain an interest in science, so I completed a year of postgraduate study to become a secondary science teacher. After 11 years teaching I made a gradual transition into becoming a teacher educator based in a University School of Education. My journey to teacher educator began as a mentor to a student-teacher, which I found the most energising aspect of my school life. I became involved in the professional development of my peers and started visiting science student-teachers in their school settings and leading some taught sessions. For five years I took increasingly more responsibility for the learning of secondary student-teachers until I moved fully into a career in teacher education, after completing my Masters in Leading Learning. My research and professional practice are closely linked, as my interests are the professional development, pedagogy and identity of teachers, school- and institute-based teacher educators; teacher leadership; development of subject knowledge for teaching; collaborative partnerships; and modelling professional values and practice. My work as a teacher educator has given me unique access to listen to other professionals in the field in primary and secondary schools and Higher Education Institutes, to execute and disseminate my research. I am currently serving as the Honorary Secretary of the International Professional Development Association (<http://ipda.org.uk/>).

**Peter Lorist, HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, and Anja Swennen, VU University Amsterdam, editors of the series**

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Elizabeth was one of the authors of the second brochure, Life and work of teacher educators. We were very pleased by her initiative during ATEE 2016 in Eindhoven, where she invited participants to share their stories for a new brochure. In a very short time there was this new brochure of Elizabeth in coproduction with Jane, Nicole, Roy, Julia, Eglé, Jeanny, Nobuko and Muriëlle.

For a short personal introduction of both of us, see brochure 2 at [www.onderwijsweb.hu.nl](http://www.onderwijsweb.hu.nl).

## **Colophon**

### **Editors of the series**

Peter Lorist

Anja Swennen

### **Guest editor volume 4**

Elizabeth White

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