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Newly Qualified Teachers in Northern Europe

– Comparative Perspectives on Promoting Professional Development

Contents

Becoming a Teacher
– an Introduction to the Theme and the Book

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Teachers are a professional group whose work and competence have received more attention in the last few years. In a society where issues of globalization, economic competition, and social mobility emphasize skills, values, and learning as important issues of competence, teachers are becoming a strategic group (see for instance OECD, 2005).

In this context, it is logical that newly qualified teachers' professional development and working situation attract attention in policy documents, in research, and in efforts to develop systems promoting professional development. Some of the causes for the growing interest are (1) the knowledge that the initial teacher education more or less requires systems for gradual introduction and support of the new teachers during the first years; (2) the possibilities, and sometimes the need, to promote newly qualified teachers' professional development; (3) the fact that many newly qualified teachers leave the teaching profession early; (4) the risk of shortage of teachers; (5) that teachers often are an overrepresented group regarding absence due to sickness, or (6) a mistrust towards initial teacher education. All of these aspects have been noticed in large European projects, and against that background research as well as development work are carried out in order to better understand and promote newly qualified teachers' professional development (Eurydice, 2004; OECD, 2005).

The causes of interest mentioned above is often manifested in media or in reports as "negative" information, with headlines telling how bad the situation is. Even in research, there seems to be a discourse to stress the problems, dilemmas, and shortcomings new teachers could meet. However, the so called "praxis chock" or "reality chock", when newly qualified teachers has to confront with the reality of teaching (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; McCormack & Thomas, 2003), is often, but not always, a fact. To be a newly qualified teacher is often a challenging period, and that is perhaps why hardly any phase in teacher careers re-

ceived more attention in research in proportion to its limited extension in time. Most challenging for new teachers seems the classroom management, the leadership, and discipline (e.g. Wideen et al., 1998; Moran et al., 1999; Fregerslev & Jørgensen, 2000). Prioritisations and meeting pupils different needs (Bergsvik et al., 2005); relations to pupils, colleagues or parents; and to handle stress and uphold self-esteem are other challenges to meet. During the first years, the emotions run high, there is an intense process of discovery, and the learning curve is steep (Grimsæth et al., 2008). To feel insecure, experience uncertainty or lack of competence then more or less becomes normal reactions, not due to imperfect preparation during initial teacher training, but due to the ever-changing nature of the teaching situation and the fact being inexperienced. We will come back to this later on in this chapter.

Newly qualified teachers' experiences and the situations they have to handle, are of interest in many spheres. The six causes of interest mentioned above, are mainly connected to three spheres of interests: (a) the new teachers themselves (who sometimes need support and promotion of their professional development), (b) initial teacher education system (with the interest to learn more about the training they are giving and about teachers professional development), and (c) authorities and employers (who has responsibility for a well functioning educational system and are in a policy making position). These three spheres of interests have one specific core interest in common, that is: how to become a teacher and develop professionally. This could also be seen as the theme for this chapter and the whole book. In the various chapters, these three spheres of interests are addressed and met, however in different extent in the various chapters.

Concepts and perspectives

So far in this chapter, we have used the phrase newly qualified teachers. However, other concepts such as beginning teachers, novice teachers, and new teachers are also commonly used in Anglo-Saxon literature. What kind of concepts one chooses to use is probably a result of contextual, linguistic and ideological factors. For instance, the term novice teacher has a bit of a negative connotation for some in the Nordic countries, as the ideological ambition is to conceptualise newly qualified teachers as fully qualified and fully worthy colleagues, however not yet so experienced. On the other hand, concepts have to be used in a way so that the intended meaning fits the context.

From the beginning we had the intention to elaborate a coherent use of concepts in the various chapters of this book. However, during the

process we found that this resulted in dilemmas related to contextual (national but also personal) ways to conceptualise and give meaning to the phenomena (for similar dilemmas see Britton et al., 2003, p. 14). As a result, the concepts are used in the various chapters in the manner the author(s) finds it most convenient, or to the extent they could compromise with their own personal and contextual perspectives. Consequently, there is no absolute coherent use of concepts between the chapters or even within the chapters. We have chosen to see this as an expression of a strong contextualization and space for personal choice of concepts. This gives the attentive reader an opportunity to analyse the texts and reflect on how this conceptuality appears. As editors, for reasons of convenience, we henceforth in this introduction and in the final chapter use the phrase 'new teacher'. We do that without any intention of reducing the value of the "newly qualified teachers" competence, nor the more experienced teachers' competence.

In the various chapters phrases like "support" and "support system" are used. The conceptualisation of these phrases is to be looked upon from the perspective of promotion of professional development, rather than from a perspective of an "incompetent" or "fragile" person in "need of help to manage". This is an important difference, as we look upon the new teachers as competent, however not yet so experienced, having some specific opportunities to learn and develop professionally. Focus on professional development also implies that it is not primarily a question of incorporating the new teacher in the existing culture, but to contribute to a development of it. In this introduction and in the final chapter we consistently see induction[1], mentoring and "systems" in the perspective of promoting professional development.

One other issue to be discussed in a book like this is *who* the new teachers are. In the Anglo-Saxon literature, new teachers are most often teachers in elementary school and secondary school. However, in Norway and Sweden early childhood teachers are sometimes also included when focusing on systems promoting new teachers' professional development. Another question is *how long a* teacher is expected to be a *new* teacher until he or she is looked upon as an experienced teacher, or at least no longer is regarded as being involved in activities promoting new teachers' professional development. Some authors claim that new teachers should get special attention for at least two year or longer (e.g. Flores, 2006; O'Brian & Christie, 2008). Both of these questions, who the new teacher is and for how long someone is new, are focused in some chapters in this book, but we avoid making a general distinction and let the context in the various chapters speak.

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[1] The concept of induction is sometimes used describing a system for support (induction-system); a time-period (induction-period); a specific phase in teaching (induction-phase), or a process of learning (Britton et al., 2003). For further elaborations, see chapters 2 and 3 in this book.

Becoming a teacher

In a book focusing on new teachers' professional development, one important issue is how to understand new teachers' professional development and the promotion in that process; that is how to become, be and develop as a teacher. Teachers, as every professional, are expected to be involved in learning and professional development activities during their entire professional lives. To become a teacher requires (most often) some kind of education and training. However, the initial teacher education is of different scope and focus in different countries. This is a natural result of the existence of different national, cultural, educational, and ideological settings. It is also a consequence of different views of what kind of education is needed to "be" or "become" a teacher (cf. Dillon & Maguire, 2007; Goodwin, 2008). Irrespective of educational settings, we dare state that there always exists a discussion – certainly different in intensity – focusing both on the process and the product; that is *how* to learn to teach (or to become a teacher) and *what kind* of knowledge, skills, and values a teacher needs. These discussions could lead to questions as: What is to be learnt, and in what way? How should the balance be between academic education and school/preschool based training; or between academic subject matter and pedagogical and didactic skills? What is possible to learn in a "decontextualised" initial teacher education, and what is best learnt on the job? Not all these questions will be answered in this book, some will and for the others a platform for further investigations will be made.

These kinds of questions have to include the very nature of learning, skills, and competence as well as the range of what is possible to learn during initial teacher education. Our conviction is that a prospective teacher cannot be prepared to 100 % without feeling any kind of uncertainty (cf. Munthe, 2003) or lack of competence, due to the ever-changing nature of the teaching situation and the very nature of knowledge, skills, and competence.[2] In initial teacher education one could, for instance, learn about how to handle conflicts, how to help pupils learn, read and write or understand mathematics *to a certain degree* – but to contextualize, develop, and deepen the knowledge, skills, and competence, as well as reduce any anxiety – one has to apply one's knowledge

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[2] Munthe (2003) found that teachers with less than five years' experience of teaching and teachers with more than 20 years' experience felt a greater uncertainty than those who had been teachers for between five and twenty years. The teachers with less than five years' experience were uncertain due to lack of experience, while the uncertainty the teachers with more than 20 years' experience could be explained by the expected difficulties to meet the changing demands and competencies needed.

in real situations (Helsing, 2007).[3] This is as obvious for teachers as for nurses, doctors, and engineers and other professionals. It is also impossible for the initial teacher education to prepare teachers for every challenge they will meet (Grimsæth et al., 2008). We could also add the process of identity formation which McNally et al. (2008) emphasize as an important aspect for new teachers' first years. According to them, the formation of an identity is essential for how new teachers conceive and perform their teaching and thereby the relations with colleagues, parents, pupils, and their own self-image, are essential. In sum, this means that a program of initial teacher education (as any other educational program) has a certain potential, just because of the nature of learning and of the knowledge, skills, values, and competence learnt. To this comes the very task of the initial teacher education, to prepare for a life-long professional development, must be expected that some skills needed as a teacher will not be so well developed as they could due to dilemmas with prioritisation within initial teacher education.

It is especially important to highlight the issues discussed above in times when the teaching profession and the initial teacher educations are questioned and criticized – of a decent cause or just out of ideological preferences (Compton & Weiner, 2008). Thus, focusing on new teachers, highlighting shortcomings, needs, and the promotion of new teachers' professional development does not automatically mean that the initial teacher education has problems, needed to be "fixed" by mentoring and support systems.[4] Instead, doing research or arguing for systems promoting new teachers' professional development could be conceptualised as a way to acknowledge the complexity of learning, as described above, and as a striving force to get the very best teaching professionals possible (whatever that may be). In this way, teacher induction has to be conceptualised in a perspective of life long learning. This is in line with, for instance, Britton et al. (2003) who claim:

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[3] This phenomenon is often manifested when teacher students or new teachers say they have not been learnt how to handle some specific field – however these reflection is often very shallow, but symptomatic of the phenomena. More seldom, we hear someone say:"I would like to know more theory about this field so I better can understand what could happen, and this way be better handle specific situations."

[4] However, sometimes it seems that some politicians or ideologists take every chance to attack the initial teacher education, searching for any argument blaming the educations and that way legitimise their own educational agenda.

Induction is not simply or primary to decrease teacher turnover: instead, in these sites, it stands as a key juncture of learning, growth and support. Induction occupies a special place, looking both backward to preservice teacher preparation and forward to the career of teaching, with its challenges of becoming and being a teacher […] It is not primarily about fixing a problem. It is about building something desirable – a teacher, a teaching force, a profession, a kind of learning for pupils in schools. (Britton et al., 2003, pp. 301–302)

In an international perspective, the research interest and the interest to develop systems promoting new teachers' professional development have been more widespread in the US and in a majority of European countries than in the Nordic and the Baltic countries. For example, various forms of introduction systems have been tried in England since at least 1968 (Jordell, 1986). In the US and New Zealand, organised support to newly qualified teachers has occurred since the beginning and the end of the 1970s, respectively (Ganser, 2002; Britton et al., 2003). It is, however, principally during the 1990s that these activities increased strikingly in scope in these countries, and also in other countries. Since the middle of the 1980s, the interest to promote newly qualified teachers' professional development has improved globally (Gold, 1996, p. 560) and the interest coincides with the listed starting points above.

The interest for new teachers' working situation and professional development has for instance expressed itself in national and international co-operation where experiences are compared and where common projects are implemented. Among others, a number of countries within the framework of ATEE (Association for Teacher Education in Europe) have conducted comparative research about different European countries' systems to support new teachers, to introduce them in the teaching profession and to promote their professional development (cf. Baldassarre, 1998; Fransson & Morberg, 2001; Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 2003). Britton et al. (2003), Dangel (2006), and Moskowitz & Stephens (1997) describe other comparative studies.

In Europe and the US, there has been rather extensive research focusing on newly qualified teachers and their working conditions for several decades. In the Nordic and the Baltic countries, however, research focusing on newly qualified teachers has not received very much attention until the last few years – and the development is uneven. In Norway and Sweden the question appeared on the agenda in the middle of 1990s, while the question in Denmark, Estonia, and Finland became

current somewhat later (see also chapter 3)[5]. In Norway, the question was highlighted in Stortingsmelding no. 48 (1996-97) "On teacher education" with proposals regarding a "candidate year" for new teachers. Since 2001, a national pilot project has been carried out in order to examine various models supporting and promoting new teachers' professional development (see chapter 3). In Finland and Denmark, new teachers' special situation began to be focused at the very end of the 1990s (Välijärvi, 2000; Luukainen, 2001; Bayer & Brinkkjær, 2003). In Estonia, the new approach for initial teacher education launched in 2000 included the basic principals for the national induction system that was implemented in 2003. In Sweden, the focus on new teachers increased in 1995 when an agreement between the teachers' union and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, stated that new teachers had the *right* to be supported by a mentor and to be offered a special program of introduction (ÖLA, 2000), but the results varied between municipalities.

Because of all these activities in the specific countries, the interest in research and development embracing new teachers has increased in these countries. All chapters in this book focus on issues connected to this development. However, the issue has become of great immediate interest in Sweden when a Government Inquiry (SOU 2008:52) in May 2008 proposed a system with registration for teachers. This new proposal is built on the same ideas as the agreement from 1995, however with some important distinctions as; it is a governmental top-down initiative; a probationary year will give possibilities to become registered as a teacher; and, the mentors have to consider if the new teachers have adequate competence to become registered. It is recommended that the Swedish National Agency for Education is given the authority to impose (or withdraw) the registration. If accepted, this reform is intended to be implemented by 2010.

At present, there are rather few studies where teachers' working conditions in the Nordic and the Baltic countries are compared – and in principle, no comparative studies that cover new teachers. However, efforts have been made, in a comparative perspective, to understand the Nordic educational systems (cf. Klette et al., 2002; Antikainen, 2006; Arnesen & Lundahl, 2006; Heiðar Frímannsson, 2006; Oftedal Telhaug et al., 2006; see also chapter 8).

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[5] However, it is delicate to stress these kinds of statements as (of course) some research has been made earlier. For instance have several reports been made both ahead and after the Norwegian project "The first year of teaching" (1980-1982) (e.g. Strømnes, 1980; Jordell, 1986). However, our statement is based on earlier discussions/events initiated having impact until today.

One of the few research projects that compares teachers' working conditions in the Nordic countries, focuses on (experienced) teachers' working conditions in times of change (Klette et al., 2002; Carlgren et al., 2006; Carlgren & Klette, 2008). In this project, teachers' attitudes to work and to the ongoing changes, as well as how Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish teachers show these attitudes, are discussed. For instance, one result is that Swedish teachers seem to be more willing to accept new requirements, but at the same time they see themselves as "victims" of change, whereas Finnish teachers seem to accept the change more quietly and simultaneously appear to stand in their "traditional" teacher role. These and other differences can probably be explained by the fact that teachers of different nations partly have different norms, values, attitudes, conceptions, and behavioural patterns. These (Nordic) differences increase the interest in performing comparative research where new teachers' working conditions and experiences are made visible and are problematised. In a Nordic perspective, the outcome of this kind of research could be of much more importance, than comparisons with research carried out in quite different cultural contexts. Therefore, the work up to now in the NQTNE network, presented in this book, has generated new knowledge, but above all formed the platform and the first step to exciting future research journeys in northern Europe in the area of new teachers.

Aims and audience

The main aim of this book is to offer opportunities for a better understanding of new teachers' working conditions, their professional development, and systems promoting their professional development in the northern European countries, that is: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. However, this could be done in many ways. The way we have chosen throughout this book is to have a comparative perspective in focus and vary the level of the analyses.

The chapters focus on the growth of the systems promoting professional development, the organisation of these systems, detailed analyses of the content of these systems where especially mentoring is highlighted, and the very individual level with personal narratives. In all this, networks and networking are key words and the knowledge created and exchanged through networks. In chapter three induction is focused at the national level, while in chapter four mentoring as a system and activity within an induction system is focused. Chapter five focuses on different approaches like how to conceptualise, organise and "perform" mentoring on a project level, and in chapter six the individual level is

focused by analysing narratives from new teachers. Chapters two and seven deal with the meta-level of the process of networking, both within NQTNE and in other contexts.

This means that the present book does not only display new and unique knowledge concerning new teachers' professional development, their working conditions, and systems promoting professional development, but also knowledge about possibilities and difficulties to organise interactive knowledge systems between individuals, municipalities, and nations, to understand or to promote new teachers' professional development or doing research. However, this is a field under development, and the way to conceptualise and organise things change. Even if we carefully have selected data and given the analysis great attention, we can never avoid the fact that it is impossible to do justice to all nuances and details or possible interpretations to a full extent. This is true especially when having a comparative perspective. To make it even more complicated, the obvious fact that teachers' working conditions and experiences vary depending on the contexts and the interpretations makes it impossible to expect conclusions as: "This is how it is!" From this point of view, the present book gives some perspectives but also opens for further investigations and interventions. Therefore, the audiences of this book are many. We hope that the contents can be of great value for researchers, teacher educators, school leaders, trade unions, municipality administrators, politicians at different levels in the community, and of course, prospective teachers.

The contents of the book

Regarding the seven chapters that follow we want the readers to notice that the authors have composed their chapters in different constellations. One reason for this was that all authors have been "forced" to acquaint themselves with the problems, conditions, and contexts of others. Another reason has been to avoid a biased description and analysis. A consequence of this writing plan is that a small part of information overlaps between chapters. Then, it is important to notice that the information is often presented from new points of view and is interpreted in another context. As editors, we consider this strategy a way to enrich the book. The strategy, however, also draws attention to the complexity of the matters handled in the publication.

In chapter two, Göran Fransson from Sweden highlights and problemise the communicative and interpretative challenges and dilemmas in international co-operation. He analyses the communicative conditions and especially the conditions of interpreting, understanding and

sensemaking when trying to communicate and understand each other's national educational conditions and systems to promote new teachers' professional development. Experiences and challenges from the work within the NQTNE network are analysed and discussed in this perspective. One aspect problematised is the dilemma occurring when trying to acquire a common understanding of the phenomena behind concepts as mentoring or induction. The same phrase could be understood quite differently. This becomes a challenge when communicating in English, as no one in the network has English as a mother tongue and sensemaking has been performed from different national (and personal) frames. However, the same situations occurs when people communicate within national contexts, on their mother tongue, e.g. colleagues, mentors, mentees or headmasters communication. Thus, this chapter brings valuable knowledge about the challenge to communicate, conceptualise and make sense of one others information and knowledge. International co-operation and comparative perspectives are, according to Fransson's conclusions, powerful tools to become aware of assumptions taken for granted and to challenge one's own perspectives. This working procedure is also important to raise new kinds of questions and construct new perspectives and new ways to conceptualise, think, and act.

In chapter three, Eva Bjerkholt from Norway and Egon Hedegaard from Denmark analyse the support to and promotion of new teachers' professional development at a system level in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. The authors begin by clarifying central concepts as induction, induction programs, and induction systems. Based on the definitions, they establish focus on the overall parts and the process of what is called induction systems. Important parts of the system development are partnerships (which means a divided responsibility) and network (which means a relationship between professionals but without shared responsibilities). Central parts of the chapter are clear descriptions of the systems promoting new teachers' professional development in the five countries and the way these have been organised. One major difference between the five countries is that Estonia's system has been implemented at a national level, whereas in the other countries a decentralised model has given locally anchored systems (or no system at all) more priority. One consequence is that in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden the commitment from the municipal school administration and/or from the local teacher union are crucial. The consequences of different intensity of commitment are various solutions: "Those owning the problems also own the solution", seems to be the basic thinking. Based on this statement, the authors highlight both strengths (for instance the integration of the promotion of new teachers' professional

development with other local development processes) and weaknesses in the systems (the continuity cannot be guaranteed). One section of the chapter concerns the teacher training as a partner in the induction system. Furthermore, the authors discuss the outcome of what they call low intensive and high intensive programmes respectively and whether it might be possible to build up some common model in the five countries. The authors' intention is to give an overall and comparable picture from five different countries. Such work always means that one must reduce details, and consequently the "reality" is not always as simple and established as the pictures pretend to be. However, the chapter offers a very good picture of both problems and solutions when it comes to support or promoting new teachers' professional development.

In chapter four, Hannu Jokinen, Åsa Morberg, Katrin Poom-Valickis, and Valdek Rohtma deepen the knowledge about mentoring, mentors, and mentees. Estonia, Finland, and Sweden are in focus in the chapter. There is a short presentation of research about mentoring, and the key concepts mentoring, mentors, and mentees are given meaning according to the authors' understanding and an attempt to place the induction period in a lifelong learning perspective. Based on empirical experiences, the authors show that mentoring can find expression in different ways. In an elucidatory table, similarities and differences between mentoring and the roles of the mentors and mentees in the three countries are illustrated. The analysis focuses on the mentors' characteristics and education, mentoring as professional development, and mentors and mentoring as part of school development. One conclusion is that a mentor requires leadership skills and empathy. It is also established that mentoring should be a dialog. The mentees, however, are not only influenced by their mentors; the work setting will be a base for the professional development. Finally, the authors discuss where mentoring should have a place in the process of developing identity as a teacher. They also discuss the development of the individual versus the community, education of mentors, strengths and weaknesses of the mentoring process, and they have some thoughts and suggestions for the future concerning mentoring and research about mentoring. However, the characteristics of mentoring given in this chapter are challenged in chapter five.

In chapter five, Hannu Heikkinen, Hannu Jokinen and Päivi Tynjälä from Finland describe and analyse mentoring as a relationship between individuals in three Finnish mentoring projects. The authors start with a theoretical discussion about mentoring in relation to newly qualified teachers. The traditional meaning of mentoring, according to the authors, has often been that the mentor is more experienced and the

mentee less experienced. This view of a mentor and a mentee has, however, been questioned lately. Now, the literature describes mentoring as a collaborative collegial relationship influenced from constructivist theories with knowledge and learning in focus using new terms, e.g. co-mentoring, dialog mentoring, peer mentoring. From conceptual changes of mentoring and new approaches of mentoring programs, three empirical research and development projects are discussed. Three mentoring models were studied and analysed, traditional one-to-one mentoring, group mentoring, and peer group mentoring. The first model was introduced in 2000 and the third in 2006. Therefore, research data from the projects differ. There are also differences between the mentoring organisation and the time devoted to meetings. Analyses of the different approaches show both weaknesses and strengths. Paired mentoring discussions were sometimes deeper, more individual, and personal, but the authors found the approach a bit vulnerable due to a lack of mentors and problems organising the activities. The authors argue that organising mentoring in a group is better connected to school development, as it is a more collaborative and collectively oriented approach. Consequently, the authors of the chapter argue that mentoring ought to be conceptualised as collaboration and a dialogue.

In chapter six, Eve Eisenschmidt, Hannu Heikkinen and Wiebke Klages and let us meet the individuals behind the phrase "newly qualified teachers". Using a narrative approach, three teachers from Estonia, Finland, and Norway share their stories and experiences of their first year as teachers. The method Eisenschmidt, Heikkinen and Klages and use is interesting, partly because they produce layers of data and analyses when letting the teachers reflect upon each other's narratives as well as their own first year expressed in the narrative, and partly because they as researchers reflect upon the narratives and the reflections of the narratives given by the teachers. In the analysis themes such as identity, implementing theory into practice, areas of concerns, and questions of support and professional development emerge. The new teachers have to a great extent similar experience, even if there (naturally) are some differences. One result displayed is that both the aspect of competence and the aspect of being in need of a promotive and supportive setting emerge in the narratives.

Since the authors of this book have come together in a network and all the chapters include something about networks as a means of reaching various objectives, we saw reasons to present how the national and international networks grew and how central participants and contributors look upon the network as a form to co-operate. In chapter seven, which has been co-ordinated by Egon Hedegaard from Denmark, there

are such descriptions from each country. The descriptions are very personal, and deviate from the other chapters when it comes to style and stringency. As editors, we have assessed that the chapter's nature gives an unpretentious explanation to the contents of the other chapters and shows, among other things, how chance and "coincidences" can lead to long-lasting co-operation that both broadens and deepens individual researchers' competence. It could be of interest having this in mind when interpreting the whole picture. Thus, the chapter is built upon narratives from central participants. In turn, each contributor presents her/his approach to networks based on some fundamental questions. From Denmark, we may experience that the efforts to establish a national network can be long and winding, but indulgence pays off. In Estonia, the decision to promote new teachers' professional development was taken at a national level. One participant's individual interests in following up this process lead to contacts with Finland and these contacts lead further to NQTNE. From Norway, the networking at the national level is stressed as an important condition for development and learning; the national network generated access to critical friends, stimulation to do research and publish, and especially an operational basis for NQTNE. From Sweden, there are two narratives, one about the requirement of taking an active interest in international networks and the effort to form NQTNE, and one about establishment and the work in a network in co-operation between University of Gävle and the surrounding municipalities, where both parties have needs of the networking. The chapter's ultimate message is an urgent request; do something because otherwise nothing will happen! In the chapter, two main aspects of the network work are emphasised, another reason for this type of personal statements (narratives) to be published. The first aspect concerns how inspiring it can be to participate in networks. The other aspect is the individual experience of networks and its formation. The chapter is a rich map over experiences, and gives some knowledge about the driving forces in networking rather than a recipe for how to initiate or run networks.

In chapter eight, the editors summarise and discuss some aspects highlighted in the various chapters. We give special attention to the Swedish proposal of a system for registration of teachers, and we discuss some critical issues connected to the proposal; such as whether mentors should, as proposed, be involved in the evaluation of new teachers' competence. Beyond that, we give a proposal for an alternative or perhaps complementary model promoting (new) teachers professional development. Finally, we draw some conclusions and propose some areas for further research.

As was established in the introduction above to chapter seven, someone has to act if anything is to happen. There are no automatic solutions. This could also be a message in this book. Teachers are key figures, important actors, in a community. They have the responsibility to handle new generations, promoting learning and individual growth – and in a global learning community, in extension, promote economic growth on a sustainable base. As editors, we are eager to use the above recommendation as a wider message to the readers of this book. Let us in the most optimal way contribute to teachers' professional development. We hope that this book can support such work. Read, learn, react, and let yourself be stimulated by the different ways and models to create networks and promote new teachers' professional development. Even if the main focus is on new teachers, it is also possible to find inspiration and models to promote experienced teachers' professional development as well. We say it again – do something or nothing will happen!

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