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It is the Shared Aims, Trust and Compassion that Allow People to Prosper: Teacher Educators' Lifelong Learning in Competence-based Education

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Abstract: Teachers' life-long learning and occupational well-being is significant in promoting educational goals and professional development. The aim of the study was to determine which factors contribute to teacher educators' commitment to work and give them energy for work and self-development. The research data consisted of 24 teacher educators in Oulu University of Applied Sciences. The research method of this case study was a qualitative, thematic content analysis, the research approach phenomenography. The most important single factor seemed to be the community of teachers, students and the administrative staff which are included in dialogue and collaboration. Emotions, meaningfulness, and interaction play an important role, often via pedagogical fellowship. Committed teacher educators take responsibility for workplace culture and transformation of teaching. Positive attitudes, motivation, reflection, and dialogue seem to be connected to professional capability and the ethos of teacher educators' work.

Keywords: *Co-passion, dialogue, professional identity, sociocultural environment, transformation.*

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Introduction

This study aims first at providing evidence about the sources of energy and professional development of teacher educators and to expose their experiences of proficiency, behavior, and job-satisfaction in their daily confrontations in competence-based programs. Therefore, it also studies the work community and colleagues. These aspects form the framework of the current research persons' work.

First, the recent Europe-wide changes in university teachers' pedagogical education will be briefly presented, then the teacher education programs (traditional and competence-based) are described and justified. Finally, the main concepts used in analyzing the material are introduced.

The conclusion is drawn from the findings of the analyzes. The discussion extends from current issues to transformative action models. These criteria will become more and more important in these changing times. We educate teachers for the future, not for yesterday.

The 2000s has been the upswing of developing higher education pedagogy. Universities began to take their teachers' pedagogical competence into account to an increasing extent (Karjalainen, 2014). In 2005 universities implemented a degree reform to achieve education aiming at university teachers' voluntary pedagogical studies. The discussion in 2005-2009 was Europe-wide (Karjalainen & Nissilä, 2008). It meant a great step in higher education pedagogy.

Traditional Programs

Science universities in Finland implement the programs of class teacher and subject teacher education. The latter is open to students from certain university faculties. Professional teacher education in universities of applied sciences is multi-subject with a wide variety of subject areas and directed to adults. It is open to applicants with doctorate or master level degrees, or with the highest exam of certain professions, and with at least three years' work experience in respective

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fields. Both programs provide teacher's competence, within certain definitions. Applied universities, like all educational institutions, require pedagogical competence from their teachers, while in science universities it is voluntary.

Competence-based Approach

Competence-based approach is introduced here to give the readers the idea of how demanding the teacher educator's work is in a totally competence-based system with adult students who have gained their expertise in a field other than teaching.

The idea of competence-based education originates in the Bologna Agreement (Ministerial Conference Bologna, 1999), The roots of the system seem to go back to apprentice and mastery-learning models, the latter since the 1920s (Guskey & Gates, 1986). Teaching focuses now more on learning instead of only transmitting information. It was understood that information does not turn into activity automatically. Competence means general knowledge, skills, and attitudes (De Bruijn, 2012; Ford & Meyer, 2015) or behavior-based general and task-specific special competences. Billett (2017) distinguishes three areas of expertise: 1) canonical competence, which means the curriculum that is accepted by society, 2) situational competence and 3) personal competence.

Since the learning of theoretical information can be hindered by experience-based education, it is necessary to pay attention to them both (Merriam, 2008). For this reason, education is based on personal study plans (Korthagen, 2004). To prepare their implementation, teacher educators guide student teachers to recognize the connection between their experiences and necessary learning goals. After the identification of the earlier competences, the student teachers must demonstrate them, often in workplaces, in the ways that are agreed together. It is demanding to compare the recognized competences and the need of further learning to the goals of the written curriculum. (Nissilä et al., 2015) The objective is high-quality expertise, which sets great demands on teacher educators.

Literature Review

There is plethora of research regarding the idea of competence-based education. In them the teacher educators' perspectives have seldom been highlighted in extant studies. The focus of this study is specifically on the experiences of teacher educators.

Competence, administration and learning at workplaces, among others, are essential in well-being at work. Van Manen (1999) defines them as the aspects that represent relational personal, moral, emotional, and cognitive perspectives in teacher- student interactions (Van Manen, 1999). The main concepts also used in this presentation are compassion, co-passion, trust, and pedagogical fellowship. Reflection, dialogue, and transformation are central concepts in the analyzes, as well.

Empathy is understanding and experiencing what another person is feeling. Affective empathy makes it possible to identify with the feelings and situations of others. Cognitive empathy will help recognize and understand the other's situation mentally. Compassion is generally thought to be more than empathy. It differs from empathy through its goodwill and willingness to act for the benefit of another person or for the greater good. (Ahlvik & Paakkanen, 2017) The concepts of empathy and compassion are easily mixed, and people often use the terms synonymously (Spännäri, 2016).

Another person's suffering can cause two possible reactions in an empathetic person: distress or concern. Feeling another person's pain is a self-related emotion. Empathic concern is the other-oriented state that causes prosocial motivation and positive feelings. (Singer & Klimecki, 2014) Compassion is not feeling with someone; it is feeling for someone. In compassion, a person is acting, because of another person's emotional state (FeldmanHall et al., 2015).

A broader concept of compassion, co-passion, means that it can also recognize another person's positive emotional states like joy, pride, or excitement and share that positive feeling, especially in the workplace, at the levels of individuals, communities, and organizations (Spännäri, 2016). Focusing on and offering opportunities for compassion/ co-passion has positive impact on wellbeing at work, work satisfaction, commitment to work, to colleagues, and to creativity (FeldmanHall et al., 2015).

Trust is psychological safety and social capital significant for the organization. It acts through open dialogue and promotes the flow of information, as well as creates common meanings and shared aims. Confidence will give space to communality, togetherness, and organizational learning. The community based on trust is prepared to meet challenges and crises, but also to anticipate problems and solve them.

Trust between students and colleagues is based on the values such as participation, consistency, transparency, and reciprocity. Emotional trust propels teamwork in the workplace to the next level. It goes beyond hard work and respects other people's time. It requires emotional intelligence which is both innate and learnable. (Cui et al., 2018)

Pedagogical fellowship appears in work contexts as the ability to think and talk about work situations and to analyze the course of events (Wenger, 1998). Consequently, dialogical peer support in the form of informal communication should be encouraged and widened among teacher educators and student teachers. Mentoring/tutoring conversations have a

pivotal position. Learning in real life situations via colleague support or team learning tends to assist all teachers and students to learn the meaning of pedagogical collegiality (Nissilä, 2015; Nissilä & Karjalainen, 2020).

Professionals – teacher educators, teachers, student teachers, workers in educational institutions and work life representatives should have a continuing dialogue with each other. The dialogical process is a form of conversation that can be meaningful to people from many kinds of backgrounds. Dialogue, as Isaacs (1999) states, is a shared inquiry, a way of thinking and reflecting together. It is not something that you do to another person. It is something that you do with people (Isaacs, 1999).

To guide these processes, teacher educators must deeply understand the interaction in learning situations and comprehend the factors underlying each situation and, in addition, possess self-knowledge and the knowledge of others to support transformative professionalism. Dialogue is deep and demanding on one hand, on the other trusting and respectful. It challenges traditional models and suggests a procedure of sustaining “partnerships”. Dialogue can empower people to learn with and from each other. (Bohm, 1996; Schön, 1983) The flow of conversation can lift people to a new level of shared understanding (Bohm, 1996).

The purpose of reflective work is to integrate beliefs and images, knowledge, and experiences on personal and collective levels (Nissilä, 2005; Senge, 1990, 2006). The prerequisite of reflective practice is deep and critical knowledge of the culture in which one lives (Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 1998). The significance of reflection is in the gradual construction of personal knowledge and meanings.

Transformative learning changes individuals and communities of practice through reshaping the major aims and goals into reflective capacity, critical-mindedness, other-directedness, interpersonal attitude, and pedagogical sensitivity (Wenger, 2010). It is likely to occur when committed teachers/ teacher educators find the subject matter directly relevant to them. Reflecting critically on their beliefs and attitudes and changing their meaning schemes can ignite transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) and transgressing epistemological limitations, whose boundaries may be personal or social.

To reach professional and personal identity development, one must reflect not only on the outer levels, environment, behavior, and competencies, but also the inner levels, mission, identity, and beliefs (Korthagen, 2004). Actual experiences should be given meanings. Teachers’ reflective capabilities and professional competences gradually become a power to change education. (Fox, 1983; Korthagen et al., 2014; Lloyd Yero, 2002; Menges & Rando, 1989)

The concept of transformative learning was introduced by Mezirow who sees the process primarily as rational, analytical, and cognitive with an inherent logic (Mezirow, 1990; Scott, 1997). Another view sees transformative learning as an intuitive, creative process based on analytical (or depth) psychology (Cranton, 1994). In transformative andragogy one constituent is the rational, the other the extra-rational expressed through symbols, images, and feelings (Boyd & Myers, 1988; Grabov, 1997).

How can transformative learning be fostered in teacher education? The teacher educator is to build trust and care and facilitate the development of sensitive relationship between dialogue participants to create shared experiences. Both the rational and affective as means of critical reflection should be emphasized.

Methodology

Research Design

Because the aim of this study was to find out which factors contribute to teacher educators’ commitment to work, well-being and energy sources of self-development, that question was addressed to the teacher educators of one organization. Their essays produced the data that were analyzed using qualitative research methods. The reliability and credibility of the data were ensured.

Sample and Data Collection

The respondents are teacher educators (N=24), male and female, with extensive experience in teaching and training teachers. Most of them are PhD’s in education and with Master’s degrees in some other majoring subjects than education. They have recently started to teach in the competence-based teacher education system which they have developed with joint planning. They wrote longer or shorter essays or expressed their opinions of their work either literally or orally, alone or in pairs, thus allowing possible discussion to inspire answering. Oral interviews were recorded and transcribed. The director has the similar educational background as the respondents (PhD) but, being ‘primus inter pares’, he did not participate in the research.

The themes charted the daily work conditions, life-long learning, and attitudes toward work (Appendix). Research persons were encouraged to freely express their conceptions of the issues. To avoid the temptation by subjects to respond only briefly, the actual research questions were not provided upfront. The answers were treated as anonymous, confidential, and the data collection was carried out in consent. The analyzed material comprises 775 statements. The essays are preserved in the University of Applied Sciences.

Analyzing of Data

In this case study, a thematic, qualitative content analysis was used, one meaning (a word, group of words, one sentence) as an analyzing unit. The research approach was phenomenographic. It is a theory of how to describe manifestations of human experience and qualitative differences. The object of analysis consists of expressed experiences. It is argued (Marton & Neuman, 1989) that people's different ways of understanding or experiencing the surrounding world is all there is. We may then compare different understandings with each other. We can compare teacher educators' conceptions of a subject matter, but we cannot compare their understandings with reality itself.

The research questions were:

- 1) What critical experiences of well-being or challenges at work were identified in teacher educators' essays and interviews?
- 2) How can the teacher educators promote compassion and co-passion personally, dialogically, and communally?
- 3) How can they make teaching attractive and well-being a shared experience?
- 4) How can the dialogue and pedagogical fellowships foster all teachers' development?

In the results-section teacher educators are called teachers and student teachers simply students, except in the direct quotations.

Findings

Initially, the first findings showed that when the cognitive and affective comments were examined separately, they were difficult to distinguish from each other. They were interwoven in expert-level thinking. The same applies to self-reflection of the experiences: integrative thinking is evident. Applying theoretical knowledge, conceptualizing practical knowledge, and developing self-regulatory data through reflection are examples of the processes. Different objects of thinking merge into one unity. In expertise, cognitive element is not prevalent alone. Emotions are the essence of human experience and the deepest layer (Tynjälä, 2016). This consideration led to thematic qualitative analysis.

According to the thematic analyzes, the most general data concerned the following viewpoints: profession, competence, well-being, dialogue, collaboration, work community, colleagues, action culture, networks, widening spheres and transformative self-reflection. They will be examined on the following pages.

Professional Competence Strengthens Self-efficacy

When the respondents charted their energy sources, they mentioned competence motivation, life-long learning, and responsiveness most often. As challenges they listed generation gap, digitalization, and practical arrangements in the workplace. The energy sources are reflected in 47% of the answers.

Competence motivation seems to be important for most teachers. They are work-oriented and consider it important to master the contents of their teaching. "I do not want to pretend I have expertise, if I do not." It means life-long learning and a continuous quest to learn, with efforts to evoke the similar attitude in students as well: "The task is to develop the competence and enthusiasm of student teachers and in-service teachers."

The competence may be somewhat challenged by the generation gap that may be observable, but not a hindrance. The young seem to think, collectively speaking, in different ways of life, work, studies, family and future, from what the teachers thought at their age.

"You should understand the world in which the young live."

" Although I don't teach the young, I supervise the teachers who work with them."

The talk about competence challenges can also refer to digital skills in which teachers feel incompetent in many ways but are willing to bridge the gap:

"Digital leap has also taken some people on the way: some are" digi-gurus", others start more moderately. It appears that some people consider certain needs of development more technical than the others see them... Tolerance of uncertainty, living with failure, imperfection and building the new on the old is commonplace. For myself they have been involved for a long time as part of professional competence and identity – perhaps since the youth."

Competence motivation and Digi learning offer positive perspectives:" A great work community gives help", they say. Since they exercise pair-teaching, the choices are not made alone but together with a colleague. Digital challenges can also be overcome within a team. The teachers who are specialists in digital learning give courses to students and are willing to help the staff as well.

Competence-based Teacher Education

The long-term collaborative work that the staff has done has made them understand the significance of their team:

“We, the work community together, have started to think of and consider competence-based teacher education. The question is of joint work of many years. We have been equal in coming up with the ideas, have had brainstorming and workshops and been allowed to express our uncertainty openly ... Gradually our professional competence has through it increased in competence-based education and we have together created the curriculum that we follow today.”

Since future professional teachers will obviously work in competence-based schools, the decision to change teacher education to competence-based was therefore well reasoned. In Finland this was the first teacher education department that moved to a new system totally, not partly as the others. Therefore, it resulted in extensive work for teachers since there were no models or experiences from which to draw, and everything was to be created by the team. Consequently, this kind of innovative work acted also as an inspiration for life-long learning.

Practical arrangements in the competence-based system and the lack of resources can be challenging. The new system brings a requirement for additional time because of the need to become acquainted with every student teacher’s professional skills, methods to identify these skills, and the resulting task of charting an individual learning path for each of them. These steps are time consuming also because of the challenge in scheduling observations of competence demonstrations at workplaces:

“ A teacher cannot plan/ implement his work evenly in terms of workload weekly/ monthly/ yearly. Individual student timetables have greater influence on them than before.”

Consequently, due to uneven timetables the workload can at times be overwhelming. The offices can also be too crowded, which is often irritable. Only one respondent referred to the salary, thinking that it should be higher in these contexts. Nobody thought that the students would be challenging in a negative way. Instead, they offer still positive moments for teachers. Hopefully, the feeling is reciprocal:

“There is a lot of joy in a teacher’s work; it is awesome and meaningful. ... I wouldn’t change to any other job. ... It is always nice to come to work.”

Life-long learning takes place through reading, discussing with colleagues who have different expertise, and collaborating in practice with the experts. Teachers’ work must be directed to two kinds of audiences: either to experienced educators, without diplomas, who want to obtain necessary further capabilities and skills, or to those who are novices in the field and need support. Heterogeneous groups can be considered as enhancing teachers’ skills and necessitating their self-development.

“The work has increased my competence in versatile ways from the viewpoints of substance and communicative competences. The profession itself includes the element of self-development. “

“The themes of my expertise are endlessly interesting, and they are interwoven with the experience of feeling my life meaningful.”

While the motivation of all kinds of students is mostly intrinsic, in a few cases it is external: the need of diplomas. Teacher educators’ motivation is strongly intrinsic.

Responsiveness

Since the most important task of a teacher is to take care of the students, the respondents take it seriously. Students are always at the center. The ethos is not to teach only facts and methods but pedagogical thinking and attitudes to teaching and students. When the theoretical basics are understood, the methods follow, or sometimes the other way round. Students’ success and gratitude provide energy to keep on working.

“I get energy, when

-the students realize something new, and I have contributed to it.

-I can mediate my own student-centred attitude and joy of teaching forward.”

“Although I do not like various ‘a good teacher’ lists, I can still say that a teacher without empathy, compassion is not a teacher. A teacher and the concentration camp guard have a certain difference! A teacher must be a realist, not naive, and the student must be given still one chance, a new deadline, new advice, a new tutoring moment.”

Nearly half of the teachers think that, besides theoretical and practical competence, the prerequisite of professionalism is the skill to generate enthusiasm, the quest for life-long learning and resilience. Hopefully, these goals will be pursued by students as well.

"I think that resilience is nearly the same or tries to describe the same phenomenon as is observed in developmental work research. ... I think that it is promoted by open interaction, positive attitude to development in sufficiently flexible operating structures."

The respondents also state that a higher education teacher cannot survive only with charisma. S/he needs the joint influence of competence, intelligence, and heart. In this regard, a group of researchers who study the type of competences needed in the future, indicate that a teacher's authority can no longer be based on tradition and charisma, but must be built on trust (Simola et al., 2021).

Compassion and Co-passion Support Self-development

Over one third (36.5%) of the respondents reflected on their work community, collaboration, competence-based education, collegial support, trust, leadership, attitude to differences and wellbeing at work.

Community oriented experiences talk about the support of work community. What is significant is that the teachers regard their work community as one of the best in their field. The next quotation expresses something of their attitude towards work community:

"The job in this vocational education unit is valued and sought after. It seems that no-one who gets employed here wants to change to some other place, although the present job means a lot of demanding work under time pressure and the need for life-long learning."

The successful implementation of the current competence-based learning plan is dependent on positive communication and interaction inside the work community. Especially the team-teacher model of two teachers at the same time in the lecture room and sharing the distance learning tasks and evaluation of students requires full trust on the co-teacher:

"We become energized through our team-teaching model and my lovely working pair. Humor is important and laughter gives energy in our collaboration."

Compassion, co-passion, and trust were revealed in nearly all respondents' comments in one way or another. Those qualities are needed to support the respondents to promote their personal goals, too. Lifelong learning and research work will benefit from an atmosphere of mutual encouragement:

"I can attain my goals by the help of research-positive work community, inspiring co-workers and the senior mentor."

Trust and Collegueship

In the atmosphere of trust, genuine encounters with other people and their full presence at that moment are precious. It does not presuppose like-mindedness or even the acceptance of all matters, but, instead, becoming heard and understood. "It is the shared trust, compassion and co-passion in the community that allows people to prosper."

A group of researchers write that the latest research on the development of skills is based on knowledge called 'powerful knowledge'. It highlights communality and safety, which both are connected to trust. (Simola et al., 2021.)

Further, in trust experiences are essential: "I will survive with the support of capable colleagues, director and the office staff."

In the respondents' reflections on trust one can discern individual, systemic, and organizational points of view reflected in the above quotations. Individual trust is intuitive, momentary and a like-minded experience. The second, systemic trust is reciprocal, learnt and maintained. Organizational trust refers to togetherness, shared aims, and repetitive interaction, or central management.

Reliable colleagues are appreciated because of their personality, expertise, natural helpfulness, and ability to work together with nearly anybody. They work in changing teams or pairs that are formed according to the task and expertise, not according to friendships (Hargreaves, 2019). "We share the tasks, responsibilities, burdens, and also successes." In the following way the research persons wrote generally of their personal experiences of collegiality:

"The support and feedback from the colleagues and director strengthen my expertise, also the feedback of student teachers. ... You should neither forget informal nor coffee-table conversations."

Leadership

Various leadership styles can have an impact on the performance of individuals. The impact of democratic or autocratic, socially oriented or target oriented, transformational, or transactional models are observed in educational studies. Bass revealed that there is a high correlation between the leader's transformational style and the organizational performance level (Bass, 1985). Negative correlation between the transactional leadership style and organizational performance has been revealed in several publications (e.g., Geyer & Steyrer, 1998).

Socially oriented and transformational, solid leadership has brought about the culture of trust among teachers and students in the current work community. In numerous writings of the leadership in this research the comments are remarkably similar. All praise the way of leadership in their workplace: pedagogical autonomy, support, listening to the subordinates and encouragement in work and research affairs. It is notable that a great many teachers have been able to finish their doctoral dissertations during their employment. For that they have received both mental and material support, the latter being mainly re-organization of time between work and research.

“What gives energy to the teacher? Collegial appreciation and trust, the director’s skills to lead, encourage and trust on work community.”

The valuation of leadership in the work context focuses on the director’s methods: side-by-side leadership, ‘hot groups’ staff meetings, also including the administrative staff, support, and the relative autonomy at work:

“Leadership is also competence-based, everyone can exercise pedagogical freedom in a meaningful way.”

“The attitude of supporting companions has moved to all the work community: I have always been supported by the director and colleagues.”

“The role of our director must not be forgotten. We are trusted and supported in any matters. Our director, Asko encourages and makes it possible to receive any challenges.”

“The method of hot groups is super: we get right and timely information and are often thanked and praised by the director. “

The attitude to differences in the work community is permissive. In the beginning the staff members, e.g., had diverse views of the competence-based education: some understood its importance at once, others needed more time for it. The process led to transformative learning experiences: the result was that staff members, teachers and students had evolved and grown in an atmosphere of mutual appreciation. These processes were the period of mental growth.

“Colleagues also influence on the work community, not negatively, but opening eyes to different realities.”

“Sharing aims with a competent team companion, different from me, makes me develop my competence, although our characteristics and ways of operation are different. Still, I learn much from it. Our work community is no birdhouse. It is made up of different thinkers and different interactors. And so it must be.”

“I can survive with good colleagues, and dare tell them about my uncertainty, when I meet such. I am prevented from dripping down the scale with the support of a splendid director who appreciates my competence.”

Wellbeing at Work

Job satisfaction is not only related to the staff’s feelings about the implementation of work projects, but also entails the whole of the organization (Jernigan et al., 2002). Wood, van Veldhoven, Croon, and de Menezes shows that employee involvement increases well-being and mediates its positive relationship with performance. Job satisfaction is thus in connection to employees’ views of their work and work environment (Wood et al., 2012). Motivation is closely related to job satisfaction.

Motivation at work is commonly described as the factor that “makes employees go the extra mile” and feel well. Wellbeing is related to the environment, the physical state of the employees, the psychological, as well as their social existence. If the employees are in a good state of health and wellbeing, it is likely to contribute to successful performance. It is also evident that for increasing the employee wellbeing, they need work in a stress-free and physically and mentally safe environment. Bakke linked wellbeing to promoting an environment that allows work to be received as rewarding, enjoyable, stimulating, and exciting. (Bakke, 2005)

Van Laar, Edwards, and Easton developed an assessment process based on six variables that include career satisfaction, home-work interface, working conditions, general wellbeing, stress, and control at work (Van Laar et al., 2007). These variables, though possibly unknown to the research persons, appear in their qualitative comments.

Collaboration and togetherness are the glue of work community. The feeling of belonging increases personal well-being and gives meaning to your work.

“You can’t evade obligations no matter how tired you are. Coming to work will make you soon enthusiastic because you notice that you and your expertise are really needed.”

Personal wellbeing is revealed generally to be good, and the mutual appreciation and support laudable. Positive feedback and the feeling of having done their best and succeeded are the most often mentioned motivators throughout this research. Personal pedagogical freedom is praised. “The autonomy and freedom of the work are important.”

In the answers there were both “roses and twigs”, i.e., things that promote well-being and things that leave something to be improved. Feedback regarding physical and mental wellbeing was positive.

" I sleep well at night and enjoy my work completely."

" You will get out of hurry with 'to do'-lists, by pruning and saying 'No'"

" We enjoy common recreation days which help to break away from work."

" Who can say whether the current workload is too big? It is good to remember that every employee is an individual. Everybody has a different conception."

Although nothing was asked about family relations, the respondents wrote of them freely. Most often they mention their nearest as the sources of wellbeing. "The nearest give energy; I get power from the children and the spouse." Respondents also consider it important that they have hobbies and interests outside the workplace.

Challenges

Challenges were also charted and directed to the organizational decision makers, and management. The lack of rooms and overcrowded offices are a continuous challenge. They need: "Functional places for supervision and mentoring."

Some research persons understand that they need much resilience in the time of great changes. The move of premises to the same building as the science university brings changes at the management level. The staff also feels the minor changes stressful.

They complain that

"I am afraid of the future occurrences in the new open offices in Linnanmaa! Will the originality and our individual work methods disappear?"

Suggestions for improvement were also given:

"To my mind, a structured and organized mentoring would be a great improvement in increasing the teacher educators' and teachers' well-being at work and 'a tool' in professional development."

"I would hope for our work to be organized so that I could mainly do the basic work of a teacher educator and give only a small contribution to one project at a time. I need time to stop and think."

Presenting research reports in international conferences gives boost. Thus, competence and feeling appreciated are like rings on the water surface: they spread and bring self-efficacy.

These improvements are not impossible to implement. Many requested improvements depend on the financiers' vision of the future coupled with their attitude towards teacher education. Unfortunately, the professional teacher education does not produce exams, but the pedagogical competence of 60 credits. Those who do not see the usefulness of pedagogy do not open their purse cords willingly.

Networks and "Inspiring joint projects make me prosper"

Networks and widening spheres are mentioned throughout the research material. The statements (8.8 %) concern project work at home and abroad, presentations in international research conferences and their invigorating influence.

The element of self-development refers to research work on educational issues:

"The themes of my expertise are endlessly interesting, and they are interwoven with the experience of feeling my life meaningful."

Considering national and international projects the teachers have demonstrated the necessary innovations and skills. For that, they are valued partners both in their sister organizations and outside, even globally. They collaborate in everyday affairs with other educational organizations and work life representatives. The respondents mention colleagues, directors, and managers, teaching practice supervisors, teacher educators in other universities or organizations, educational networks and all the partners that make up pedagogical fellowship.

"Inspiring joint projects, research and development work make me prosper."

"Satisfied in-service education participants and organization customers make me feel successful."

"Acting as a lecturer and in projects adds your competence, because you must, all the time, acquire actively the latest knowledge of the things that you teach or develop."

"I would hope for margins in working time so that it would make it possible to accept last minute training requests. That all of them should not be done as extra work."

Collaboration in national and international affairs is demanding, but it gives perspective to observe the situation in one's own work community. It leads, inevitably, to further professional development.

“One step ahead” - Transformative Challenges

Transformative self-reflection is a concept that appeared in 40 statements (6%). There are some more hints to it, but they are not communicated clearly. The central idea is to understand that times change, and one must always be “one step ahead” as noted by one of the respondents. They educate teachers for the future, teachers who should find their solutions in new situations.

Structurally, transformative learning involves the simultaneous restructuring of several cognitive and emotional schemes (Nissilä, 2010). Functionally, transformative learning changes the learner’s self and thereby provides the learner with qualitatively new understandings and patterns of action (op. cit.). Kupferberg (1996) has noted that project work can form a pedagogical framework that contains possibilities of transformative and meta-learning. They are the challenges that the teacher feels obliged to deal with.

“We want to mediate reformative and courageous pedagogics.”

“Social changes are reflected also on the alignments of educational policy. The teachers’ ongoing self-development in the digitalizing world needs power and motivation. “

“Perhaps the greatest drive appears when we brainstorm a new type of implementation of teaching and a new concept.”

“Even a glimpse of the impact of the work energizes, and I can mediate... transformation forward.”

In the winds of change it is important to preserve the core of a teacher’s work: use your brain and heart and keep them in balance. This is referred to by many futurologists, like Edgar Morin, a philosopher and information theorist (2001).

Meta-level

“We must rethink our way of organizing knowledge” (Morin, 2001, p. 5). We can identify the new meta-level field of global knowledge futures, grounded in human thinking capacities, such as creativity, imagination, dialogue, and collaboration: “Imagination is more important than knowledge. For while knowledge defines all we currently know and understand, imagination points to all we might yet discover and create” claims Albert Einstein.

Now that “knowledge production”, “knowledge transfer”, and “knowledge dissemination” have become core commodities of the global knowledge market economy, how will universities and their research centers keep up? The research persons realized this challenge and tried to suggest some solutions in the global knowledge fraction.

The few meta level statements in this study (0.9%) referred to them:

“As an ongoing challenge we have to stay on the map in the changes that come from society. “

“Social changes are reflected on education-political guidelines. Teachers’ continuous self-development ... need energy and motivation.”

All that the teachers can do in this situation is to understand where we are and where we want to go. Alone they cannot do much, but together they are mightier.

In the following table the findings reported above are given, first horizontally, then vertically first the raw material figures then percentages. The figures are cross tabulated according to five themes and ten questions, picked from the tasks in the Appendix, and answers to them. No other statistics has been used because of the small number of the respondents.

Table 1. Teacher educators' development

Quest		Profession, competence well-being		Work community dialogue collaboration		Networks collaboration Widening spheres		Meta level		Total	
1	What energizes	46	6%	10	1%	-		3	<1%	59	8%
2	What makes flourish	20	3%	48	6%	2	<1%	8	1%	78	10%
3	What promotes professionally	27	3%	42	5%	33	4%	16	2%	118	15%
4	With whom communicate	-		60	8%	22	3%	1	<1%	83	11%
5	What challenges	100	13%	1	<1%	4	1%	3	<1%	112	14%
6	How do you cope	58	7%	34	4%	-		-		92	12%
7	What would be improvement	26	3%	14	2%	6	1%	9	1%	55	7%
8	Most important duty of teacher educator	12	2%	33	4%	-		9	1%	56	7%
9	Where do empathy self-efficacy resilience come from	59	8%	27	3%	-		-		87	11%
10	Addenda	20	3%	14	2%	1	1%	-		35	5%
	Total	368	47%	283	36.50%	68	8.80%	7	0.90%	775	99.20%

The table shows that reciprocal dynamics create an environment larger than the task and the individual. Trust is the red thread that runs through the research data. Accordingly, personal strength goes together with effective collaboration and dialogical influence among all actors.

The credibility and validity of the results.

In phenomenography it is impossible to reach absolute truth about something in principle since new interpretations are continuously made both by us and by every new generation. We may not compare the respondents' understandings with reality itself. Phenomenography is interested in the variation of the experiences (Niikko, 2003).

A thematic content analysis process was started with examining the texts and looking for similarities and differences after which the material was preliminarily tabulated (Schreier, 2012). The analysis was then built on a theory/conceptual organization which made it possible to compare the data to the theory in question (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The second tabulation examined the material widely from various viewpoints and categories. (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Primary validity criteria are credibility, authenticity, criticality, and confirmability. To ensure credibility and authenticity direct quotations were provided from study participants. It also ensures confirmability. It is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not the researcher's inventions. It includes criticality and openness.

Validity criteria are fulfilled when the research is targeted according to the plan. The respondents were also informed about the aim. Auditability was established by the possibility of the readers being able to follow the steps of the research from the research questions to the data collection, the data, and the findings.

Discussion

Setting our perspective toward the future education, we understand that "one of the greatest problems we face today is how to adjust our way of thinking to meet the challenge of an increasingly complex, rapidly changing, unpredictable world" (Morin, 2001, p. 5). One of the challenges is the shift from the idea of simple identities to complex identities (Morin, 2008). The 1960s brought us the emergence of the environmental, feminist, and civil rights movements called a "silent revolution" which is gradually transforming the world. The profound implications of more complex collective and individual identities ask what it means to be human and what it means to live on this planet. They point to a shift greater than that of the Industrial Revolution. (Inglehart, 2014)

It is also argued that we are now entering the sixth wave of future development: the age of intelligent, integrated technologies, helping to restore the balance between humans, technology and nature by radically improved material and energy efficiency and a wiser use of human potential (Wilenius & Halonen, 2017). When talking of better futures, two types of responses stand out. One seems to be almost a sense of shock at hearing of "better" futures, often followed by a sad detachment from a sense of loss and hopelessness. Surprisingly often someone will tell that they have never thought of the possibility of a better future. (Gidley, 2016; Nordensvärd, 2014; Schneider-Mayerson & Leong, 2020)

For the reasons above, we must give attention to weak signals. In the last few years, the global megatrends have been the transformation between the relationship of work and income, eroding democracy and constant technological change. The future research clarifies the discussion by presenting various dimensions of the change: signals, and their interpretation. The signals do not always reflect the true state of the emerging issue, which calls for digging into the primary sources of information. (Hiltunen, 2017) Weak signals as such are independent from the researcher, and thus they can be regarded as an objective phenomenon. We can ourselves choose, whether we want to participate in creating our future or let others do it. (Kuusi et al., 2000)

The resources which are required for the prospering of global knowledge futures are intrinsically human faculties, which are not so dependent on economic and material resources and are thus potentially more sustainable. Creativity and innovation; imagination, inspiration, and intuition; anticipation and foresight; dialogue and collaboration are all human capacities that know no bounds except those we self-impose. (Gidley, 2013) In Albert Einstein's words, imagination points to all we might yet discover and create.

To encompass this, we need future thinking, new perspectives in education and pedagogical autonomy. Lifelong learning presupposes renewable action models. It requires learning after graduation, learning at work, returning flexibly to continuing education alongside of the career and recognizing skills accumulated outside of degrees. Although the new models refer here to education, the same action models widely concern all job design and other fields of social life. They must also be movable to future contexts.

Educational organizations and companies, in the framework of the future, will obviously comprise several parallel or interlaced futures, e.g., extended present, known future and unknown future. They form an expanding continuum. When the number of opportunities increases, uncertainty likewise increases. (Dufva, 2020) Amid constant change, we must remember the power of sustainable human qualities, brain, heart, imagination, co-passion, and trust.

This survey was conducted just prior to the onset of Covid 19 virus, when meeting-in-person was normal. During the pandemic, a new normal has been created that emerges as e-learning, -teaching and e-contacts. Now we need especially trust and co-passion within work communities. The future will reveal if the so-called digital leap will remain. It will provide impetus for a follow-up study.

Conclusion

This research shows strongly that higher education teachers need meaningfulness, relevance, appreciation at work and compassion and co-passion. Feeling of sharing and togetherness with colleagues and reciprocity with students are rewarding, as will be seen in the following summary.

Answers to the research questions

1. What critical experiences of well-being or challenges at work were identified by the teacher educators? The challenge and pleasure of teachers is the continuing pursuit for learning new things. Because the contents and students change, teachers must be attuned to various subjects, heterogeneous groups and age differences that bring the need of finding context-sensitive solutions.

The strict timetables and long workdays are demanding. On some days worktime is longer, on others shorter. When enthusiastic, the teachers concentrate on their work conscientiously. Challenges are the source of both hard work and great joy and satisfaction when the obstacles are overcome.

Autonomy inspires for volunteering in lifelong learning, research, and various ways to develop professional competence together with colleagues. It includes conscious mentoring practices between more experienced and young colleagues. It means responsibility within the work community.

Teachers pursue for continuing learning, reforms, and transformation trying to ignite students to strive for the same. Wellbeing comes from the feeling of meaningfulness and the support of superiors and colleagues. The atmosphere of togetherness and co-passion fosters energy.

2. How can teacher educators promote compassion and co-passion personally, dialogically, and communally? Compassion is promoted with conscious attitude. Empathy is understood and practiced in dialogues between the staff, including students. Gradually, from teachers' example all the staff and students have moved toward compassion, some without noticing it themselves. Also, co-passion is contagious. When you have experienced support and co-passion, you do not forget it, but want to pass it forward. It is important to make students conscious of the importance of compassion and co-passion.

3. How can teachers make teaching attractive and well-being a shared experience with their target groups? Teachers give models in their courses aiming at positive or even enthusiastic experiences for students. It often comes from the feeling of becoming heard or getting necessary tools for the future. Placing the student in the center of teaching also leaves a strong memory trail. Usually, students appreciate the teaching profession after their pedagogical education more than before.

Students are very positive about in-service training if the resources of their employers allow. Training and working as peer mentors or as mentees will widen the scope of understanding the profession both cognitively and emotionally.

4. How can the dialogue and pedagogical fellowship develop and foster the teacher educators? Dialogical peer support in the form of informal pedagogical fellowships encourages and widens teacher education and should be practiced continuously. By supporting others, teachers and students promote their own professional competences, often unnoticed. Mentor/tutor conversations pursue the same goal and help students reach the shared wisdom of practices. "Seized by an elemental togetherness, we touch the genuine power of dialogue, and magic unfolds" (Buber, 1988, p. 76).

Recommendations

The following recommendations will be valid in all related situations:

- 1) Foster the dialogue between all actors in the field
- 2) Include teacher students in the togetherness and collaboration of the community
- 3) Reflect theories and their applications in your daily work. Evaluate your activities and personal communication, successes, and obstacles, especially if the feedback gives reason. Be honest to yourself and seek for self-development
- 4) Support reflective practice and listen to your student teachers
- 5) Think forward, be transformative!

Limitations

This case study is of highly educated professionals who are capable of both autonomy and teamwork. The research design and results cannot be directly moved to any environment. Still, the central findings of sustainable human qualities can benefit all kinds of work communities.

Authorship contribution Statement

Nissilä: Conceptualization, design, analysis, writing. Karjalainen: Conceptualization, reviewing. Koukkari: Data acquisition.

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Appendix



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Oulu University of Applied Sciences, Professional Teacher Education Autumn 2019

ENERGY TO WORK AND PROSPECTS OF TEACHER EDUCATORS' DEVELOPMENT

- What gives the teacher educator energy to their work?
- What makes the teacher educator enthusiastic and flourish?
- What helps the teacher educator develop in their work both professionally and as a communication expert? Give examples!
- With whom do you collaborate most often?
- What challenges does your present work pose to you?
- How have you solved them/ could better solve them?
- What would be a great improvement in the present situation of a teacher educator's work?
- What do you think is the teacher educator's most important duty?
- Where do empathy, self-efficacy, and resilience in a teacher's work come from?

What else would you like to tell of a teacher educator's daily life?