Meeting the professional learning needs of Higher Education-based teacher educators

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InFo
TED
International Forum for Teacher
Educator Development

International Forum for Teacher Educator Development (InFo-TED)

- Established at AERA 2013

- Norway, Netherlands, Belgium, England, Scotland, Ireland, and with representatives from Israel, USA and Australia

- Mission: " *to bring together, exchange and promote research, policy and practice related to teacher educators' professional development so as to develop the professional identities and knowledge bases of those who prepare and support teachers as a means of advancing the state of teacher education in Europe and globally".*

- First wave of publications, papers and conference presentations; successful ERASMUS+ grant developing European Professional Development Programme with summer school and virtual learning platform

For more information: https://www.ntnu.edu/info-ted

The study

RQ 1: What professional learning activities do university-based teacher educators value?

RQ 2: How best can these activities be realized?

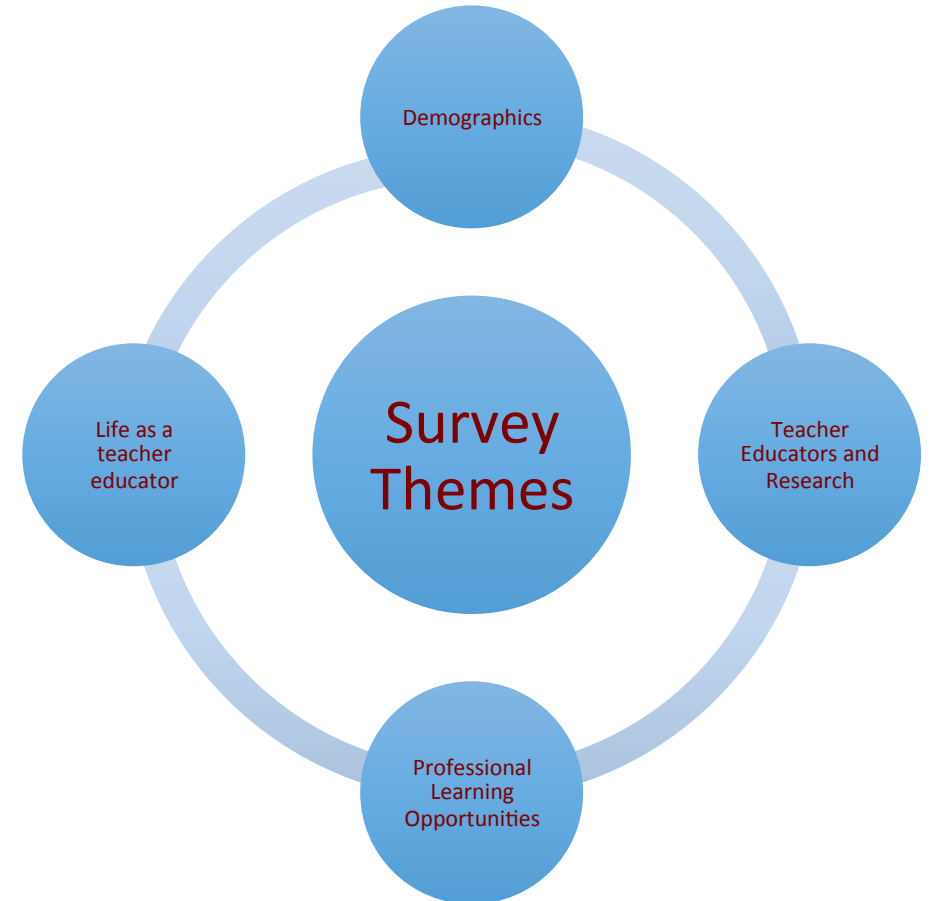Survey of 1059 HE-based Teacher educators from:
Belgium (176)
Ireland (54)
Israel (101)
The Netherlands (358)
Norway (76)
The UK (294)

Demographics

Life as a teacher educator

Survey Themes

Teacher Educators and Research

Professional Learning Opportunities

The context

- Teacher Educators' (TE) professional learning is under-researched
- TE work is different from the work done by teachers in schools/ colleges
- This work carries with it a complex set of pedagogies
- Most professional learning takes place in the work place
- There are different professional learning needs at different stages of the career trajectory
- National differences in recruitment and retention criteria ensure different transitional experiences and professional learning needs
- Situated tensions associated with the role of research

The sample
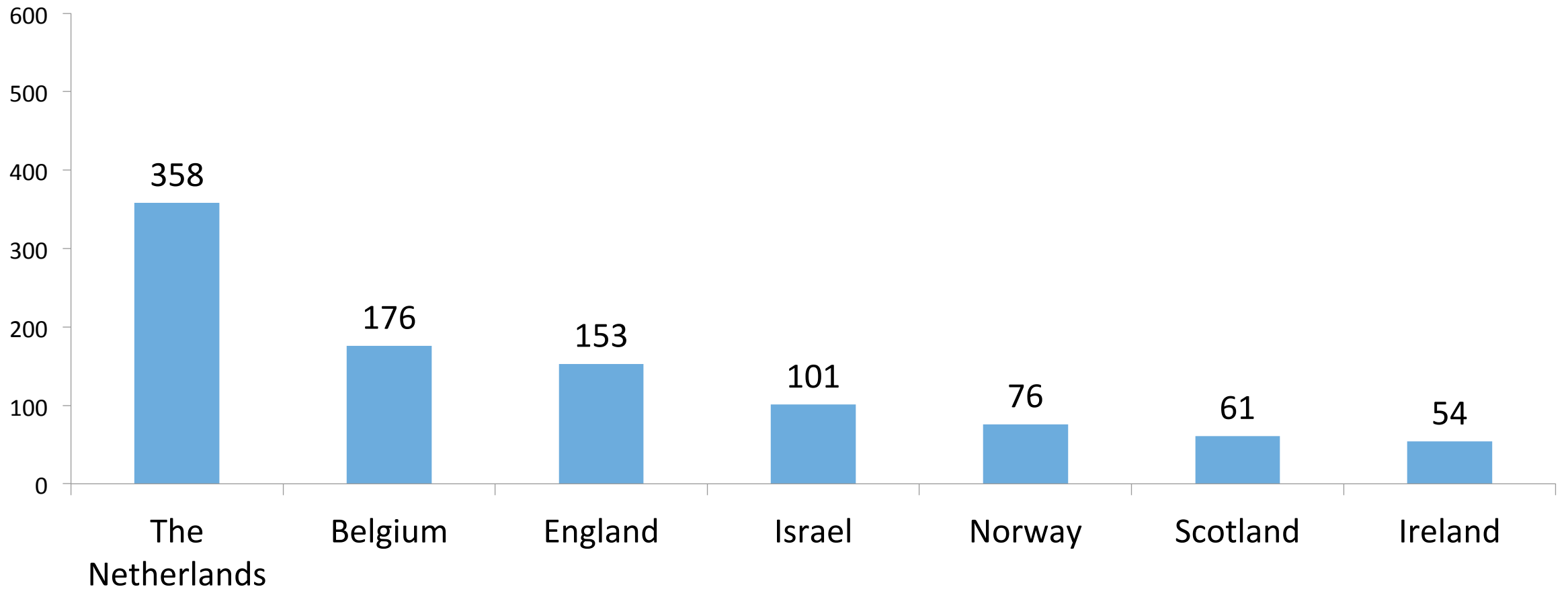
Professional demographics

- Doctorates (53%)   Masters   (40%)

- Female   (70%)   Male   (30%)

- Full-time   (78%)   Part-time   (6%)

- Permanent (83%)   Fixed term (10%)

- Primary   (33%)   Secondary (50%)
  Post 16   (21%)   University   (23%)

- 35-44 (24%)   45-54 (36%)   55-64   (28%)

Academic Degree

Teaching Experience (Prior to TE)

	Yes	No
Scotland	97%	3%
England	95%	5%
Norway	78%	22%
The Netherlands	75%	25%
Ireland	74%	26%
Israel	73%	26%
Belgium	59%	41%

Team GB (vs)….

The Peculiarity of the English ITE Context

- Ministerial commitment to marketplace, supply-side economics and fiscal restraint exacerbated by 'Brexit';

- Multiple pathways to becoming a teacher emphasising school-led 'craft' and apprenticeship models of ITT (not ITE)

- Occupational group in England drawn mainly from schools (in contrast to countries drawing labour from those with PhDs (see Ulvik and Smith, in press, on Norway; Mayer et al., 2011 on Australia; Kosnik and Goodwin, 2011, on the USA and Canada);

- Multiple roles including teaching, mentoring, supervising, coaching, 'relationship maintenance', gate keeping, curriculum development (Ellis et al 2002; Lunenberg et al 2014; Tack & Vanderlinde, 2014)

- Differing transitional experiences and lack of induction for those involved in teacher education (Murray, 2005; van Velzen et al. 2010),

- Teacher educators often have heavy workloads, teach long hours in both the university and partnership schools, and undertake high levels of student nurture and care (Maguire 2000; Murray 2002, 2007; Ellis et al, 2012)

Findings 1: Life as a teacher educator

- Volunteer sample of 157
- 96% employed by universities, 69% female, 78% full-time
- 96% previous school teaching experience
- But many (70%) involved in cross-phase (regardless of own pathway)
- Older work force (19% aged 34-44; 41% aged 45-54; 32% aged 55-64)
- 35% doctorates, 53% Masters, 11% first degree only
- 86% provide CPD for teachers

Findings 2: Teacher Education and Research

- Very strong consensus that teacher education programmes need to be informed by research (mean 5.44) and that research is essential for teacher educators (mean 5.54)

- Reluctance to describe themselves as researchers but...

- 90% involved in scholarship & various forms of research engagement

- 80.9% (127) participants being involved in **R**esearch

- 14 participants had NO experience of data collection/analysis

Findings 3: valuing of professional learning activities

Only moderate levels of satisfaction with professional learning opportunities

Personal reading *(5.14)*

Informal learning conversations with colleagues *(4.93)*

Visits to schools / other universities *(4.84)*

Action research *(4.75)*

Participation in professional organisations *(4.7)*

Secondments / sabbaticals *(4.46)*

Institutional training activities *(3.84)*

Observations carried out by colleagues *(3.82)*

Online learning *(3.44)*

Findings 4: prioritisation of learning areas

Current developments in teacher education (4.76)

Curriculum development (4.24)

Scholarly writing (4.17)

Ways of researching personal practice (4.16)

Research skills (4.03)

Assessment (3.96)

Technology integration (3.80)

Subject knowledge enhancement (3.78)

Reviewing papers etc (3.70)

Conference presentations (3.69)

Coaching / mentoring student teachers (3.48)

Academic administration (2.31)

Learning needs and learning opportunities

Themes	Learning needs	Learning opportunities
Availability (or not) of time	Research reading/conducting research/academic writing and thinking; discussion with colleagues; new programmes	Reduced workload; sabbatical/ study leave; managing workload
Research skills	Two levels – (i) how to conduct research and (ii) how to extend research profile	Research seminars, workshops, courses; collaborating with colleagues; work in and with groups
Use of ICT/online learning/social media	Online learning; social networking and social media	Courses and training workshops; personal coaching and mentoring
Publish research/academic writing	Two levels – (i) begin writing and (ii) increase publication rate/quality	Coaching and mentoring; collaborating with colleagues
Consideration of pedagogical principles/delivery	Up-skilling in new pedagogies; generic teaching and learning strategies; class management; new procedures and systems	University courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, ITE colleagues

Discussion

Austerity leading to further concerns around economic, political, socio-cultural turmoil in post-Brexit UK and its implications for access to professional support

Emphasis on collaborative experiential learning (vs) Potential diminution of professional and social capital

Workplace learning environments in universities and schools – opportunities through national framing and pan-European opportunities

Multiple contexts for teacher educators' practice and therefore for their professional learning

In England fragmenting teacher education and school systems - increased marketisation and *über*-accountability

Beware the sorcerer's apprentice!

Strong desire for more effective professional learning

Sufficient and designated time for induction recognising complex professional pathways

Olympic investment in human and material resources

International sharing of best practice

Where next…

- The development of a VIRTUAL LEARNING PLATFORM FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS (VLP). The platform will offer blended learning opportunities to local, national and European teacher educators' communities of practice responsible for integrated university- and school based teacher educator development.

- The organisation of a EUROPEAN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS (EDPD). This programme will bring groups of experienced teacher educators together, from across Europe, to learn from each other and to form communities of practice who will support and create conditions for teacher educator learning at institutional, regional and national levels.

- In the longer term, the project will evolve into a 'EUROPEAN TEACHER EDUCATOR ACADEMY' organising education and development courses and bringing together European research, pedagogy, and professional learning on teacher educators' professional development.